



mm18.5.1

May 4, 2016

Dear Colleague:

There are over seven hundred thousand Greeks living in Canada and approximately two hundred thousand in the Toronto area. Twenty-five percent of the Canadian Greek population is from, or whose ancestors came from, Asia Minor (Pontos). It is estimated that there are over 50,000 Pontian Greeks in the Toronto area. There is a monument recognizing the Pontian Genocide in a City park located in the old Municipality of East York.

We are seeking your support of Motion MM18.5 which we have proposed calling for the recognition of the Pontian Greek Genocide by the Ottoman Empire. The Motion reads as follows:

***Recommendations***

*Councillor Jim Karygiannis, seconded by Councillor Mary Fragedakis, recommends that:*

- 1. City Council recognize the Pontian Genocide, to honour the memory of the men, women and children who died.*

***Summary***


*The Pontian Genocide, together with the Armenian and Assyrian Genocides, was the first genocide of the 20th century. These Genocides took place between 1913 and 1922.*

*The Pontian Genocide was the systematic extermination by the Ottoman Empire of its minority Greek subjects. This atrocity took place during and after World War I in which 450,000 - 750,000 Pontian and Anatolian Greeks were executed.*

*Pontians were sent by death marches to concentration camps in Anatolia, where most were subjected to forced labour. Thousands were subjected to forced labour, deportation and execution.*

Thank you for your consideration of this Motion.

Regards,



Jim Karygiannis  
Councillor Ward 39



Mary Fragedakis  
Councillor Ward 29



## Greek genocide

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

The **Greek genocide**, part of which is known as the **Pontic genocide**, was the systematic ethnic cleansing of the Christian Ottoman Greek population from its historic homeland in Anatolia during World War I and its aftermath (1914–22).<sup>[1]</sup> It was instigated by the government of the Ottoman Empire against the Greek population of the Empire and it included massacres, forced deportations involving death marches, summary expulsions, arbitrary execution, and the destruction of Christian Orthodox cultural, historical, and religious monuments.<sup>[2]</sup> According to various sources, several hundred thousand Ottoman Greeks died during this period.<sup>[3]</sup> Most of the refugees and survivors fled to Greece (amounting to over a quarter of the prior population of Greece).<sup>[4]</sup> Some, especially those in Eastern provinces, took refuge in the neighbouring Russian Empire. Thus by the end of the 1919–22 Greco-Turkish War, most of the Greeks of Asia Minor had either fled or had been killed.<sup>[5]</sup> Those remaining were transferred to Greece under the terms of the later 1923 population exchange between Greece and Turkey, which formalized the exodus and barred the return of the refugees. Other ethnic groups were similarly attacked by the Ottoman Empire during this period, including Assyrians and Armenians, and some scholars and organizations have recognized these events as part of the same genocidal policy.<sup>[6]</sup><sup>[7]</sup><sup>[8]</sup><sup>[9]</sup><sup>[10]</sup>

The Allies of World War I condemned the Ottoman government-sponsored massacres as crimes against humanity. More recently, the International Association of Genocide Scholars passed a resolution in 2007 recognising the Ottoman campaign against Christian minorities of the Empire, including the Greeks, as genocide.<sup>[7]</sup> Some other organisations have also passed resolutions recognising the campaign as a genocide, as have the parliaments of Greece, Cyprus, Sweden, Armenia, the Netherlands, and Austria.

### Contents

- 1 Background
- 2 Events
  - 2.1 Post-Balkan Wars
  - 2.2 World War I
  - 2.3 Greco-Turkish War
  - 2.4 Relief efforts
  - 2.5 Contemporary accounts
  - 2.6 Casualties
- 3 Aftermath
- 4 Genocide recognition
  - 4.1 Terminology
  - 4.2 Academic discussion
  - 4.3 Political
  - 4.4 Reasons for limited recognition
- 5 Memorials
- 6 See also
- 7 Notes
- 8 Bibliography
  - 8.1 Contemporary accounts
  - 8.2 Secondary sources
- 9 Further reading
  - 9.1 Books
  - 9.2 Articles
  - 9.3 External links

## Background


The Greek presence in Asia Minor has been dated to at least the time of Homer around 800 BCE.<sup>[12]</sup> The geographer Strabo referred to Smyrna as the first Greek city in Asia Minor.<sup>[13]</sup> Greeks referred to the Black Sea as the "Euxinos Pontos" or "hospitable sea" and starting in the eighth century BCE they began navigating its shores and settling along its coast.<sup>[13]</sup> The most notable Greek cities of the Black Sea were Trebizond, Sampsounta, Sinope and Heraclea Pontica.<sup>[13]</sup>

During the Hellenistic period (334 BC - 1st century BC) that followed the conquests of Alexander the Great, Greek culture and language began to dominate Asia Minor. The Hellenization of the region accelerated under Roman and early Byzantine rule, and by the early centuries AD the local Anatolian languages had become extinct, being replaced by the common Koine Greek language.<sup>[14]</sup><sup>[15]</sup><sup>[16]</sup> The resultant Greek culture in Asia Minor flourished during the following millennium under the Greek-speaking Byzantine Empire. Until the Turkic peoples began their late medieval conquests of this empire, Byzantine Greek citizens were the largest group of indigenous peoples living in Asia Minor.<sup>[13]</sup> Even after the Turkic conquests of the interior, the Black Sea coast and mountains of Asia Minor remained the heart of a Greek state, the Empire of Trebizond, until its eventual conquest by the Ottoman Turks in 1461.

At the outbreak of World War I, Asia Minor was ethnically diverse, its population including Turks, Azeris, Pontic Greeks (including Caucasus Greeks), Armenians, Kurds, Zazas, Georgians, Circassians, Assyrians, Jews, and Laz people.

