

Armenian Genocide: Turkish embassy's statement

On May 29, The Daily Star in its Wide Angle (page 16) covered the issue of Armenian genocide. The page was based on information from anca.org, softschool.com, time.com and globalvoicesonline.org. On June 2, the Turkish Embassy in Dhaka sent a statement, denying the genocide. Following is the full statement:

Dear Mr Editor,
I refer to the article titled "The Armenian Genocide and Turkey's denial" published in the Daily Star on 29 May 2015 which contains a number of allegations that seriously distort the truth about the events of 1915, a two-way tragedy in which large numbers of Turks and Armenians lost their lives. I will highly appreciate it, in the name of fair journalism of presenting both sides of a story, a principle which I feel is revered by your newspaper, if you could kindly share the views presented below with your readers so that they can see that there is another pertinent narrative to this highly charged issue and draw their own conclusions.
But before starting I would like to touch open the debate over the numbers of dead which in itself is very controversial. Was it really 1.5 million Armenians that perished as claimed by the Armenian propagandists and their supporters? This seems to be a completely unrealistic figure seeing that this would mean virtually the entire Ottoman Armenian population died when in fact hundreds of thousands survived. Or was it over 1 million as was suggested in your article? Interestingly in the box that appeared on the same page of your paper that reads "Timeline" this number is recorded as around 600,000.
Saying "even 1 is too many" and putting aside how many more from other nationalities of the Ottoman Empire, including the Turks, died during the same period let's focus on the main allegation and try to understand whether the events of 1915 could be defined as "genocide".
Genocide is not a generic concept, but an international crime codified in

the 1948 UN Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Under the 1948 Convention, in order to incriminate a person with the crime of genocide, first, it must be proven that the crime has been committed with "intent to destroy", in whole or in part, a particular national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such. Secondly, a competent court must ascertain that the crime of genocide has been perpetrated as defined in the 1948 Convention. Moreover, the 1948 Convention is not retroactive as emphasized in the case law of the International Court of Justice. Since none of these conditions exists about the 1915 events, the charge of genocide has no legal value and only constitutes a defamation.
The "intent to destroy" is the essential characteristic of genocide, which distinguishes it from other serious crimes, and thus must be convincingly shown beyond any doubt by evidence. The historical evidence does not suggest that religious or racial hatred existed against the Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire. Not only the Armenians were not subjected to systematic racial or religious ill-treatment in the Ottoman classical age as well as in the late Ottoman Empire, they had always been perceived as the "loyal community" of the Empire. With the outbreak of World War I, some Armenian revolutionary organizations began cooperating with the Russians, the main adversary of the Ottoman Empire in Eastern Anatolia. To forestall this cooperation as well as the atrocities committed by Armenians against the Muslim population of the region, the Ottoman government decided to relocate the Armenians to the regions far away from the Russian front.
Nevertheless, Ottoman attitudes towards Armenians who remained loyal had not changed much. Despite increasing grievances and even rebellions, the Ottoman government continued to employ Armenians in the civil service, even after 1913, when the Young Turks (CUP), often accused of

being the perpetrator of the "Armenian genocide" assumed power. For instance, in the 1914-1918 term of the Ottoman Parliament, there were 14 Armenian deputies, who were directly selected by the Young Turks.
The most significant example of genocidal intent is the Holocaust, before which the intent to destroy the Jews was clear in Nazi administration's official and non-official documentation, including the laws, regulations and military orders of the Nazi regime as well as Hitler's book Mein Kampf. The intent to destroy was evident not because the Jews were perceived as a threat to the security or territorial integrity of the Third Reich, but because "for Hitler, the presence of the Jew in Germany despoiled the purity of the Aryan nation".
Until today, no official document stipulating, beyond any doubt, that the Armenian community of the Empire suffered losses because they were Armenian, has ever been discovered in the archives. The circumstantial evidence also falls short of fulfilling the criteria for genocidal intent.
It should be admitted that the relocation process was not easy. Hundred thousands of people were moved without any proper means of transport. Some of them failed to reach the ultimate destination of the relocation operation either because of the spread of lethal diseases or the lack of proper alimentation. Moreover, some of them were killed either by irregular bands or sometimes on the orders of officials who had acted against governmental decrees ordering the provision of security of the relocated Armenians. In other words, the Ottoman administration could not manage and allocate enough resources for the relocation process. Although, the administration tried to minimize casualties through governmental decrees, the losses of relocated Armenians were still high. However, this does not mean definitely that the Ottoman government acted with genocidal intent.
Also, it would be extremely paradoxical to claim that the Young Turks

