

From: [redacted]
Sent: 13 September 2013 10:50
To: Kathy Leach
Cc: [redacted]
Subject: Armenia and WW1 Centenary

Kathy

Many thanks for this. We have fed in thoughts on [redacted] submission – as have many others – and I understand that it continues to be a work in progress [redacted]

We appreciate the sensitivities that the First World War Centenary has for Armenia and understand the need to tread very carefully. [redacted]

From: Kathy Leach
Sent: 08 September 2013 14:11
To: [redacted]
Cc: [redacted]
Subject: Armenia and WW1 Centenary

[redacted]

As you may already be aware, for Armenia there is also a seminal centenary approaching which is inextricably linked with WWI – this is the anniversary of the massacres, deportations and other crimes by the Ottoman Empire towards the Armenian population of Eastern Anatolia, during which some 1-1.5m Armenians died. For the past fifty years, the survivors have campaigned for this tragedy to be recognised by the world as an act of genocide [redacted]

The UK government has had a policy of not using the term genocide (in common with other tragedies which have not been characterised as ‘genocide’ by a judgement in a competent court) – and this has also led to a policy of Ministers refusing to go to commemorative events. More detail in response to your specific questions below – but you should also know that [redacted] in the South Caucasus team is currently in the process of writing a submission about what our policy to recognition and commemoration might be.

I. Is your host planning to mark the Centenary?

No evidence that the Centenary of the start of WWI will be commemorated particularly, except insofar as it is the beginning of the process which led to the start of the massacres.

II. What are their objectives?

The key objective will be to remind the world of the scale of the tragedy and to press for countries at the highest level to recognise 1915 as a genocide against the Armenian population.

II. What are the key dates from their perspective? Are there any other historical anniversaries that may have a bearing on the Commemorations?

Genocide Memorial day – an annual commemoration - has long been set as 24 April. This is because 24 April 1915 was the day that hundreds of Armenian intellectuals were arrested and subsequently executed. [redacted]

III. In terms of bilateral relationship and UK priorities, (a) what are the key opportunities? And (b) the risks?

The UK has been characterised by human rights groups and the worldwide Armenian diaspora as a 'genocide denier'. This has not so far affected the bilateral relationship with Armenia – we are not the only country which has a policy of non-recognition, although the number of European countries who have passed a parliamentary resolution has grown considerably in the past 20 years. In the centenary year, the world-wide campaign and media materials can be expected to have considerable media impact, and there is a strong likelihood that other countries [redacted] will recognise the events as genocide.

[redacted]

Being clear about our understanding of the nature of the events in 1915 - and taking part in commemorative events – would go some way to mitigating the impression that we deny the scale of the tragedy [redacted]

IV. What Embassy-led events or activities are you contemplating in support of the foreign policy priorities, and in support of the themes of remembrance, education, youth and partnership?

[redacted]

- V. For events and activity, please estimate costs and in which FY they might fall, and indicate where this might be shared with your host, others (including other Embassies) or sponsored. For events and activity planned for FY 14-15, it would be most helpful if you could complete the attached proforma, listing projects in priority order.

Too early to tell.

VI. Are there any events planned in your host country to which senior visitors might be invited and which the First World War is not already aware of? Who would you be bidding for (Royal and ministerial level)?

There will be a major commemorative event in Yerevan on and around 24 April 2015. It is possible that Armenia will issue an invitation to all heads of state and religious leaders (e.g. Archbishop of Canterbury).

VIII. Are there any known UK events which your hosts should attend, including the events listed in the national programme? Who should we be bidding for?

[redacted]

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