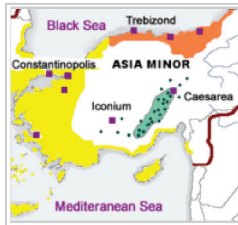
Among the causes for the Turkish campaign against the Greek population was a fear that the population would aid the Ottoman Empire's enemies, and a belief among some Turks that to form a modern nation state it was necessary to purge from the territories of the state those national groups who could threaten the integrity of a modern Turkish nation state.<sup>[17]</sup><sup>[18]</sup>

**Greek genocide**



Greek civilians mourn their dead relatives, Great Fire of Smyrna, 1922

<b>Location</b>	Ottoman Empire
<b>Date</b>	1913–1922
<b>Target</b>	Greek population, particularly Pontic, Cappadocian and Ionian people
<b>Attack type</b>	Deportation, mass murder, death march, others
<b>Deaths</b>	450,000–750,000 (see casualties section below)
<b>Perpetrators</b>	Ottoman Empire, Turkish National Movement



Areas with the presence of Anatolian Greeks in 1910. Demotic Greek speakers in yellow. Pontic Greek in orange. Cappadocian Greek in green with individual towns indicated.

<sup>[11]</sup> Shaded regions do not indicate that Greek-speakers were a majority.

According to a German military attaché, the Ottoman minister of war Ismail Enver had declared in October 1915 that he wanted to "solve the Greek problem during the war... in the same way he believe[d] he solved the Armenian problem."<sup>[19]</sup>

## Events

### Post-Balkan Wars

Following similar accords made with Bulgaria and Serbia, the Ottoman Empire signed a small voluntary population exchange agreement with Greece on 14 November 1913.<sup>[22]</sup> Another such agreement was signed 1 July 1914 for the exchange of some Turks of Greece for some Greeks of Aydin and Western Thrace, after the Ottomans had forced these Greeks from their homes in response to the Greek annexation of several islands.<sup>[4]</sup>

The swap was never completed due to the eruption of World War One.<sup>[23]</sup> This Ottoman pattern, using a population swap to permanently formalize a population removal that had already been conducted, would be repeated with the Population exchange between Greece and Turkey, which formalized and made permanent the preceding exodus of Asia Minor Greeks occasioned by the Greek genocide.<sup>[5][24]</sup>

Beginning in the spring of 1913, the Ottomans implemented a programme of expulsions and forcible migrations, focusing in Greeks of the Aegean region and eastern Thrace, whose presence in these areas was deemed a threat to national security.<sup>[25]</sup> While discussions for population exchanges were still conducted, Special Organization units attacked Greek villages forcing their inhabitants to abandon their homes for Greece, being replaced with Muslim refugees.<sup>[26]</sup> The Ottoman government adopted a "dual-track mechanism" allowing it to deny responsibility for and prior knowledge of this campaign of intimidation, emptying Christian villages.<sup>[27]</sup> Such an incident took place in Phocaea (Greek: Φώκεια), on 12 June 1914, a town in western Anatolia twenty-five miles (40 km) northwest of Smyrna, where Turkish irregular troops massacred the population, while the ones that survived escaped to Greece.<sup>[28]</sup>

The involvement in certain cases of local military and civil functionaries in planning and executing anti-Greek violence and looting led ambassadors of Greece and the Great Powers and the Patriarchate to address complaints to the Porte.<sup>[29]</sup> In protest to government inaction in the face of these attacks and to the so-called "Muslim boycott" of Greek products that had begun in 1913, the Patriarchate closed Greek churches and schools in June 1914.<sup>[29]</sup>

Responding to international and domestic pressure, Talat Pasha headed a visit in Thrace in April 1914 and later in the Aegean to investigate reports and try to sooth bilateral tension with Greece. While purporting that he had no involvement or knowledge of these events, Talat met with Kuşçubaşı Eşref, head of the "cleansing" operation in the Aegean littoral, during his tour and advised him to be cautious not to be "visible".<sup>[30]</sup>

In the summer of 1914 the Special Organization (Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa), assisted by government and army officials, conscripted Greek men of military age from Thrace and western Anatolia into Labour Battalions in which hundreds of thousands died.<sup>[31]</sup> Sent hundreds of miles into the Interior of Anatolia, these conscripts were employed in road-making, building, tunnel excavating and other field work but their numbers were heavily reduced through either privations and ill-treatment or by outright massacre by their Ottoman guards.<sup>[32]</sup> The policy of persecution and ethnic cleansing was expanded to other regions of the Empire including Pontus, Cappadocia and Cilicia.<sup>[33]</sup>

The forceful expulsion of Christians of western Anatolia, especially Ottoman Greeks, has many similarities with policy towards the Armenians, as observed by US ambassador Henry Morgenthau and historian Arnold Toynbee. Certain Ottoman officials, such as Şükrü Kaya, Nazım Bey and Mehmed Reshid, played a role in both, Special Organization units and labour battalions were involved in both campaigns and a dual plan combining unofficial violence and the cover of state population policy was in implementation in both cases.<sup>[34]</sup>

## World War I

However, after November 1914 Ottoman policy towards the Greek population shifted; state policy was since restricted to the forceful immigration to the interior of Greeks living in coastal areas, particularly the Black Sea region, close to the Turkish-Russian front.<sup>[35]</sup> This change of policy was due to a German demand for the persecution of Ottoman Greeks to stop, after Eleftherios Venizelos had stated this as a condition of Greece's neutrality to the German ambassador in Athens. Venizelos also threatened to undertake a similar campaign against Muslims that were living in Greece in case that Ottoman policy wouldn't change.<sup>[36]</sup> While the Ottoman government tried to implement this change in policy, it wasn't successful and attacks, even murders, continued to occur unpunished by local officials in the provinces, despite repeated instructions in cables sent from the central administration.<sup>[37]</sup> Arbitrary violence and extortion of money intensified later, providing ammunition for the Venizelists arguing that Greece should join the Entente.<sup>[38]</sup>

In July 1915 the Greek chargé d'affaires claimed that the deportations "can not be any other issue than an annihilation war against the Greek nation in Turkey and as measures hereof they have been implementing forced conversions to Islam, in obvious aim to, that if after the end of the war there again would be a question of European intervention for the protection of the Christians, there will be as few of them left as possible."<sup>[39]</sup> According to George W. Rendel of the British Foreign Office, by 1918 "...over 500,000 Greeks were deported of whom comparatively few survived."<sup>[40]</sup> In his memoirs, the United States ambassador to the Ottoman Empire between 1913 and 1916 wrote "Everywhere the Greeks were gathered in groups and, under the so-called protection of Turkish gendarmes, they were transported, the larger part on foot, into the interior. Just how many were scattered in this fashion is not definitely known, the estimates varying anywhere from 200,000 up to 1,000,000."<sup>[41]</sup>

