

World Council of Churches involvement in the efforts for the recognition of the Armenian Genocide

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The Executive Committee of the World Council of Churches (WCC) gathered in Armenia from June 8th to June 12th 2015, hosted by the Armenian Apostolic Church, Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin at the invitation of His Holiness Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of all Armenians, issued a statement on the centenary of the Armenian genocide. The statement was read by WCC moderator Dr. Agnes Aboum (Anglican Church of Kenya) at a public service of remembrance in Yerevan on 10 June and shared by WCC leadership in a meeting with the president of the Republic of Armenia Sezh Sargyan on the same day.

The text the statement mentions some of the “many other occasions” in which different WCC governing bodies or commissions called for recognition of the Armenian genocide and encourage WCC constituency to participate in future events related to the celebration of the Armenian genocide. It states also that the Executive Committee of WCC felt encouraged by in issuing this statement by His Holiness Pope Francis’ public recognition on 12 April 2015 of the mass killing of an estimated 1.5 million Armenians as genocide.

It is essential that this statement mentions, along with the Armenian genocide, also “genocidal acts against other – mostly Christian – communities of Aramean, Chaldean, Syrian, Assyrian and Greek descent, which have blighted history at the beginning of the 20th century.”

The statement ends with a call to the international community and to WCC’s member churches and to all people of faith and good will to “re-commit to the prevention of genocide and all crimes against humanity.”

WCC efforts for the recognition of the Armenian genocide

There is a long history of WCC involvement in the efforts for the recognition of the Armenian genocide. The Armenian Apostolic church became a member of WCC in 1962, when Armenia was part of the Soviet Union. Already in 1979, in a session of the UN Human Rights Commission, the WCC Commission of the Churches on International Affairs called for recognition of the Armenian genocide by the United Nations with reference to

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