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## Armenian National Committee of America

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

March 28, 2013

The Honorable John Kerry  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street N.W.  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Kerry:

I am writing to invite you and your Department of State colleagues to the annual Armenian Genocide commemoration on Capitol Hill, on Wednesday, April 24th from 6:00 to 8:00 pm in Room 902 of the Hart Senate Office Building.

As you may know, senior Administration officials, including those from the National Security Council and the State Department, frequently participated in Armenian Genocide Observances as recently as the late 1990s. Unfortunately, we have, by all accounts, witnessed a sharp departure from this tradition, even as we have seen increased participation by Administration representatives in programs hosted by organizations, both foreign and domestic, that actively and openly deny this atrocity against all humanity. Among these organizations are the Assembly of Turkish American Associations, Turkic American Alliance, American Turkish Council and others who join with Ankara in seeking to enforce a gag-rule on American condemnation of a still unpunished crime that continues to hold profound moral and material meaning for Armenia, Turkey, the United States, and the entire international community.

Aside from a handful of U.S. officials silently, sometimes even unofficially, visiting the Armenian Genocide Memorial in Yerevan, it would seem that, over the past decade and a half, senior U.S. officials have not paid tribute to the victims of this crime at an Armenian Genocide observance organized by U.S. citizens, here on American soil. This includes, of course, the annual Congressional observances that you have personally addressed and that have been attended, in aggregate, by hundreds of U.S. legislators. In addition, we have not, despite our inquiries to the Department, been informed of even one instance, in which the U.S. Embassy in Ankara has been officially represented at Armenian Genocide observances organized, at great personal risk, by righteous Turks within Turkey.

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We are deeply troubled by this retreat and are distressed that our government's pattern of deference to the irrational and immoral foreign sensitivities of a genocide-denying state is clearly at the expense of our core national interests and values. We turn to you to start your tenure as Secretary in the right direction on this score by personally participating, along with your Obama Administration colleagues, in the upcoming April 24th Armenian Genocide observance on Capitol Hill and at other prominent commemorative programs in California, New York, and across America.

We raise this issue with you in the spirit of the letter we sent you earlier this year congratulating you on your swearing-in as Secretary of State and noting how very pleased we were to see the Department of State being led by someone with your long and distinguished record of leadership on U.S. recognition of the Armenian Genocide. It was in this same context of shared values that we called upon you to invite the broad-based collective Armenian American leadership to a pre-April 24th meeting, that we continue to offer you our help in facilitating a continued dialogue with our community, and that we ask you to urge President Obama to honor his as yet unfulfilled pledge to recognize the Armenian Genocide.

Thank you for your consideration of our invitation and for your attention to our concerns.

Sincerely,



Kenneth V. Hachikian  
Chairman

cc: Members of the U.S. Congress