	Greek census (1910 –12)	Ottoman census (1914)	Soteriades (1918) <sup>[21]</sup>
Hudavendigar (Prousa)	262,319	184,424	278,421
Konya (Ikonio)	74,539	65,054	66,895
Trabzon (Trebizond)	298,183	260,313	353,533
Ankara (Angora)	85,242	77,530	66,194
Aydin	495,936	319,079	622,810
Kastamonu	24,349	26,104	24,937
Sivas	74,632	75,324	99,376
Izmit (Nicomedia)	52,742	40,048	73,134
Biga (Dardanelles)	31,165	8,541	32,830
Total	1,399,107	1,056,357	1,618,130



Phocaea in flames, during the massacre perpetrated by Turkish irregulars in June 1914.



Hellenism in Near East during and after the World War I, showing some of the areas (Western Anatolia and Eastern Thrace) where the Greek population was concentrated. The Pontic region is not shown.

Despite the shift of policy, the policy of evacuating Greek settlements and relocating the inhabitants was continued, albeit in a limited scale. The policy was targeted to specific regions that were considered militarily vulnerable, not the whole of the Greek population. As a 1919 Patriarchate account records, the evacuation of many villages was accompanied with looting and murders, while many died as a result of not having been given the time to make the necessary provisions or of being relocated to uninhabitable places.<sup>[42]</sup>

State policy towards Ottoman Greeks changed again in the fall of 1916. With Entente forces occupying Lesbos, Chios and Samos since spring, the Russians advancing in Anatolia and Greece expected to enter the war siding with the Allies, preparations were made for the deportation of Greeks living in border areas.<sup>[43]</sup>

In January 1917 Talat Pasha sent a cable for the deportation of Greeks from the Samsun district "thirty to fifty kilometres inland" taking care for "no assaults on any persons or property".<sup>[44]</sup> However, the execution of government decrees, which took a systematic form from December 1916, when Behaeddin Shakir came to the region, was not conducted as ordered: men were taken in labour battalions, women and children were attacked, villages were looted by Muslim neighbours.<sup>[45]</sup> Germanos Karavangelis, the bishop of Samsun, reported to the Patriarchate that thirty thousands had been deported to the Ankara region and the convoys of the deportees had been attacked, with many being killed. Talat Pasha ordered an investigation for the looting and destruction of Greek villages by bandits.<sup>[46]</sup> Later in 1917 instructions were sent to authorize military officials with the control of the operation and to broaden its scope, now including persons from cities in the coastal region. However, in certain areas Greek populations remained undeported.<sup>[47]</sup>

Greek deportees were sent to live in Greek villages in the inner provinces or, in some case, villages where Armenians were living before being deported. Greek villages evacuated during the war due to military concerns were then resettled with Muslim immigrants and refugees.<sup>[48]</sup> According to cables sent to the provinces during this time, abandoned moveable and non-movable Greek property was not to be liquidated, as that of the Armenians, but "preserved".<sup>[49]</sup>

On 14 January 1917 Cossva Anckarsvärd, Sweden's Ambassador to Constantinople, sent a dispatch regarding the deportation decision of the Ottoman Greeks:

What above all appears as an unnecessary cruelty is that the deportation is not limited to the men alone, but is extended likewise to women and children. This is supposedly done in order to much easier be able to confiscate the property of the deported.<sup>[50]</sup>

According to Rendel, atrocities such as deportations involving death marches, starvation in labour camps etc. were referred to as "white massacres".<sup>[40]</sup> Ottoman official Rafet Bey was active in the Genocide of the Greeks and in November 1916, Austrian consul in Samsun, Kwiatkowski, reported that he said to him "*We must finish off the Greeks as we did with the Armenians... today I sent squads to the interior to kill every Greek on sight...*"<sup>[51]</sup>

## Greco-Turkish War

According to the official Ottoman documents, in January 1919, the Ottoman government allowed the return of some Greeks who were deported, gave them financial aid and gave back their properties.<sup>[52]</sup>

The Turkish Courts-Martial of 1919–20 saw charges brought against a number of leading Ottoman officials for their part in ordering massacres against both Greeks and Armenians.<sup>[53]</sup>

In an October 1920 report a British officer describes the aftermath of the massacres at Iznik in north-western Anatolia in which he estimated that at least 100 decomposed mutilated bodies of men, women and children were present in and around a large cave about 300 yards outside the city walls.<sup>[40]</sup>

The systematic massacre and deportation of Greeks in Asia Minor, a program which had come into effect in 1914, was a precursor to the atrocities perpetrated by both the Greek and Turkish armies during the Greco-Turkish War, a conflict which followed the Greek landing at Smyrna<sup>[54][55]</sup> in May 1919 and continued until the retaking of Smyrna by the Turks and the Great Fire of Smyrna in September 1922.<sup>[56]</sup> Rudolph Rummel estimated the death toll of the fire at 100,000<sup>[57]</sup> Greeks and Armenians, who perished in the fire and accompanying massacres. According to Norman M. Naimark "more realistic estimates range between 10,000 to 15,000" for the casualties of the Great Fire of Smyrna. Some 150,000 to 200,000 Greeks were expelled after the fire, while about 30,000 able-bodied Greek and Armenian men were deported to the interior of Asia Minor, most of whom were executed on the way or died under brutal conditions.<sup>[58]</sup> George W. Rendel of the British Foreign Office noted the massacres and deportations of Greeks during the Greco-Turkish War.<sup>[40]</sup> According to estimates by Rudolph Rummel, between 213,000 and 368,000 Anatolian Greeks were killed between 1919 and 1922.<sup>[59]</sup> There were also massacres of Turks carried out by the Hellenic troops during the occupation of western Anatolia from May 1919 to September 1922.<sup>[56]</sup>

