

SENATE RESOLUTION 152

By Dickerson

A RESOLUTION to recognize April 2020 as Genocide Prevention and Awareness Month.

WHEREAS, the goal of Genocide Prevention and Awareness Month is to educate the public about the history of previous and contemporary genocides; to advocate against future genocides; to focus attention on the specter of genocide so that policies, strategies, and programs geared toward combating the evils of genocide and mass atrocities can be developed; and to commemorate the victims of genocide; and

WHEREAS, during World War II, a Polish lawyer of Jewish descent, Raphael Lemkin, coined the term "genocide" to describe the coordinated plan of actions aimed at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of certain groups with the aim of annihilating a group itself by disintegrating a group's social institutions, culture, language, national or ethnic identities, religion, and economic existence while also destroying the personal security, liberty, health, and dignity, as well as the lives, of individuals belonging to the group; and

WHEREAS, throughout history, numerous genocides originated or stemmed from events that occurred in April, and as a result, many institutions around the world have designated April to be a month of genocide awareness and prevention; and

WHEREAS, when coining the term "genocide," Raphael Lemkin was moved to investigate the assimilation, deportation, and near eradication of the Armenian population and other Christian communities, beginning in April 1915; and

WHEREAS, in April 1933, the Nazis issued a decree preparing the way for the "Final Solution," defining non-Aryans as "anyone descended from non-Aryan, especially Jewish parents or grandparents"; and

WHEREAS, from 1932 to 1933, the Holodomor, an artificial famine, was imposed by Stalin's regime on Soviet Ukraine and killed up to eight million individuals; and

WHEREAS, in September 1941, possibly the largest massacre during the Holocaust, remembered as Babi Yar, took place in Kiev, Ukraine, killing nearly 34,000 Jews in only two days; and

WHEREAS, in 1975, Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge took power in Cambodia, conducting widespread killings of people belonging to specific groups, as well as an involuntary relocation of all city dwellers to the countryside for forced labor, resulting in famine, turning the countryside into a killing field, and causing the deaths of two million people; and

WHEREAS, the 1992-1995 siege of Sarajevo, Srebrenica, and other cities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, ultimately led to the deaths of more than 200,000 Bosniaks, or Bosnian Muslims; and

WHEREAS, the Al-Anfal Campaign (1984-1988), under the leadership of Saddam Hussein, sought to destroy and depopulate the Kurdistan region in northern Iraq and notoriously used chemical weapons to that end, causing the deaths of over 180,000 Kurds and others and creating millions of refugees and internally displaced persons; and

WHEREAS, in April 1994, 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus were slayed by the Interahamwe in Rwanda over a period of three months; and

WHEREAS, in April 2003, the displacement and killing of Darfurians was begun by the government of Sudan and led to hundreds of thousands of deaths and the displacement of millions, which genocide continues unabated to this day; and

WHEREAS, DAESH, the so-called Islamic State, has forcefully caused the civilian population of the Ezidi-Kurdish religious minority in Iraq and Syria, beginning in 2014 through the present day, to flee from their ancestral towns, villages, and holy sites as a result of forced conversion, killing, kidnapping, and enslaving of their population; according to their records, this is the seventy-fourth genocide throughout that population's history; and

WHEREAS, the Genocide Prevention Task Force released its report in December 2008 in order to spotlight genocide prevention as a national priority; and

WHEREAS, in 2011, the President of the United States declared the prevention of mass atrocities and genocide to be a "core national security interest and core moral responsibility" of the United States and ordered the creation of the Atrocities Prevention Board in 2012; and

WHEREAS, Tennesseans are a diverse population of racial, ethnic, national, and religious groups, and there are victims of genocide and subsequent generations who reside in Tennessee communities; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that we recognize the month of April 2020 as Genocide Prevention and Awareness Month in Tennessee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.