

Media Release

Petition launched to include all Greeks in genocide recognitions.

By Aris Tsilfidis, 3 July 2017.

Over the past few decades, Greeks have made numerous attempts to recognize the genocide of native Greeks living in Ottoman Turkey between 1914-1923. More often than not, these recognitions have been assigned to a particular region (usually Pontus) and in the process, have excluded other Greeks from recognition and remembrance. A petition has just been created, which hopes to put an end to the act of excluding Greek victims from future genocide recognitions. The [petition](#) has already attracted over 500 signatures in 4 days.

Genocide is the ultimate act of exclusion. Subsequently it should be remembered in inclusive ways. While the reasons Greeks choose to seek recognition for one particular region and exclude other Greeks from recognition are complex, the fundamental act of excluding Greek Genocide victims from recognition needs to be addressed.

In 2007, the world's foremost experts on genocide, the *International Association of Genocide Scholars* [officially affirmed](#) the genocide of Greeks in Ottoman Turkey. The AIGS used the term 'Pontian and Anatolian' Greeks when describing the region/s in which Greeks were victims. Notwithstanding the fact that Pontus was a region within Anatolia, the recognition should have been a catalyst for including more Greeks in future recognitions. But it wasn't.

In 2009, the South Australian Lower House condemned only the genocide of Pontian Greeks in a [joint recognition](#) (along with Armenians and Syrian Orthodox victims), while in 2010, the Swedish Parliament also only [recognized](#) the genocide of Pontian Greeks. It had become obvious that Greeks were ignoring the decisions of genocide scholars and continuing with their policy of exclusion.

While research on the broader genocidal experience of Greeks has expanded, and while the Greek public is becoming more aware of the scope of the genocide, more needs to be done to raise awareness. But the problem of exclusion needs to be tackled. With that in mind, the *Greek Genocide Resource Center* has launched a petition urging all genocide advocates to sign. The petition makes the following demands:

- all future recognitions, pay respects to all the Greek victims of the genocide, using terminology that does not divide the Greek victims based on region, and
- all future recognitions refer to the Greek victims as 'Greeks' regardless of which region they were from.

For the sake of clarity and uniformity, the petition also asks, that:

- the genocide be referred to as a Greek Genocide, and strongly argues against giving the genocide multiple titles based on regions. A single title, used uniformly, is common practice when referring to a genocide, and is in line with other co-victims such as the Armenians and

Assyrians, who refer to their genocide as an *Armenian Genocide* and *Assyrian Genocide* respectively.

One of the targets of the petition, is Canadian Senator *Leo Housakos*. Senator *Housakos* will soon [present a motion](#) to the Canadian Senate seeking to only recognize the genocide of 353,000 Greek victims from Pontus. While the death toll of the Greek Genocide as a whole is approximately 1,000,000 Greeks, it is surprising that a Senator of Greek descent will exclude almost 700,000 Greeks from recognition and memory. *Housakos* has yet to make a statement regarding the reasons he has excluded so many Greeks from the motion.

Other decision makers of the petition include Pontic organizations in Greece and abroad.

While the path to recognition for Greeks has been largely one of exclusion, it should be noted that there have been some inclusive recognitions. For example in 2013, the New South Wales Legislative Assembly [recognized](#) the genocide of all Greek victims, regardless of region. While this recognition was impeccable in its wording, it has been the exception, rather than the norm.

Those who wish to sign the petition can do so at the [following link](#).