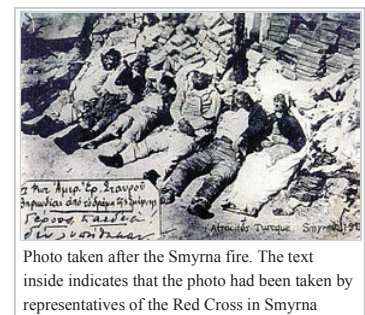
For the massacres that occurred during the Greco-Turkish War of 1919–1922, British historian Arnold J. Toynbee wrote that it was the Greek landings that created the Turkish National Movement led by Mustafa Kemal:<sup>[60]</sup> "*...The Greeks of 'Pontus' and the Turks of the Greek occupied territories, were in some degree victims of Mr. Venizelos's and Mr. Lloyd George's original miscalculations at Paris.*"

## Relief efforts

In 1917 a relief organization by the name of the Relief Committee for Greeks of Asia Minor was formed in response to the deportations and massacres of Greeks in the Ottoman Empire. The committee worked in cooperation with the Near East Relief in distributing aid to Ottoman Greeks in Thrace and Asia Minor. The organisation disbanded in the summer of 1921 but Greek relief work was continued by other aid organisations.<sup>[61]</sup>

## Contemporary accounts

German and Austro-Hungarian diplomats, as well as the 1922 memorandum compiled by George W. Rendel on "Turkish Massacres and Persecutions", have provided evidence for series of systematic massacres and ethnic cleansing of the Greeks in Asia Minor.<sup>[40][62]</sup> The quotes have been attributed to various diplomats, notably the German ambassadors Hans Freiherr von Wangenheim and Richard von Kühlmann, the German vice-consul in Samsoun Kuchhoff, Austria's ambassador Pallavicini and Samsoun consul Ernst von Kwiatkowski, and the Italian unofficial agent in Angora Signor Tuozzi. Other quotes are from clergymen and activists, notably the German missionary Johannes Lepsius, and Stanley Hopkins of the Near East Relief. Germany and Austria-Hungary were allies of the Ottoman Empire in World War I.





Smyrna, 1922

The accounts describe systematic massacres, rapes and burnings of Greek villages, and attribute intent to Ottoman officials, namely the Ottoman Prime Minister Mahmud Sevket Pasha, Rafet Bey, Talat Pasha and Enver Pasha.<sup>[40][62]</sup>

Additionally, *The New York Times* and its correspondents have made extensive references to the events, recording massacres, deportations, individual killings, rapes, burning of entire Greek villages, destruction of Greek Orthodox churches and monasteries, drafts for "Labor Brigades", looting, terrorism and other "atrocities" for Greek, Armenian and also for British and American citizens and government officials.<sup>[63][64]</sup> Australian press also had some coverage of the events.<sup>[65]</sup>

Henry Morgenthau, the United States ambassador to the Ottoman Empire from 1913 to 1916 accused the "Turkish government" of a campaign of "outrageous terrorizing, cruel torturing, driving of women into harems, debauchery of innocent girls, the sale of many of them at 80 cents each, the murdering of hundreds of thousands and the deportation to and starvation in the desert of other hundreds of thousands, [and] the destruction of hundreds of villages and many cities", all part of "the willful execution" of a "scheme to annihilate the Armenian, Greek and Syrian Christians of Turkey."<sup>[66]</sup> However, months prior to the First World War, 100,000 Greeks were deported to Greek islands or the interior which Morgenthau stated, "for the larger part these were bona-fide deportations; that is, the Greek inhabitants were actually removed to new places and were not subjected to wholesale massacre. It was probably the reason that the civilized world did not protest against these deportations..."<sup>[67]</sup>

US Consul-General George Horton, whose account has been criticised by scholars as anti-Turkish,<sup>[68][69][70]</sup> claimed, "One of the cleverest statements circulated by the Turkish propagandists is to the effect that the massacred Christians were as bad as their executioners, that it was '50-50.'" On this issue he comments: "Had the Greeks, after the massacres in the Pontus and at Smyrna, massacred all the Turks in Greece, the record would have been 50-50—almost." As an eye-witness, he also praises Greeks for their "conduct [...] toward the thousands of Turks residing in Greece, while the ferocious massacres were going on...", which, according to his opinion, was "one of the most inspiring and beautiful chapters in all that country's history."<sup>[71][72]</sup>

**Casualties**



Newspaper published by *The Scotsman* on July 20th 1915 entitled, "Greek Population of Turkey, A Crisis At Aivali"

For the whole of the period between 1914 and 1922 and for the whole of Anatolia, there are academic estimates of death toll ranging from 289,000 to 750,000. The figure of 750,000 is suggested by political scientist Adam Jones.<sup>[74]</sup> Scholar Rudolph Rummel compiled various figures from several studies to estimate lower and higher bounds for the death toll between 1914 and 1923. His estimates ranged from 289,000 to 459,000 deaths in the Greek genocide throughout this period.<sup>[75]</sup> Historian Constantine G Hatzidimitriou writes that "loss of life among Anatolian Greeks during the WWI period and its aftermath was approximately 735,370."<sup>[76]</sup>

Some contemporary sources claimed different death tolls. The Greek government collected figures together with the Patriarchate to claim that a total of one million people were massacred.<sup>[77]</sup> A team of American researchers found in the early postwar period that the total number of Greeks killed may approach 900,000 people.<sup>[78]</sup> Edward Hale Bierstadt, writing in 1924, stated that "According to official testimony, the Turks since

1914 have slaughtered in cold blood 1,500,000 Armenians, and 500,000 Greeks, men women and children, without the slightest provocation."<sup>[79]</sup> On 4 November 1918, Emanuel Efendi, an Ottoman deputy of Aydin, criticised the ethnic cleansing of the previous government and reported that 550,000 Greeks had been killed in the coastal regions of Anatolia (including the Black Sea coast) and Aegean Islands during the deportations.<sup>[80]</sup>

