



June 19, 2020

Aram Suren Hamparian  
Executive Director  
Armenian National Committee of America  
1711 N St NW  
Washington, DC 20036

Dear Mr. Hamparian,

Thank you for your letter of December 4, 2019, and your interest in the Library of Congress. You asked that the Library of Congress change the Library of Congress Subject Heading (<http://id.loc.gov/authorities/subjects/sh85007296>) from "Armenian massacres, 1915-1923" to "Armenian Genocide, 1915-1923."

I understand that your request is in response to the passage of H.Res.296 by the U.S. House of Representatives on October 29, 2019, as well as the passage of S.Res.150 by the US Senate on December 12, 2019. In both cases, Members of Congress voted for resolutions expressing that "it is the sense of [each body] that it is the policy of the United States government to commemorate the Armenian Genocide." In doing so, each body offered official Congressional recognition regarding the use of "genocide" versus "massacres."

Within a week of the Senate passage however, the State Department responded stating a different official US government policy: "The position of the Administration has not changed. Our views are reflected in the President's definitive statement on this issue from last April." The reference was to his April 24, 2019, statement on Armenian Remembrance Day where he acknowledged the atrocity differently. The President again made a similar statement on April 24, 2020.

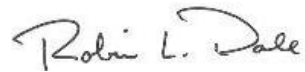
Deciding whether to declare the atrocities a genocide is an enormous foreign policy and diplomatic issue and is the purview of the president and the State Department, not the Library of Congress. The Library of Congress therefore defers to the president and the State Department on the terminology and refrains from using the word genocide in the official subject heading.

Rest assured, while the current Library of Congress subject heading for the event is **Armenian massacres, 1915-1923** there is also a *see* reference from *Armenian genocide, 1915-1923*. This allows library users to search under that phrase to find content under the official heading.

Therefore, the word genocide is present in LCSH, but is not part of the official heading. If the State Department and the president were to reverse course and declare the atrocities a genocide, then the Library of Congress would also consider a change to the official heading.

Thank you again for your interest in the Library of Congress. I hope this information is helpful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robin L. Dale". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'R'.

Robin L. Dale  
Associate Librarian for Library Services