

U.S. President Commemorates Armenians 'Massacred' by Ottomans

WASHINGTON (Press TV) – U.S. President Donald Trump has censured the killings of more than one million Armenians at the hands of Ottoman Turks over 100 years ago, however, stopping short of describing them as “genocide.”

In a statement issued on the 102nd anniversary of the massacre, Trump commemorated “one of the worst mass atrocities of the 20th century.”

“Beginning in 1915, one and a half million Armenians were deported, massacred, or marched to their deaths in the final years of the Ottoman Empire,” he said. “I join the Armenian community in America and around the world in mourning the loss of innocent lives and the suffering endured by so many.”

The remarks were made as thousands of Armenian-Americans had gathered to remember the “Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day”

at Times Square in New York City and other locations in major cities across the States, waving the tricolor flags of Armenia and paying homage to the victims.

“We must remember atrocities to prevent them from occurring again,” Trump noted. “We welcome the efforts of Turks and Armenians to acknowledge and reckon with painful history, which is a critical step toward building a foundation for a more just and tolerant future.”

April 24 marks the date when hundreds of Armenians were arrested in the then-Ottoman capital of Constantinople in 1915 for allegedly collaborating with the enemies of the Turks. A process of mass killings then began.

Trump’s language on Monday was similar to that of his predecessor, Barack Obama, and other U.S. administration heads who were concerned with upsetting Turkey



Thousands of members of the Armenian community march towards the Turkish Consulate on April 24, 2017 in Los Angeles, California.

as a U.S. ally in the Middle East.

The former U.S. president had promised to recognize the killings as genocide but failed to follow through during his eight-year tenure.

In reaction to the latest remarks by the businessman-turned-politician, the Turkish Foreign Ministry claimed that Trump’s comments on the remembrance day were “misinformation” and “false definitions.”

Bahrain Strips Dozens of Political Dissidents of Citizenship



This file photo shows a view of Bahrain’s Ministry of Justice, Islamic Affairs building in the capital Manama.

MANAMA (Dispatches) – Bahraini courts have revoked the nationality of dozens of people as part of the ruling Al Khalifah regime’s oppressive

measures and heavy-handed crackdown on political dissidents and pro-democracy campaigners in the tiny Persian Gulf kingdom.

The courts sentenced three defendants to life imprisonment, while the rest were slapped with between three and ten years in jail. The activists were all found guilty of “forming a terror cell and illegally possessing explosives,” Arabic-language Lualua television network reported.

The development came only two days after Bahrain’s Supreme Court of Appeal sentenced three defendants to 15 years and three others to 10 years behind bars.

The seventh defendant was slapped with three years in jail. They were all charged with “forming a terror cell and possessing explosives in the western village of Dar Kulaib.”

Thousands of anti-regime protesters have held numerous demonstrations in Bahrain on an almost daily basis ever since a popular uprising began in the country on February 14, 2011.

They are demanding that the Al Khalifah dynasty relinquish power and a just system representing all Bahrainis be established.

Manama has spared no effort in clamping down on dissent and rights activists. On March 14, 2011, troops from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates were deployed to Bahrain to assist the Manama government in its crackdown on peaceful protesters.

Scores of people have lost their lives and hundreds of others sustained injuries or got arrested as a result of Al Khalifah regime’s crackdown on anti-regime activists.

The Observances ...

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gates of paradise to open, and He commands the Tree of Tuba, whereat it spreads its branches all over the world. Thereat a herald of our Lord, Almighty and Glorious, calls out: “O servants of God! These are the branches of the Tree of Tuba! So catch hold of them so that they may lift you up toward paradise. And those are the branches of the Tree of Zaqqum! Beware of them! Let them not draw you toward hell!” The Prophet of Allah said, “By Him who sent me as a prophet with the truth! Whoever approaches one of the doors of goodness and piety on this day adheres to a branch of the Tree of Tuba, and is taken toward paradise. And whoever approaches one of the doors of evil on this day, is stuck to a branch of the Zaqqum Tree which draws him toward hell.”

“The Prophet of Allah then said, ‘Whoever performs supererogatory prayers on this day for the sake of God catches hold of one of its branches. Whoever fasts on this day clings to one of the branches. On this day whoever makes peace between a husband and wife, father and son, or between two of his relatives or neighbours, or between two strangers, clings to one of the branches. Whoever shows lenience toward his debtor in straits or forgoes part of the debt, is one who clings to its one of its branches. Also someone who on reviewing his accounts sees that he owes an old debt to someone who has lost hope of reclaiming it, and repays the debt, is one who clings to one of the branches. Whoever assumes charge of an orphan’s care on this day is one who clings to one of the branches. Whoever restrains a fool from compromising the honour of a faithful person is one who clings to one of the branches. Whoever recites the Qur’an or part of it therein is one who clings to one of the branches. Someone who remembers God and His blessings and gives thanks for them is one who clings to one of the branches. Someone who visits a sick person is one who clings to one of the branches. Someone who accompanies a funeral procession is one who clings to one of the branches. Someone who condoles with the bereaved victim of a tragedy on this day is one who clings to one of the branches. Someone who does an act of kindness for his parents is one who clings to one of the branches. Someone who obtains the satisfaction of his parents after they had been displeased with him earlier is one who clings to one of the branches. Similarly, someone who performs any of the various kinds of good on this day is one who hangs on to one of the branches of Tuba.’