According to various sources the Greek death toll in the Pontus region of Anatolia ranges from 300,000 to 360,000.<sup>[78]</sup> According to the International League for the Rights and Liberation of Peoples, between 1916 and 1923, up to 350,000 Greek Pontians were reportedly killed in massacres, persecution and death marches.<sup>[81]</sup> Merrill D. Peterson cites the death toll of 360,000 for the Greeks of Pontus.<sup>[82]</sup> According to George K. Valavanis "The loss of human life among the Pontian Greeks, since the Great War (World War I) until March 1924, can be estimated at 353,000, as a result of murders, hangings, and from punishment, disease, and other hardships."<sup>[83]</sup>

**Aftermath**

Article 142 of the 1920 Treaty of Sèvres, prepared after the first World War, called the Turkish regime "terrorist" and contained provisions "to repair so far as possible the wrongs inflicted on individuals in the course of the massacres perpetrated in Turkey during the war."<sup>[84]</sup> The Treaty of Sèvres was never ratified by the Turkish government and ultimately was replaced by the Treaty of Lausanne. That treaty was accompanied by a "Declaration of Amnesty", without containing any provision in respect to punishment of war crimes.<sup>[85]</sup>

In 1923, a population exchange between Greece and Turkey resulted in a near-complete elimination of the Greek ethnic presence in Turkey and a similar elimination of the Turkish ethnic presence in much of Greece. According to the Greek census of 1928, 1,104,216 Ottoman Greeks had reached Greece.<sup>[86]</sup> It is impossible to know exactly how many Greek inhabitants of Turkey died between 1914 and 1923, and how many ethnic Greeks of Anatolia were expelled to Greece or fled to the Soviet Union.<sup>[87]</sup> Some of the survivors and expelled took refuge in the neighboring Russian Empire (later, Soviet Union).

In 1955, the Istanbul Pogrom caused most of the Greek inhabitants remaining in Istanbul to flee and migrate from there. Historian Alfred-Maurice de Zayas identifies Istanbul Pogroms as a very serious crime against humanity and he states that, small Greek causality and especially the flight and big migration of Greeks after the pogrom corresponds to the "intent to destroy in whole or in part" criteria of the Genocide Convention.<sup>[88]</sup>

**Genocide recognition**

**Terminology**

The word *genocide* was coined in the early 1940s, the era of the Holocaust, by Raphael Lemkin, a Polish lawyer of Jewish descent. In his writings on genocide, Lemkin is known to have detailed the fate of Greeks in Turkey.<sup>[89]</sup> In August 1946 the *New York Times* reported:



Smyrna burning during the Fire of Smyrna. According to different estimates some 10,000,<sup>[73]</sup> to 100,000<sup>[57]</sup> Greeks and Armenians were killed in the fire and accompanying massacres.



Smyrna citizens trying to reach the Allied ships during the Smyrna fire, 1922. The photo had been taken from the launch boat of a US battleship

Genocide is no new phenomenon, nor has it been utterly ignored in the past. ... The massacres of Greeks and Armenians by the Turks prompted diplomatic action without punishment. If Professor Lemkin has his way genocide will be established as an international crime...<sup>[90]</sup>

The 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (CPPCG) was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in December 1948 and came into force in January 1951. It defines genocide in legal terms. Before creation of the word "genocide", the destruction of the Ottoman Greeks was known by Greeks as "the Massacre" (in Greek: η Σφαγή), "the Great Catastrophe" (η Μεγάλη Καταστροφή), or "the Great Tragedy" (η Μεγάλη Τραγωδία).<sup>[91]</sup>

### Academic discussion

In December 2007 the International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS) passed a resolution affirming that the 1914–23 campaign against Ottoman Greeks constituted genocide.<sup>[7]</sup> Utilising the term "Greek Genocide", the resolution affirmed that alongside the Assyrians, Ottoman Greeks were subject to a genocide "qualitatively similar" to the Ottoman genocide of the Armenians. IAGS President Gregory Stanton urged the Turkish government to finally acknowledge the three genocides: "The history of these genocides is clear, and there is no more excuse for the current Turkish government, which did not itself commit the crimes, to deny the facts."<sup>[93]</sup> Drafted by Canadian scholar Adam Jones, the resolution was adopted on 1 December 2007 with the support of 83% of all voting IAGS members.<sup>[94]</sup>

Several scholars researching the Armenian genocide, such as Peter Balakian, Taner Akçam, Richard Hovannisian and Robert Melson, however stated that the issue had to be further researched before a resolution was passed.<sup>[95]</sup> Manus Midlarsky notes a disjunction between statements of genocidal intent against the Greeks by Ottoman officials and their actions, pointing to the containment of massacres in selected "sensitive" areas and the large numbers of Greek survivors at the end of the war. Because of cultural and political ties of the Ottoman Greeks with European powers, Midlarsky argues, genocide was "not a viable option for the Ottomans in their case."<sup>[96]</sup> Taner Akçam refers to contemporary accounts noting the difference in government treatment of Ottoman Greeks and Armenians during WW I and concludes that "despite the increasingly severe wartime policies, in particular for the period between late 1916 and the first months of 1917, the government's treatment of the Greeks – although comparable in some ways to the measures against the Armenians – differed in scope, intent, and motivation."<sup>[97]</sup> Historian Mark Mazower states that the deportation of Greeks by the Ottomans was on a "relatively small scale and do not appear to have been designed to end in their victims' deaths. What was to happen with the Armenians was of a different order".<sup>[98]</sup>

Other genocide scholars, such as Dominik J. Schaller and Jürgen Zimmerer, however stated that the "genocidal quality of the murderous campaigns against Greeks" is "obvious".<sup>[99]</sup> Niall Ferguson has drawn a comparison between sporadic massacres of Pontic Greek communities after 1922 and the fate of the Armenians.<sup>[100]</sup>

Seminars and courses in several western universities examine the events. These include the University of Michigan Dearborn<sup>[101]</sup> and the University of New South Wales<sup>[102]</sup> which has a dedicated research unit. The events are also published in academic journals such as *Genocide Studies International*.<sup>[103]</sup>