(CUP) had a genocidal intent to exterminate all the Armenians while court-martial, established by the CUP, tried and punished persons who had ill-treated the relocated Armenians. As a result of these trials, which continued until the mid-1916, 67 individuals were sentenced to death; 524 individuals were sentenced to imprisonment; and 68 individuals were sentenced to exile, penal servitude, or a judicial fine. Thus, at least some culprits were punished by the Ottoman judiciary when the CUP was still in power. This also casts a shadow on the argument of genocidal intent.
Mr Editor,
As I tried to explain above, contrary to the claims, there exists no legal ground, no political or academic consensus, nor pertinent archival documented evidence to justify in any way qualifying these events as "genocide". You will appreciate that having a number of politically motivated advocates claiming that genocide is a historical fact does not make it so.
But then the question that remains to be answered is why does Turkey still face tides of accusations which make a gross injustice to judge its history?
To answer this question one has to understand the dynamics surrounding the Armenian Diaspora. The role of the Armenian Diaspora is extremely important in disseminating the Armenian genocide allegations, even exceeding the activities of the Armenian state.
Armenians of the Diaspora place the "Armenian genocide" at the center of their discourse and continuously emphasize their victimization by the Ottoman Turks. Their main goal has been to convince the international community about the unquestionable reality of the genocide and make the international community put pressure on Turkey to force it to recognize the Armenian genocide allegations.
The Armenian Diaspora insists on its allegations in order to maintain its unity and sense of common identity, things threatened by political, ideological, and social differences among the Armenians

of the Diaspora and the pressures of the host cultures to assimilate them. The only way to maintain identity within the Diaspora and the political influence in the homeland as well as in the host countries is, according to the Diaspora elites, the continuation of the struggle for international recognition of the genocide allegations.
Even some radical Armenians within the Diaspora established terrorist organizations, such as ASALA (Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia) or JCAG (Justice Commandos for the Armenian Genocide), which attacked above all Turkish diplomats and personnel serving abroad. Between 1973 and 1986, ASALA and JCAG as well as certain self-acting individuals murdered a total of 70 people, including 31 Turkish diplomats, other Turkish officials and their relatives.
Using terrorism as a means to make the international community aware of the genocide discourse proved futile. This forced the terrorist organizations to go underground and introduce the issue of genocide recognition into the international political scene through more parliamentary decisions and other propaganda activities including movies, concerts, exhibitions, articles in various newspapers, etc.
Mr Editor,
Turks and Armenians have extensive mutual historical memories. For centuries, they lived together, sharing each other's happiness as well as their sorrows.
They benefitted from the successes and economic accomplishments of the Empire but they also experienced bitter conditions, when the Empire was in decline. In other words, the fates of the Turks and the Armenians were intertwined.
Questioning the validity of the Armenian genocide allegations does not imply any denial of the suffering of Armenians during the relocation. Acknowledging the Armenian sufferings during the process of relocation is a humanitarian issue. However Armenian suffering should not be

