

MEDIA RELEASE

ANC Australia, AUA Australia, AHC (NSW) release joint statement



SYDNEY: At the invitation of the Australian Hellenic Council (AHC NSW), the Armenian National Committee of Australia (ANC Australia) and the Assyrian Universal Alliance (AUA) held a three-way conference in Sydney to discuss genocide awareness in Australia.

The conference, which was held to address the significant shared concerns of the three public affairs organisations, brought about an atmosphere of cooperation on issues of human rights, genocide recognition and freedom of speech.

Executive Director Mr. Varant Meguerditchian, who led the ANC Australia delegation at the three-way meeting, stated that with the AUA and the AHC, ANC Australia had begun a process to build a coalition in opposition to genocide and its subsequent denial.

He said: "ANC Australia, the AHC and the AUA as representatives of those Australian communities who were subjected to genocide in the early part of the 20th century have a moral obligation to raise genocide awareness in the political and public spheres.

"By combining the collective will of the Armenian-Australian, Assyrian-Australian and Australian Hellenic communities we are presenting a united front in opposition to genocide denial in Australia."

AHC NSW Secretary Dr. Panayiotis Diamadis added: "Raising public awareness shall serve as the building block to recognition and condemnation of the first genocides of the 20th century."

The Armenian-Australian, Australian Hellenic and Assyrian-Australian communities represent a sizable portion of the Australian voting public. They see recognition of the Armenian Genocide, the Hellenic Genocide and the Assyrian Genocide as an issue of fundamental importance.

Mr. Hermiz Shahan, AUA Regional Secretary for Australia and New Zealand, stated that "our commitment to genocide awareness was all about influencing Australian government policy to bring an end to the cycle of genocide".

Based on the shared concerns of their respective communities, ANC Australia, AHC and AUA have released the following joint statement, outlining their agreement to focus on genocide recognition:

Whereby, Australia is signatory to the UN Genocide Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and has demonstrated leadership on international human rights issues; whereby, the people of Australia provided food, clothing and shelter to victims and survivors of the Armenian Genocide, the Hellenic Genocide and the Assyrian Genocide as part of an international humanitarian relief effort known as the Near East Relief; and whereby, throughout World War One, Australian servicemen witnessed the systematic annihilation of the Armenian, Hellenic and Assyrian peoples in the Ottoman Empire from 1915 - 1922; ANC Australia, the AHC and the AUA commit to their moral responsibility to seek recognition of the Armenian Genocide, Hellenic Genocide and Assyrian Genocide by the Federal Government of Australia as a measure aimed at preventing similar crimes against humanity from ever occurring again.

<http://www.anc.org.au/newsletter/91>