



ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆԻ ՀԱՆՐԱՊԵՏՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՊԱՏՎԻՐԱԿՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ
DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA
ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE

Statement

**On the Second Global Forum Against the Crime of Genocide and Aurora Prize
Award**

**delivered by Ambassador Arman Kirakossian at the 1098th Meeting of the OSCE
Permanent Council**

April 28, 2016

Mr. Chairman,

The Remembrance and Education of Genocide is an important part of the OSCE human dimension commitments and we would like to draw the attention of the Permanent Council to two events, Global forum against Genocide and Aurora prize award ceremony, which were held in Yerevan and got wide international attention and participation in the framework of the Armenian Genocide commemoration.

The Second Global Forum on the Crime of Genocide, was held in Yerevan on April 23-24. The statement of the President of the Republic of Armenia at the Forum was distributed in the OSCE.

The general heading of this year's forum was "Living Witnesses of Genocide". Participation of a number of survivors of genocides and other crimes against humanity in different parts of the world made the conference indeed a remarkable and at the same time inspiring event. Mr. Youk Chhang, survivor of Khmer Rouge terror and currently Executive Director of the Documentation Center of Cambodia, Nadia Murat, survivor of the Genocide of Yezidi people in Iraq, who endured torture and degrading treatment by ISIL Mr. Kabanda Aloys, survivor of Rwanda Genocide and currently the Administrator of the Ibuka Memory and Justice Association along with other participants shared their stories of suffering, struggle, gratitude and revival. The very presence of these people in itself bore the powerful message that genocide perpetrators never win.

The Forum brought together representatives of international organizations, genocide scholars, parliamentarians, academicians and representatives of civil society.

Mr. Chairman,

Last year when I addressed this distinguished audience I singled out gratitude and renewed faith in humanity as one of the main themes of the commemoration of the Centenary of the Armenian Genocide. I am pleased to underline that these strong feelings have been further evoked and materialized in an important humanitarian undertaking.

On behalf of the Armenian Genocide survivors a group of well-known intellectuals and philanthropists launched the Hundred Lives Initiative and Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity and as a gratitude to those who saved the sons and daughter of perishing nation regardless of difficult circumstances. The Aurora Prize will be awarded annually on April 24 in Yerevan. The very name of the prize was inspired by the Armenian Genocide survivor Aurora Mardigian, who actively participated in fundraising in the United States and thus had personal contribution in saving many women and children scattered in the Syrian desert in the immediate aftermath of massacres. The Aurora Prize Laureate is honored with a \$100,000 award. In addition, the winner will have the unique opportunity to continue the cycle of giving by selecting an organization that inspired their work to receive a \$1,000,000 grant.

First winner of the Aurora prize was Marguerite Barankitse, from Maison Shalom and REMA Hospital in Burundi, who saved tens of thousands lives and cared for orphans and refugees during the years of civil war in Burundi. When the war broke out, Barankitse, a Tutsi herself, tried to hide 72 of her closest Hutu neighbors to keep them safe from persecution. They were discovered and executed in front of her eyes. Following to this gruesome incident, she started her work saving and caring for children and refugees. She saved roughly 30,000 children and in 2008, she opened a hospital which has treated more than 80,000 patients to date.

The other three nominees were Dr. Tom Catena, from Mother of Mercy Hospital in the Nuba Mountains of Sudan, who and is responsible for serving over 500,000 people in the region; Ms Syeda Ghulam Fatima, the General Secretary of the Bonded Labor Liberation Front in Pakistan, which has liberated thousands of Pakistani workers, including approximately 21,000 children, who were forced to work for brick kiln owners in order to repay debts; and Father Bernard Kinvi, a Catholic priest in Bossemptele in the Central African Republic, who provided refuge and health services to those on both sides of the conflict in that country, saving hundreds of people from persecution and death.

The full information on the Global Forum and the Hundred Lives Initiative will be distributed by the Delegation of Armenia.

Mr. Chairperson,

Armenia has committed itself to the prevention of the crime of genocide and made it as a priority. The protection of the population which can be a subject of genocide is firmly embedded in the Armenian national security strategy.

The Global Forum against the Crime of Genocide has turned into an important platform of dialogue on the issues of genocide prevention, remembrance and education. We encourage the OSCE and its institutions to be more active in utilizing this platform in addressing the implementation of OSCE human dimension commitments.

Thank You.