



PRESS RELEASE

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Canadian Museum of Human Rights and Zoryan Institute Reps Meet with Diaspora Minister

Yerevan—On March 20, representatives of the Zoryan Institute and the Canadian Museum of Human Rights (“CMHR”) met with the Republic of Armenia’s Minister of Diaspora to discuss the significance of the new museum being developed in Winnipeg in relation to the Armenian Genocide.

K.M. Greg Sarkissian, president of Zoryan, pointed out that the exhibits on the Armenian Genocide will be very significant, given their permanent nature and the impact of the CMHR in a country such as Canada,

which has officially recognized the Genocide of the Armenians by Ottoman Turkey. Minister Hranush Hakobyan shared some of her ministry’s recent publications on both the history and commemoration of the Armenian Genocide.



Minister Hakobyan took the opportunity of the visit to officially present to Mr. Sarkissian the Movses Khorenatsi Medal, which had been granted by Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan for the Zoryan Institute’s contributions to the study and preservation of Armenian identity in the Diaspora.

In accepting the honour on behalf of the Institute, Mr. Sarkissian mentioned Zoryan’s original scientific research and more than forty publications, and praised Canada especially, which “provides us the forum, the structures, the constitution, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, to be

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part of a collective ideology, collective ideal. Our relationship as citizens with each other is defined through a doctrine, through a written constitution that gives rights to every ethnic, religious, racial human being, irrespective of their colour, their beliefs, or their sexual belongings. In short, it is a country that truly upholds absolute human rights... And that charter of rights serves as a base which has given birth to the Canadian Museum for Human Rights. The new museum will be an educational centre to present to the world the true meaning of human rights... One of the worst kinds of human rights violations is genocide, and as all of you know, Raphael Lemkin, who defined genocide, did so with the Armenian Genocide very much in mind...

“On behalf of my Armenian colleagues in the Ministry, I'm sure you will all join me to thank Canada and you [Mr. Curle] for taking the time to come here and learn about our people, our culture, and our heritage, and hopefully present the Armenian Genocide appropriately in the context of the CMHR, to Canadian society and to the world at large.”

Dr. Clint Curle, Head of External Relations for the CMHR, added, “You know, it's almost 100 years since the Genocide began. If I look back thirty years ago in Canada, almost nobody knew about the Armenian Genocide, and almost nobody knew about Armenia. It was the forgotten genocide, and people didn't even have a concept of what a genocide was thirty years ago in Canada. I would say that the Zoryan Institute, in its decades of work, has changed this in Canada. I mean not only did they educate Canadians about the Armenian Genocide, but also about genocide in general and about human rights. They found a way to talk to Canadians and to tell them about the genocide and to approach it with a scientific point of view. And because of Zoryan's work over the decades, today there is a strong and growing awareness of the Genocide, our government acknowledges the Genocide, and we owe a debt of gratitude to the Zoryan Institute. The museum I work for is continuing to build on the strong foundation that was laid by the Zoryan Institute and other groups like this. I just want to thank you all. I feel very welcome and honoured to be in Armenia and to be talking about these important issues, such as human rights with you. On behalf of my museum, I would like to bring greetings to all of you. Thank you.”



During their visit, the CMHR and Zoryan officials visited historic sites, churches and museums, including the Madenataran and the Armenian Genocide Museum Institute. Upon his return home, Dr. Curle wrote the following in his blog:

“Last month, I travelled to Yerevan, Armenia, to meet with people from the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute (AGMI). They're working to raise greater awareness of a horrific genocide that saw the murder of 1.5 million people during the final years of the Ottoman Empire around 1915. Ongoing denial of this historic atrocity, waged in the name of racial and religious homogeneity, makes it a contemporary human-rights concern.

“When the CMHR opens next year, information about this atrocity will be included in its galleries. We are also working to establish formal ties of cooperation with the Museum in Yerevan that could help both institutions in our efforts to use awareness and dialogue as a way to promote enhanced human rights for Armenians and all of humanity.

“On my trip, I was accompanied and assisted by members of the Toronto-based Zoryan Institute of Canada, a group that supports scholarship and public awareness relating to issues of universal human rights, genocide, and diaspora-homeland relations.”

The Zoryan Institute is the parent organization of the International Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies, which runs an annual, accredited university program on the subject and is co-publisher of *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal* in partnership with the International Association of Genocide Scholars and the University of Toronto Press. It is the first non-profit, international center devoted to the research and documentation of contemporary issues with a focus on Genocide, Diaspora and Armenia. For more information please contact the Zoryan Institute by email zoryan@zoryaninstitute.org or telephone 416-250-9807.