“Then the Prophet of Allah added: By Him who sent me as a prophet with the truth! Whoever approaches one of the doors of evil and disobedience to God on this day, hangs on to one of the branches of the Tree of Zaqqum and is drawn toward hell.” Then he said, ‘By Him who sent me as a Prophet with the truth! Whoever is negligent of his obligatory prayers on this day and misses them is one who clings to one of its branches. Whoever misses a fast that was obligatory on him on this day is one who clings to one of its branches. Someone who is approached on this day by a weak and indigent person whose wretched condition he knows and he is able to change it without suffering any harm, and there is no one else who may help him and act in his stead, and were he to leave him to languish and perish and fail to give him a helping hand, then he is one who clings to one of the branches of the Zaqqum Tree. Whoever that does not accept the apology of someone who has done him a wrong and instead of keeping the punishment of the offender within the limits of his offense transgresses those limits, he is one who clings to one of the branches of the Zaqqum Tree. Whoever that creates ill feeling between a husband and wife, a father and son, two brothers, two relatives, two neighbours, two friends or two strangers is one who clings to one of its branches. Whoever presses his demand hardly and harshly against someone in a pinch, knowing his predicament, thus adding to his distress and affliction, is one who clings to one of the branches.’

“Whoever denies a debt that he owes and transgresses against his creditor forcing him to forgo his claim, such a one clings to one of the branches. Whoever mistreats an orphan, torments him or unjustly appropriates his property, is one who clings to one of the branches; whoever that compromises the honour of his brother-in-faith and prompts other people to do so, is the one who clings to one of the branches of the Tree. Whoever that engages in unlawful singing on this day that prompts sinful actions, is one who clings to one of the branches of the Zaqqum Tree; whoever that sits and recounts his ugly deeds in a confrontation or his wrongful actions against God’s servants and boasts about them, he is one who clings to one of that tree’s branches. Someone who has sick a neighbour and he does not pay him a visit due to making light of his rights, such a person is one who clings to one of the branches of the tree. Whoever that fails to take part in the funeral of his neighbour for not giving significance to him is one who clings to one of the branches. Whoever is undutiful toward his parents or one of them is one who clings to one of the branches. Also someone who has been undutiful toward his parents and in spite of being able to make them pleased with him again on this day, does not do so, in one who has caught hold of one of the branches. Similarly, whoever that commits any of the various kinds of evils on this day is one who clings to one of the branches of the Zaqqum Tree.”

U.S. ...

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will fight until equipment is withdrawn from the site and ask South Korea’s new government to reconsider,” Kim told Reuters by telephone.

A police official in the nearby town of Seongju said police had withdrawn from the area and were not aware of any injuries.

The United States and North Korea have been stepping up warnings to each other in recent weeks over North Korea’s development of nuclear weapons and missiles.

U.S. President Donald Trump has vowed to prevent North Korea from being able to hit the United States with a nuclear missile.

North Korea says it needs the weapons to defend itself and has vowed to strike the United States and its Asian allies at the first sign of any attack on it.

The United States is sending the USS Carl Vinson carrier strike group to waters off the Korean peninsula, where it will join the USS Michigan, a nuclear submarine that docked in South Korea on Tuesday. South Korea’s navy has said it will hold drills with the U.S. strike group.

North Korea’s foreign ministry denounced a scheduled UN Security Council meeting on Friday, chaired by U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, saying the United States was “not morally entitled” to force members states to impose sanctions on it.

“It is a wild dream for the U.S. to think of depriving the DPRK of its nuclear deterrent through military threat and sanctions. It is just like sweeping the sea with a broom,” the North’s KCNA cited a foreign ministry spokesman as saying.

DPRK stands for the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, the North’s official name.

China’s envoy on North Korea, Wu Dawei, met his Japanese counterpart, Kenji Kanasugi, for talks in Tokyo and they agreed that they would “respond firmly” to any further North Korean provocation, Japan’s foreign ministry said.

“We are against anything that might lead to war or chaos,” Wu said.

KCNA said earlier leader Kim Jong Un had supervised the country’s “largest-ever” live-fire drill to mark Tuesday’s 85th founding anniversary of its military, with more than 300 large-caliber, self-propelled artillery pieces on its east coast.