### Political

Following an initiative of MPs of the so-called "patriotic" wing of the ruling PASOK party's parliamentary group and like-minded MPs of conservative New Democracy,<sup>[104]</sup> the Greek Parliament passed two laws on the fate of the Ottoman Greeks; the first in 1994 and the second in 1998. The decrees were published in the Greek Government Gazette on 8 March 1994 and 13 October 1998 respectively. The 1994 decree affirmed the genocide in the Pontus region of Asia Minor and designated 19 May (the day Mustafa Kemal landed in Samsun in 1919) a day of commemoration,<sup>[105]</sup> while the 1998 decree affirmed the genocide of Greeks in Asia Minor as a whole and designated 14 September a day of commemoration.<sup>[106]</sup> These laws were signed by the President of Greece but were not immediately ratified after political interventions. After leftist newspaper I Avgi initiated a campaign against the application of this law, the subject became subject of a political debate. The president of the left-ecologist Synaspismos party Nikos Konstantopoulos and historian Angelos Elefantis,<sup>[107]</sup> known for his books on the history of Greek communism, were two of the major figures of the political left who expressed their opposition to the decree. However, the non-parliamentary left-wing nationalist<sup>[108]</sup> intellectual and author George Karabelias bitterly criticized Elefantis and others opposing the recognition of genocide and called them "revisionist historians", accusing the Greek mainstream left of a "distorted ideological evolution". He said that for the Greek left 19 May is a "day of amnesia".<sup>[109]</sup>

In the late 2000s the Communist Party of Greece adopted the term "Genocide of the Greeks of Pontus" (Γενοκτονία Ποντίων) in its official newspaper Rizospastis and participates in memorial events.<sup>[110][111][112]</sup>

The Republic of Cyprus also officially recognizes the events as genocide.<sup>[113]</sup>

In response to the 1998 law, the Turkish government released a statement which claimed that describing the events as genocide was "without any historical basis". "We condemn and protest this resolution" a Turkish Foreign Ministry statement said. "With this resolution the Greek Parliament, which in fact has to apologize to the Turkish people for the large-scale destruction and massacres Greece perpetrated in Anatolia, not only sustains the traditional Greek policy of distorting history, but it also displays that the expansionist Greek mentality is still alive," the statement added.<sup>[114]</sup>

On 11 March 2010, Sweden's Riksdag passed a motion recognising "as an act of genocide the killing of Armenians, Assyrians/Syriacs/Chaldeans and Pontic Greeks in 1915".<sup>[115]</sup>

On 14 May 2013, the government of New South Wales was submitted a genocide recognition motion by Fred Nile of the Christian Democratic Party, and was later passed making it the fourth political entity to recognise the genocide.<sup>[116]</sup>

In March 2015, the National Assembly of Armenia unanimously adopted a resolution recognizing both the Greek and Assyrian genocides.<sup>[117]</sup>

In April 2015, the States General of the Netherlands and the Austrian Parliament passed resolutions recognizing the Greek and Assyrian genocides.<sup>[118][119]</sup>



Among the victims of the atrocities committed by the Turkish nationalist Army (1922–23) were hundreds of Christian clergy in Anatolia, such as metropolitan bishops (from left): Chrysostomos of Smyrna (lynched) Gregory of Kydonies (executed), Ambrosios of Moschonisia (buried alive).



Matthaios Kofidis, former member of the Ottoman Parliament, was among the several notables of Pontus, hanged by an "Ad hoc Court of Turkish Independence" in Amasya, in 1921.<sup>[92]</sup>

## Reasons for limited recognition

The United Nations, the European Parliament, and the Council of Europe have not made any related statements. According to Constantine Fotiadis, professor of Modern Greek History at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, some of the reasons for the lack of wider recognition and delay in seeking acknowledgement of these events are as follows:<sup>[120]</sup>

- In contrast to the Treaty of Sèvres, the superseding Treaty of Lausanne in 1923 dealt with these events by making no reference or mention, and thus sealed the end of the Asia Minor Catastrophe.
- A subsequent peace treaty (*Greco-Turkish Treaty of Friendship* in June 1930) between Greece and Turkey. Greece made several concessions to settle all open issues between the two countries in return for peace in the region.
- The Second World War, the Civil War, the Military junta and the political turmoil in Greece that followed, forced Greece to focus on its survival and other problems rather than seek recognition of these events.
- The political environment of the Cold War, in which Turkey and Greece were supposed to be allies – facing one common Communist enemy – not adversaries or competitors.

In his book *With Intent to Destroy: Reflections on Genocide*, Colin Tatz argue that Turkey denies the genocide so as not to jeopardize "its ninety-five-year-old dream of becoming the beacon of democracy in the Near East".<sup>[121]</sup>

In their book *Negotiating the Sacred: Blasphemy and Sacrilege in a Multicultural Society*, Elizabeth Burns Coleman and Kevin White present a list of reasons explaining Turkey's inability to admit the genocides committed by the Young Turks, writing:<sup>[122]</sup>

Turkish denialism of the genocide of 1.5 million Armenians is official, riven, driven, constant, rampant, and increasing each year since the events of 1915 to 1922. It is state-funded, with special departments and units in overseas missions whose sole purpose is to dilute, counter, minimise, trivialise and relativise every reference to the events which encompassed a genocide of Armenians, Pontian Greeks and Assyrian Christians in Asia Minor.

and propose the following reasons for the denial of the genocides by Turkey, quote:<sup>[122]</sup>

- A suppression of guilt and shame that a warrior nation, a ‘beacon of democracy’ as it saw itself in 1908 (and since), slaughtered several ethnic populations. Democracies, it is said, don’t commit genocide; ergo, Turkey couldn’t and didn’t do so.
- A cultural and social ethos of honour, a compelling and compulsive need to remove any blots on the national escutcheon.
- A chronic fear that admission will lead to massive claims for reparation and restitution.
- To overcome fears of social fragmentation in a society that is still very much a state in transition.
- A ‘logical’ belief that because the genocide was committed with impunity, so denial will also meet with neither opposition nor obloquy.
- An inner knowledge that the juggernaut denial industry has a momentum of its own and can’t be stopped even if they wanted it to stop.