isolated from the suffering of other communities of the Empire. 1915 relocation and the common tragedy experienced during World War by the Muslim and Armenian populations of the Ottoman Empire should be studied without politicization or prejudice.
Indeed what Turkey has offered for almost a decade, is to achieve a "just memory" which respect the sufferings of all. In 2005, Turkey offered to establish a commission of joint historians, including not only Turkish and Armenian historians, including not only Turkish and Armenian historians, but also historians from all over the World, who are eager to contribute to reveal the historical reality. Contrary to what would normally be expected from the side which seems so confident of its genocide claim, Armenians have not accepted this proposal. Because they know perfectly well that their claims of genocide are totally devoid of a historical or legal basis and that they are nothing but political propaganda. That is why Armenia and the Armenian Diaspora around the world try to pressure third countries to recognize the false Armenian genocide through parliamentary decisions or political statements
Mr Editor,
I would like to conclude by referring to the President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's written message of last year when he was the Prime Minister. Inter alia, it reads: "It is our hope and belief that the peoples of an ancient and unique geography, who share similar customs and manners will be able to talk to each other about the past with maturity and to remember together their losses in a decent manner. And it is with this hope and belief that we wish that the Armenians who lost their lives in the context of the early twentieth century rest in peace, and we convey our condolences to their grandchildren."
These are the sentiments of 77 million people of Turkey.
With my esteem regards.
Hüseyin Müftüoğlu
Ambassador of Turkey

Pallas's Fish Eagle

FROM PAGE 20
From that sight to its ever familiar "kro-kro" noise, which fills the haor, and to its unique way of picking up a large fish, it seems that this eagle owns the haor and is the real king of the place. This is Pallas's Fish Eagle, the emperor of "Tangaur Haor".
Pallas's Fish Eagle is a migratory raptor of Bangladesh. During summer, it departs our country for Tibet due to availability of food there and stays there for 3-4 months.
The eagle stays in the country during winter when the haor dries up and food is abundant for them. They prefer to stay in flocks and reproduces mostly in our country.
Tangaur Haor provides the largest breeding area in the country for the eagles. The abundance of food makes the haor an important site for this species. I have spotted around 12 nesting sites of Pallas's eagle in the last 3 years.
The fish eagle's characteristics are quite unique. Only a few pairs of the eagle are seen in the haor every year, and these few pairs have enriched the diversity of the haor.
One of the main characteristics of the bird is that it prefers to nest in the same place over and over again if it has the opportunity. The bird nests in the trees in the haor.
However, problem arises for them when the trees are cut down.
Due to this, conflict between the eagle and the resident crows is common as the crows also often use the same trees for their own breeding purposes.
Successful breeding for Pallas's eagle includes the laying of eggs by the female and incubating the eggs. Both the male and female birds contribute equally during the incubation period. They also guard their nests during that period.

The writer is a principal investigator of the White-rumped Vulture Conservation Project of IUCN.

Kidnapped boy

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on Tuesday evening. Around 11:30pm, an unknown caller phoned his father and demanded Tk 10 lakh for his safe return, said Rajib Hossain, victim's cousin.
Following an intense negotiation, the abductor agreed to return Rifat for Tk 1 lakh. He instructed the family to leave the money in a hole in the ground in front of Azimpur Chhapra Mosque in Azimpur.
Meanwhile, the family already filed a general diary with Lalbagh police and sought help from the Rab.
As promised, Rifat's father left the money on Wednesday evening, but plainclothes Rab personnel, already on the spot, arrested Jewel when he went there to pick up the cash.

Crime that still haunts

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presence in the region and it was difficult to speak up against their action. But Kalpana had the courage to stand before the army and speak to them outright without fear," explained Ilira.
In 1997, the CHT peace accord was signed between the government and the Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samiti (United People's Party of the Chittagong Hill Tracts), the armed group that had been fighting for the autonomy of the hills.
Chanchana Chakma, president of the central committee of Hill Women's Federation, said, "If the policemen who raped and murdered Yasmin in 1995 could be brought to justice why should we not get justice for Kalpana's abduction?"
Tuku Talukdar, convener of Narir Proti Sohingsota Protirodh Andolon, a Rangamati-based rights organisation,

'Provocative, hostile'