“The brave artillerymen mercilessly and satisfactorily hit

the targets and the gunshots were very correct, he said, adding that they showed well the volley of gunfire of our a-match-for-a-hundred artillery force giving merciless punishment to the hostile forces,” KCNA cited Kim as saying.

There had been fears North Korea would mark the anniversary with its sixth nuclear test or a long-range missile launch.

the Moscow conference that the U.S. missile strike was a gross violation of international law.

“In addition, Washington’s actions have created a threat to the lives of our soldiers, who are in Syria fighting terrorism,” Shoigu said.

Iran ...

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described the U.S. missile strike against the Syrian airfield as a strategic mistake.

Dehqan said the missile raid was against all international regulations.

He further highlighted Washington’s unconstructive role in the Middle East, saying the U.S. is trying to implement a new doctrine by “commercializing security.”

Pointing out to factors contributing to the current local and international imbalance and violence, Dehqan cited Trump’s volatility in word, attitude and decision-making as well as the U.S., Israel, Britain, and Saudi Arabia supporting and reinforcing Takfiri terrorist groups against regional governments.

He also warned that neither the U.S. nor any other country can attain its “political and expansionist” goals by backing war and terrorism.

Unless terrorism is vanquished in Syria and Iraq -- which hold the largest concentrations of Takfiris -- the terrorists would soon be targeting all their backers, including the U.S., Europe, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey “with the most violent acts,” he further cautioned.

Highlighting that the global security problems have emanated from the U.S. efforts to impose “a unilateral order,” Dehqan said the only way out of the situation was to bring about a multipolar international establishment, which negated both imperialism and any type of regional or global hegemony.

The Russian foreign minister also called for a professional and transparent investigation into the Idlib chemical incident.

“Provocations like those that occurred in Khan Shaykhoun on April 4 require a professional investigation under the auspices of the OPCW, on a geographically balanced basis, and such an investigation should be open and transparent,” Lavrov said.

Meanwhile, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu told

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Saudis...

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“The last thing the Middle East needs is an even more aggressive and expansionist Saudi Arabia. The regime and its allies have some of the worst human rights records in the world, and have spent the last two years waging an appalling and destructive war in Yemen.

“UK arms companies have been complicit in the destruction, and now UK PR companies are trying to whitewash it. No amount of spin can alleviate the humanitarian catastrophe or change the terrible reality facing the Yemeni people. No self-respecting company should be lining up to fuel and profit from war and oppression.”

The alliance has previously used U.S.-based lobbyists to secure the attendance of high-profile dignitaries at its conference in Riyadh in January, which was attended by former U.S. secretary of state John Kerry.

Husain Abdulla, executive director for Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain, told MEE: “Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and many other members of this coalition are masterful at diverting attention from their systematic human rights abuses. Their participation in the Islamic Military Alliance is a clear example of how they use the fight against terrorism to distract from abuse and repression.”

Burson-Marsteller, which boasts of its “impressive global reach”, previously worked directly for Saudi Arabia in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks in New York and Washington in 2001.

Working with Prince Bandar bin Sultan, the then-Saudi Arabian ambassador to the United States, it placed adverts in newspapers across the country disassociating

Saudi Arabia from the attackers, 15 of whom were Saudi nationals.

Saudi Arabia’s use of western PR firms predates the Yemen conflict, and there have been long-running concerns that Riyadh uses London and Washington-based PR firms to distract attention from its use of the death penalty.

Last year it emerged that a U.S. subsidiary of Publicis Groupe, the French media conglomerate that owns UK brands such as Saatchi & Saatchi, distributed an article in which the kingdom’s foreign minister Adel bin Ahmed Al-Jubeir implicitly attempted to justify the execution of 47 people.

The Newsweek article prompted allegations that one of the world’s largest advertising agencies was helping Saudi Arabia “whitewash” its record on human rights following the kingdom’s largest mass execution for more than 30 years.

The article – entitled “The Saudis Are Fighting Terrorism, Don’t Believe Otherwise” – was distributed by Qorvis MSLGroup, a subsidiary of Publicis Groupe that has been working with Saudi Arabia for more than a decade, The Independent newspaper reported.

Maya Foa, a director at London-based rights group Reprieve, told MEE: “It’s no secret that Saudi Arabia’s government has one of the worst human rights records in the world. In the last few years alone we’ve seen a soaring number of executions in the kingdom – including of juveniles who were sentenced to death for attending protests – while the use of torture to extract ‘confessions’ is routine. It’s deeply disturbing that PR firms are happy to help cover up these activities. Surely any responsible business would refuse to play a part in the whitewashing of gross abuses.”

The use of Qorvis MSL Group and Burson-Marsteller come after Saudi Arabia’s U.S. embassy launched the website Arabia Now in 2015. It was described in a press release as an “online hub for news related to the Kingdom”. The site carries positive articles and blogs about Saudi culture, its alleged fight against terrorism, and economic development.