## Memorials

Memorials commemorating the plight of Ottoman Greeks have been erected throughout Greece, as well as in a number of other countries including Germany, Canada, the United States and, most recently, Australia.<sup>[123]</sup>

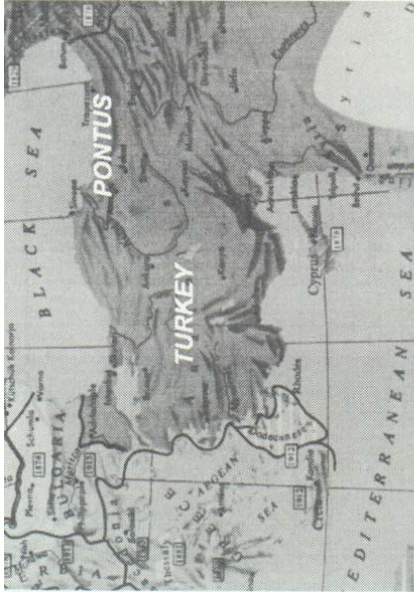
## See also

- Academic quotes on the Greek genocide
- Armenian Genocide
- Assyrian Genocide
- Genocide denial
- Greek refugees
- Istanbul Pogrom
- Human rights in Turkey
- The Twenty Classes
- Megali Idea
- Republic of Pontus
- Cappadocian Greeks
- Imbros

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- Matthew J. Gibney, Randall Hansen. (2005). *Immigration and Asylum: from 1900 to the Present, Volume 3*. ABC-CLIO. p. 377. ISBN 1-57607-796-9. "The total number of Christians who fled to Greece was probably in the region of 1.2 million with the main wave occurring in 1922 before the signing of the convention. According to the official records of the Mixed Commission set up to monitor the movements, the "Greeks" who were transferred after 1923 numbered 189,916 and the number of Muslims expelled to Turkey was 355,635 [Ladas 1932, 438-439; but using the same source Eddy 1931, 201 states that the post-1923 exchange involved 192,356 Greeks from Turkey and 354,647 Muslims from Greece]."
- Jones 2010, pp. 171–2 (<https://books.google.com/books?id=BqdVudSuTRIC&pg=PA172>): 'A resolution was placed before the IAGS membership to recognize the Greek and Assyrian/Chaldean components of the Ottoman genocide against Christians, alongside the Armenian strand of the genocide (which the IAGS has already formally acknowledged). The result, passed emphatically in December 2007 despite not inconsiderable opposition, was a resolution which I co-drafted, reading as follows:...'
  - "Resolution" (PDF). IAGS. 16 December 2007. Archived (PDF) from the original on 3 January 2014..
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# A Brief History of the Pontian Greek Genocide (1914- 1923)



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With the exception of the two figures and the five quotes, this pamphlet is based on the lecture, "Pontic Hellenism and the Asia Minor Disaster, 1908-1923" presented by Dr. H.J. Psomiades on May 19th, 2006, sponsored by the PontianGreek Society of Chicago "Xeniteas"

# A Brief History of the Pontian Greek Genocide (1914 - 1923)

## Who are the Pontian Greeks?

Pontus (Greek Pontos), an ancient Greek word for "sea", refers to the Black Sea and the surrounding coastal areas. The presence of Greeks in the area dates back to ancient times some 2000 years before the migration of Turkic people to this area in the 10th century A.D. Research suggests that in the period around 1000 B.C., the first trading journeys in this area took place, mainly in search of gold and other minerals. During the 8th Century B.C. Greeks from Miletus (Greek Miletos) colonized this area, establishing cities like Sinope, Samsun (Greek Amisos) and Trebizond or Trapezunt (Greek Trapezus). Pontus contributed great thinkers such as the philosopher Diogenes of Sinope and the geographer Strabo of Amasia.

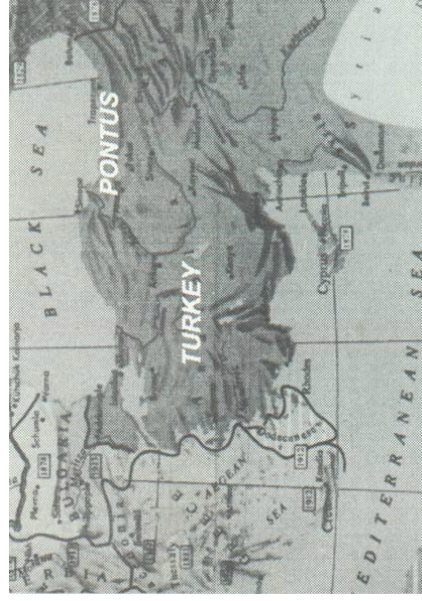


Figure 1. Map of Greece and Turkey, circa 1912

Following the death of Alexander the Great, the Greek city- states of Pontus and the Pontian hinterland formed the Kingdom of Pontus under the Mithridates family. The Kingdom was the most powerful in the eastern Mediterranean until its defeat by the Romans in 63 B.C.

With the advent of Christianity, in late Roman and early Byzantine times the great monasteries of Pontus were founded in the high mountains southeast of Trapezus, most notably the monastery of Panagia Soumela (Virgin Mary of Soumela) in 386 A.D. Pontus produced two of the greatest intellectuals of the Mediterranean world, Cardinal Bessarion, and George the Trapezuntine.

The fragmentation of the Byzantine Empire, as a result of the Latin conquest of Constantinople in 1204 by the Crusaders, led to the emergence of the Greek Empire of Trebizond under the great Byzantine dynasty, the Comnenus family. The Empire finally fell to the Ottoman Turks in 1461, some eight years after the fall of Constantinople, the capital of the Byzantine Empire, in 1453.

During the first two hundred years of Ottoman rule, the Pontian Greeks successfully resisted the extraordinary pressures to convert to Islam. Geographic, economic, and historical factors all combined to enable the Pontian Greeks to preserve their dynamic social cohesion, deeply rooted ethnic traditions, and distinctive Greek culture and dialect.