FROM PAGE 20
Yesterday's resolution, moved by Leader of the House Raja Zafarul Haq, said such "crude attempts" by India are unacceptable and Pakistan rejects this "hegemonic mindset".
It condemned the recent "disturbing pattern of provocative and hostile" statements by Indian leaders including threatening attacks against Pakistani territory.
The resolution stated that the Pakistan armed forces are fully capable of giving a befitting response to any incursion and Pakistani people stand shoulder to shoulder with their armed forces, Radio Pakistan reported.
Condemning Indian leaders' comments, it said such statements confirm Pakistan's apprehensions about India's intention to destabilise Pakistan.
The House urged the international community to take note of such "provocative statements" which it said negatively affected the prospects for regional peace, sovereignty and stability.
Concluding the discussion, Haq said that being a nuclear power Pakistan's defence has been made indispensable. He said that the statement of Indian Prime Minister is against the UN Charter.
He alleged that India on one hand is making a "useless effort" to become a permanent member of UN Security Council and on the other hand it is "violating the UN Charter by carrying out human rights violations in Kashmir."
'INDIA'S NEW POSTURE'
Indian Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar said yesterday morning that the Indian Army's operation to neutralise two camps of militants on Tuesday has led to a "change in mindset."
"Change requires a change in mindset. A simple action against insurgents has changed the mindset of the security scenario of the country," said the Defence Minister.
Parrikar also said, "Those who fear India's new posture have started reacting," in what is seen as a reference to a Pakistani minister warning on Wednesday that "Paki-

stan is not like Myanmar."
Pakistan's Interior Minister Nisar Ali Khan's statement was in response to Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore's remarks India's military action in Myanmar.
To a specific question on whether he meant dealing with cross border terrorism from Pakistan, Rathore had said, "It is undoubtedly a message to all nations that harbour any intentions - be it the west or the specific country we went into right now."
Yesterday, Parrikar refused to go into details of Tuesday's operations, in which the Indian Army liquidated two camps of militants inside Myanmar territory in a 45-minute surgical strike carried out by a team of the elite 21 Para (Special Forces).
He also refused to comment on a Myanmar official denying that the Indian army carried out its ops inside its territory. The Myanmar government has made contradictory statements in the last two days about the operation.
Zaw Htay, director of the office of Myanmar President Thein Sein, was quoted by the Wall Street Journal as confirming the Indian operation in his country.
"He said that there was 'coordination and cooperation' between the Indian troops and Myanmar's armed forces based in the area of the raids, but added that no Myanmar soldiers were directly involved," Wall Street Journal reported.
In a Facebook post, also on Wednesday, Zaw Htay, however said, "According to the information sent by Tatmadaw (Myanmar army) battalions on the ground, we have learned that the military operation was performed on the Indian side at India-Myanmar border." [Compiled from reports of PTI, NDTV]

PM leaves for UK

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fields, including the implementation of the much-awaited Land Boundary Agreement with India, news agencies BSS and UNB reported, quoting the PM's press secretary.
She is scheduled to return home on June 18.

KALPANA PROBE Timeline

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Kalpana Chakma was born on May 1, 1976 at New Lalyaghona under Baghaichhari upazila in Rangamati.
In 1993 she started politics as secretary of Pahari Chhatra Parishad and later became organising secretary of the Central Committee of Hill Women's Federation.
On June 12, 1996, around 1:00 pm, Lieutenant Ferdous Kaiser Khan of Kojoichari army camp along with seven-eight others broke into Kalpana's house in plain clothes and abducted her.
On June 12, 1996, Kalpana's eldest brother Kalindi Kumar Chakma filed the First Information Report with Baghaichhari Police Station.
Eye witnesses named Lieutenant Ferdous and two Village Defence Party (VDP) men Nurul Haq and Saleh Ahmed as the alleged abductors.
In September 1996, the government formed a three-member judicial inquiry committee, which interviewed 94 people including the prime accused Lieutenant Ferdous. The report was submitted to the home ministry but it was never made public.
On May 21, 2010, police submitted the final report of the case without any conclusive remarks on Kalpana's abductors and whereabouts. Kalpana's brother rejected the report.
On September 2012, Criminal Investigation Department (CID) Chittagong Zone submitted the final report of a reinvestigation without any conclusion on her status and whereabouts.
On January 16, 2013, the magistrate court of Rangamati handed over the case to the District Superintendent of Police Amena Begum for another reinvestigation.
On July 20, 2014, SP Amena submitted a progress report to the court, saying "Since the main witness of the case is the victim Kalpana Chakma herself, it is not possible to complete the investigation of the case until the said Kalpana Chakma is rescued or any final decision about her is available."
The present SP Sayeed Tarikul Hassan now has the responsibility for conducting the investigation.
After extending the date 23 times since 2013, the court at long last fixed July 16 as the next date for the submission of the investigation report.

