[Armenian Genocide Commemoration Day – April 24, 2010]

Resolution declaring April 24, 2010 As Armenian Genocide Commemoration Day in San Francisco.

WHEREAS, The Armenian people, living in their 3,000 year historic homeland in eastern Asia Minor and throughout the Ottoman Empire, were subjected to severe persecution and brutal injustice by the government of the Ottoman Empire before and after the turn of the twentieth century, including widespread massacres, usurpation of land and property, and acts of wanton destruction during the period from 1894 to 1896, and again in 1909; and

WHEREAS, The horrible experience of the Armenians at the hands of the Ottoman Turkish government culminated in 1915 in what is known by historians as the first genocide of the twentieth century; and

WHEREAS, The Armenian Genocide began with the arrest, exile, and murder of hundreds of Armenian intellectuals, and political, religious, and business leaders, starting on April 24, 1915; and

WHEREAS, The Ottoman authorities planned and executed the unspeakable atrocities committed against the Armenian people from 1915 through 1923, which included the torture, starvation, and murder of 1,500,000 Armenians, death marches into the Syrian desert, the forced exile of more than 500,000 innocent people, and the loss of the traditional Armenian homelands; and

WHEREAS, The United States National Archives and Record Administration and the official archives of other countries hold extensive and thorough documentation on the Armenian Genocide; and

WHEREAS, The Honorable Henry Morgenthau, United States Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire from 1913 to 1916, organized and led protests by officials of many countries, among them the allies of the Ottoman Empire, against the Armenian Genocide; and
WHEREAS, Ambassador Morgenthau explicitly described to the United States Department of State the policy of the government of the Ottoman Empire as 'a campaign of race extermination,' and was instructed on July 16, 1915, by United States Secretary of State Robert Lansing that the 'Department approves your procedure... to stop Armenian persecution'; and

WHEREAS, Leading news agencies of the time documented the atrocities being committed against the Armenians; and

WHEREAS, Raphael Lemkin, who coined the term 'genocide' in 1944, and who was the earliest proponent of the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide, invoked the Armenian case as a definitive example of genocide in the 20th century; and

WHEREAS, The International Association of Genocide Scholars has repeatedly affirmed that the massacres of Armenians ordered by the Young Turk government constitute genocide; and

WHEREAS, The Republic of Turkey unjustifiably and adamantly denies the occurrence of this crime against humanity while actively continuing to remove traces of Armenian existence, including the destruction of cultural heritage, to this day; and

WHEREAS, The Republic of Turkey suppresses freedom of speech on the matter of the Armenian Genocide and prosecutes its citizens under Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code for statements related to the Armenian Genocide, including Nobel Laureate Orhan Pamuk and Hrant Dink, an Armenian newspaper editor, who was assassinated as a result of these prosecutions; and

WHEREAS, The passage of nine decades and the fact that few survivors remain who serve as reminders of indescribable brutality and torment, compel a sense of urgency in efforts to solidify recognition, reaffirmation and justice of historical truth; and

WHEREAS, By honoring the survivors and consistently remembering and condemning the atrocities committed against the Armenian people as well as the persecution of the Assyrian and Greek populations of the Ottoman Empire, we guard against repetition of the crime of genocide; and
WHEREAS, California has become home to the largest and most active population of Armenians in the United States, and those citizens have enriched our state through leadership in the fields of academia, medicine, business, agriculture, government, and the arts and are proud and patriotic practitioners of American citizenship; and

WHEREAS, San Francisco Armenian-Americans are predominantly descendants of the few remaining refugees, who witnessed and survived the brutal murder of their families and the destruction of their homes and institutions, and confiscation of all their properties, and

WHEREAS, Those Armenian Genocide survivors who arrived in San Francisco and reestablished themselves, built a thriving community that has created churches, civic and charitable organizations, and a school, and have become an integral part of the dynamic culture of San Francisco, and

WHEREAS, San Francisco is proud to join the Armenian-American community in its commemoration of the 95th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide in an effort to educate others about the tragic loss of life, land, and human rights of the Armenian people and the crime of genocide committed against them; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the San Francisco Board of Supervisors does hereby declare April 24, 2010 as Armenian Genocide Commemoration Day in the City and County of San Francisco; and, be it,

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the San Francisco Board of Supervisors will send a letter to San Francisco’s elected representatives in the House of Representatives and Senate urging the United States Congress and President Barack H. Obama to give just recognition of the Armenian Genocide.
Resolution declaring April 24, 2010, as Armenian Genocide Commemoration Day in San Francisco.

April 20, 2010 Board of Supervisors - ADOPTED

Ayes: 10 - Alioto-Pier, Avalos, Campos, Chiu, Chu, Daly, Dufty, Elsbernd, Mar and Mirkarimi
Excused: 1 - Maxwell

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED on 4/20/2010 by the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco.

Angela Calvillo
Clerk of the Board

Mayor Gavin Newsom

Date Approved: 4-30-10