During the 17th and 18th centuries, approximately 250,000 Pontian Greeks were forced to convert to Islam. Although most Greeks remained in the Pontus, thousands migrated into areas of the Caucasus and northern shores of the Black Sea controlled by Russia. This movement into Russian territory which began in 1774 was encouraged by Russia, which preferred that this area be populated with fellow Christians. Pontian Greeks also fled there to escape Turkish oppression and persecution, particularly following the numerous Russian-Turkish wars in the nineteenth century, along the Caucasus, in which the Ottomans suffered one defeat after another. They took out their frustrations on the Pontian Greeks and the Armenians who lived in the border areas, in the Trebizond to Erzerum provinces.

Nevertheless, in an attempt to bring the Ottoman Empire into the world economy, new laws were introduced in the 19th century to modernize the empire. The lives of Ottoman subjects, including the Christian minorities were also improved by attempts to assert the control of the central government and to contain the oppressive rule of local Turkish despots. Unfortunately, the resulting social, religious and economic renaissance in the Christian communities ended during the beginning of the 20th Century.



## The Pontian Greek Genocide

In 1908, the Young Turks (Turkish nationalists) gained control of the government by revolting against Sultan Hamid. After the Ottoman Empire's defeat in the Balkan Wars of 1912—1913, the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), an ultra-nationalist group of Young Turks, took control of the government. Its goal was to achieve the Turkification of the Empire by eliminating ethnic Christian minorities such as the Armenians, Assyrians, and Pontian Greeks.

From *The Murder of a Nation* by Henry Morgenthau, American Ambassador to Turkey (1913-1916)

... *The Armenians are not the only subject people in Turkey which have suffered from this policy of making Turkey exclusively the country of the Turks. The story which I have told about the Armenians I could also tell with certain modifications about the Greeks and Syrians [Assyrians]. Indeed the Greeks were the first victims of this nationalizing idea ...*

With the commencement of World War I in 1914, Turkey called for general mobilization. Since the Christian men were not allowed to bear arms, they were sent to labor battalions in the interior of Turkey, which were essentially "battalions of death." Forced labor in the treacherous mountains and ravines, hunger, and exposure to severe weather conditions killed most of those forced to serve in these labor battalions. Some of those who survived were able to escape to join those Greeks in the mountains who took up arms to protect themselves and their families.

After eliminating a significant part of the male population, the Young Turk leaders and later Kemal Atatürk, proceeded to eliminate the rest of the Greek population including the elderly, women, and children. Their plan was to deport the Greek population to the interior and expose them to severe weather conditions, hunger, and illness. Censorship was used quite effectively to avoid headlines in the foreign press. After executing many prominent Greeks in the western Pontus, the Turks proceeded to deport a large part of the Greek population to the interior, Kurdistan, and as far as Syria

Documentary Evidence that Turkish Officials Ordered the Atrocities. Translated, it reads in part: "To the Commandant of the Central Brigade:

"I call your attention to the following:"

"There is nothing but death for the Greeks, who are without honor. As soon as the slightest sign is given you, destroy everything about your immediately. As for the women, stop at nothing. Do not take either honor or friendship into consideration when the moment of vengeance arrives!"

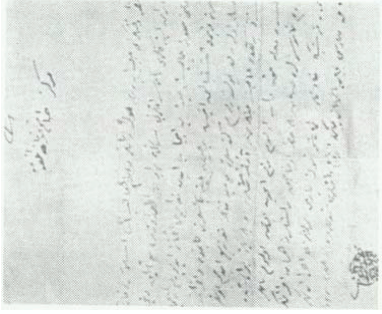


Figure 2. Documentary Evidence of the Genocide (from "The Great Betrayal" by E.H. Bierstadt)

Along the way, the deportees were robbed of money and clothes by mobs of Turkish and Kurdish peasants, and women and girls were raped by the armed escorts who were supposed to protect them. Hundreds of thousands of Greek men, women and children died as a result of these deportations and other atrocities.

From *The Blight of Asia*, by George Horton, U.S. Consul-General in the Near East, 1926:

*In January, 1916, the Greek deportations from the Black Sea began. These Greeks came through the city of Marsovan by thousands, walking for the most part the three days' journey through the snow and mud and slush of the winter weather. Thousands fell by the wayside from exhaustion and others came into the city of Marsovan in groups of fifty, one hundred and five hundred, always under escort of Turkish gendarmes. Next morning these poor refugees were started on the road and destruction by this treatment was even more radical than a straight massacre such as the Armenians suffered before. (p. 194)*

From a report by Stanley K. Hopkins of the Near East Relief, November 16, 1921: *After leaving Samsoun on my return trip to Harpoot I passed the old men of Samsoun, Greeks, who were being deported. Many of these men were feeble with age, but in spite of that they were being pressed forward at a rate of thirty miles a day and there was no transport available for those who were weak or ill. There was no food allowance for them and any food they could obtain had to be procured by money or sale of small articles that they could carry with them. On this trip I passed many corpses of Greeks lying by the roadside where they had died from exposure. Many of these were the corpses of women and girls with their faces toward the sky, covered with flies. (Genocide, 13, pp. 219-220)*

From Lloyd George, British Prime Minister, House of Commons (Parliament Debates):... *tens of thousands of (Greek) men, women and children were expelled and dying. It was clearly a deliberate extermination. "Extermination" is not my word. It is the word being used by the American mission.*

From The Memorandum by Mr. G.W. Rendel, of the Foreign Office, on Turkish Massacres and Persecutions of Minorities since the Armistice. March 20, 1922.

*"Serious persecutions in the Maridin area, affecting about 30,000 Christians were also reported by Sir P Cox. But the worst atrocities undoubtedly took place in the Pontic region against the Greek population of the coastal towns."*

By 1923, out of an approximate 700,000 Pontian Greeks who lived in Turkey at the beginning of World War I, as many as 350,000 were killed, and almost all the rest had been uprooted during the subsequent forced population exchange between Greece and Turkey. This was the end of one of the ancient Greek civilizations in Asia Minor.

As a consequence of the deliberate and systematic policy of Turkification of the Ottoman Empire, it is estimated that more than 2.75 million Armenians, Assyrians and Greeks were slaughtered outright or were victims of the "white death" of disease and starvation — a result of the routine process of deportations, slave labor, and death marches.