Modi hands

FROM PAGE 20
"Visited Atalji & was delighted to hand over the Bangladesh Liberation War Honour to his family," Modi tweeted after handing over the crest.
India's External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj was present on the occasion.
The Honour was given to Vajpayee by Bangladesh government for his role in the struggle for independence of Bangladesh and consolidation of friendship with India.

Nasa reveals

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18,000 light years away from Earth.
"Although the universe may seem spacious most galaxies are clumped together in groups or clusters and a neighbour is never far away," Nasa wrote.
"But this galaxy, known as NGC 6503, has found itself in a lonely position."
NGC 6503 spans some 30,000 light-years, about a third of the size of the Milky Way.
Bright red patches of gas can be seen scattered through its swirling spiral arms, mixed with bright blue regions that contain newly forming stars.

Thai general suspended

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Manas, a former special adviser to the Thai army, was arrested on June 3 amid a crackdown on the human traffickers in Thailand after discovery of 34 skeletons -- believed to be of Myanmar's Rohingya and Bangladeshi people -- from mass graves in the southern region of Thailand.
Army commander General Udomdej Sitabutr said yesterday that Lt Gen Manas would be reinstated and paid retroactively if found not guilty of the various crimes with which he has been charged, reports Thai newspaper, The Nation.
Apart from 4 million bahts, other properties of Manas included land, boats and a hotel, said Anti-Money Laundering Office (Amlo) Secretary-General Pol Col Sihanart Prayoonrat yesterday, according to Bangkok Post.
In total, the Amlo has so far seized 258 items worth 109 million baht, all believed to have been acquired through human trafficking deals, he said.
Between 20 and 30 million baht has been found to have been transferred to and from
Lt Gen Manas's bank accounts. However, it is unclear how much of this money was generated through human trafficking deals and whether other officials had been involved in it, he said.

Dark brown dust lanes snake across the galaxy's bright arms and centre, giving it a mottled appearance.

This galaxy does not just offer poetic inspiration; it is also the subject of ongoing research, according to Nasa.
Hubble is exploring a sample of nearby galaxies, including NGC 6503, to study their shape, internal structure, and the properties and behaviour of their stars.
The galaxy's central region is a good example of something known as a 'low ionisation nuclear emission region', or Liner.
These are less luminous than some of the brightest galaxies.

If there is sufficient evidence to prove that the transferred money was generated from human trafficking, the Amlo will ask the committee handling financial transactions to freeze the accounts. It is too soon now to conclude that the money sent to recipients was from illegal activity, Sihanart said.

Regarding the seizure of 4 million baht from Lt Gen Manas' account, a source said the Amlo found that the money was transferred by migrant-trafficking suspects. They had no other sources of income except from fishing boats and people-smuggling, the source added.
The Nation, meanwhile, reported that public prosecutors dealing with the Rohingya trafficking case will be ready to indict all 53 suspects in custody by June 25.
This deadline is based on the scheduled completion of police investigations of the case by June 19, Deputy Attorney General Somnuek Siangkongsaid.
In addition to the 83 people wanted in the case, 53 of whom are already in custody, five additional suspects will be facing arrest, police said.
Three of the additional suspects are Thai nationals based in Songkhla's Sadao district, while one is a Myanmar national and the other a Rohingya.

Hunt on for three others

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Police claimed Bakhtiar could not be remanded earlier as "he had fallen sick".
Detectives also held the SUV driver Imran Fakir the same day and seized the pistol, 21 bullets and two mobile phones.
Hakim's mother Monwara Begum filed the murder case on April 15, accusing some unnamed persons.
Bakhtiar's mother Pinu Khan, also Mahila Awami League general secretary, said the allegation brought against her son was totally false.
"He was beside his ailing daughter at Apollo Hospitals that night. His daughter died there on April 15," she said.