

**43 Australian-based experts in the Holocaust, genocide and human rights reaffirm the historical reality of the Armenian genocide and urge SBS to candidly report on it.**

As scholars and practitioners on Holocaust, genocide and human rights issues, we are seriously concerned by the Special Broadcasting Service's (SBS's) editorial policy on the Armenian genocide.

SBS reporters are instructed to refer to the event not as the Armenian genocide but as "the mass killing of Armenians, considered by many to have been a genocide, which Turkey denies".

In always coupling references to the Armenian genocide with Turkey's denial, SBS treats historians' findings and the views of deniers as if they had equal weight.

This is misguided and wrong.

Beginning in 1915, the Ottoman Government conducted a systematic genocide of its Armenian

citizens through direct killing, torture, rape, starvation and forced death marches.

The event is abundantly documented in the official records of the United States, France, Great Britain, Russia and Turkey's wartime allies Germany, Austria, and Hungary; in Ottoman courts-martial records; by the eyewitness accounts of relief workers and missionaries; in the testimony of survivors; and by decades of historical scholarship.

Raphael Lemkin, the jurist who coined the term 'genocide' and drafted the United Nations' Genocide Convention, developed the concept of the crime based partly on the Armenian experience.

The International Association of Genocide Scholars has unanimously reaffirmed that the mass murder of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire conformed to the provisions of the UN Genocide Convention.

A growing number of Turkish historians also acknowledge the Armenian genocide.

Yet SBS, citing no examples, justifies its editorial policy by stating that "many historians dispute whether it was a genocide".

Holocaust scholar Deborah Lipstadt – whose legal battle against Holocaust denier David Irving is portrayed in the film *Denial* – has written: "Denial of genocide – whether that of the Turks against the Armenians or the Nazis against the Jews – is not an act of historical reinterpretation... The deniers aim at convincing innocent third parties that there is 'another side of the story'... when there is no credible 'other side'."

*The New York Times*, *The Boston Globe*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Canadian Broadcasting Corporation*, *The Jerusalem Post* and *Haaretz* have heeded these words. They accept the Armenian genocide as fact and forthrightly report on it.

SBS should follow the lead of its international counterparts on the Armenian genocide. That means using no caveats or qualifiers in reporting on what is an indisputable historical fact.

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**Dr Michael Abrahams-Sprod**

Roth Lecturer in Israel, Jewish Civilisation and Holocaust Studies  
The University of Sydney

**Dr Avril Alba**

Senior Lecturer in Holocaust Studies and Jewish Civilisation  
The University of Sydney

**Vicken Babkenian**

Co-author, *Armenia, Australia and the Great War*

**Dr Jennifer Balint**

Senior Lecturer, School of Social and Political Sciences  
The University of Melbourne

**Professor Brian Burdekin AO**

Visiting Fellow, University of New South Wales  
Former Human Rights Commissioner

**Robert Cribb FAHA**

Professor of Asian History  
Australian National University

**Dr Judith Crispin**

Julfa Cemetery Digital Repatriation Project  
Australian Catholic University

**Joy Damousi FASSA FAHA**

Professor of History  
The University of Melbourne

**Dr Panayiotis Diamadis**

Associate, School of International Studies  
University of Technology, Sydney

**Dr Daniella Doron**

Senior Lecturer in Holocaust and Genocide Studies  
Monash University

**The Hon. John Dowd AO QC**

President, International Commission of Jurists Australian Section  
Former Justice, Supreme Court of New South Wales

**Professor Philip Dwyer**

Director, Centre for the History of Violence  
The University of Newcastle

**Professor the Hon. Gareth Evans AC QC**

Co-chair, Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect  
Former President, International Crisis Group  
Former Foreign Minister of Australia

**Associate Professor Benjamin Goldsmith**

Chief Investigator, Atrocity Forecasting Project  
The University of Sydney

**Winton Higgins**

Associate, School of International Studies  
University of Technology, Sydney

**Dr Cecilia Jacob**

Research Fellow, Department of International Relations  
Australian National University

**Associate Professor Hans-Lukas Kieser**

Australian Research Council Future Fellow  
The University of Newcastle

**Emeritus Professor Konrad Kwiet**

Resident Historian  
Sydney Jewish Museum

**Dr Wendy Lambourne**

Acting Chair, Department of Peace and Conflict Studies  
The University of Sydney

**Dr Ari Lander**

Education Officer  
Sydney Jewish Museum

**Dr Jan Laniecek**

Lecturer in Jewish and Modern European History  
University of New South Wales

**Dr Edwina Light**

Research Fellow, Sydney Health Ethics  
The University of Sydney

**Robert Manne FASSA**

Emeritus Professor of Politics and Vice-Chancellor's Fellow  
La Trobe University

**Nikki Marczak**

Co-editor, *Genocide Perspectives V*  
(forthcoming by UTS ePress)

**Dr Steve Mark AM**

Chair, International Commission of Jurists Australian Section  
Former President, Anti-Discrimination Board of NSW

**Dr Deborah Mayersen**

Research Fellow  
University of Wollongong

**Dr Eyal Mayroz**

Lecturer, Department of Peace and Conflict Studies  
The University of Sydney

**Dirk Moses**

Professor of Modern History  
The University of Sydney

**Dr Darren O'Brien**

Honorary Research Senior Fellow  
The University of Queensland

**Dr Melanie O'Brien**

Postdoctoral Research Fellow  
The University of Queensland

**Dr Paul O'Shea**

Author, *A Cross Too Heavy: Pope Pius XII and the Jews of Europe*

**Dr Sev Ozdowski AM**

President, Australian Council for Human Rights Education  
Former Human Rights Commissioner

**Dr Jadranka Petrovic**

Lecturer, Monash Business School  
Monash University

**Dr Annie Pohlman**

Lecturer, School of Languages and Cultures  
The University of Queensland

**Michael Robertson**

Clinical Associate Professor  
The University of Sydney

**Professor Lynette Russell FASSA**

Director, Monash Indigenous Studies Centre  
Monash University

**Emeritus Professor Suzanne Rutland**

Department of Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies  
The University of Sydney

**Thomas Schmutz**

PhD candidate, Centre for the History of Violence  
The University of Newcastle

**Dr Noah Shenker**

N. Milgrom and 6a Foundation  
Senior Lecturer in Holocaust and Genocide Studies  
Monash University

**Dr Kirril Shields**

Fellow, School of Communication and Arts  
The University of Queensland

**Professor Linda Shields**

Faculty of Science  
Charles Sturt University

**Peter Stanley FAHA**

Research Professor  
University of New South Wales Canberra

**Professor Colin Tatz AO**

Visiting Fellow, School of Politics and International Relations  
Australian National University

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