

AGMI to delve deeper into Armenian Genocide, other genocides



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INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

Every year, on April 24, Armenians all around the world commemorate the martyrs of the "Armenian Genocide" (in Armenian: Medz Yeghern, Armenocid), which took place in the Ottoman Empire at the beginning of the 20th century. The memorial to the victims of the Armenian Genocide has been raised on the Tsitsernakaberd hill in Yerevan on 1965. The Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute (AGMI) was established next to the memorial complex in 1995, the aim of which was to collect, process, publish, preserve, and exhibit documents, photos, and literature related to the Genocide. The focus of the AGMI is also the study of other genocides that have taken place throughout the history of mankind and are still taking place today, which is no less important from the point of view of preventing such new crimes. We conducted an exclusive interview with Edita Gzoyan, Director of the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute, to understand the activities of the center, the directions in which studies are currently carried out, etc.

HARUTYUNYAN: At what stage are the implementation of the AGMI goals, which were set at the time of its foundation?

GZOYAN: In 1995, on the 80th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, the AGMI began to function as a union of two sub-structures with equal status: museum and institute. Today, almost 30 years later, the AGMI has a fairly extensive collection, formed through collecting works, donations from individuals, and purchases. We present some of the materials through exhibitions to the visitors of the Armenian Genocide Museum. To this day, this process continues. The descendants of many survivors still have very valuable materials related to the Armenian Genocide.

Today, the AGMI, first of all, continues the full study of the Armenian Genocide, delving into the research of individual micro-stories and narrow topics. The anti-Armenian aggression, violence, and genocidal acts, however, unfortunately, continue until today. Hence, the AGMI has set a task to collect, process, research, publish, preserve, and exhibit facts, documents, photos, and testimonies related to the violence that took place in Nagorno-Karabakh, Nakhichevan, as well as in the Armenian-inhabited areas of Azerbaijan. In this context, the documentation and study of violence, ethnic cleansing, and genocidal acts in Nagorno-Karabakh is particularly important. One of our main goals is to spread the truth through foreign language publications. One full issue of the AGMI International Journal of Armenian Genocide Studies in English (Vol. 7, No. 2, 2022) is dedicated to the Nagorno-Karabakh, and we have articles on Nagorno-Karabakh in the last issue of the journal, too.

Researching and exhibiting other genocides throughout human history is also a constant focus of AGMI. The activities of the AGMI are generally aimed at raising awareness of the topic of



genocide in scientific and public circles, as well as preventing further genocides.

Is the AGMI recognized outside Armenia within the region and the world?

The AGMI is still the world's only museum-institute dedicated to the Armenian Genocide. It also cooperates with various Armenian studies and Genocide studies centers, as well as other institutions in the field.

The AGMI regularly organizes international conferences, gathering under its roof leading specialists in the field of genocide studies from four corners of the world. Our researchers participate in important conferences in the field as well. All of this is important for presenting the views of the Armenian school of genocide studies in the international arena.

Tens of thousands of visitors come to the museum every year, mostly from official foreign delegations, and their number is increasing year by year.

The Armenian Genocide is the second most studied genocide in the world. Could you please explain the directions through which the AGMI conducts its current studies and, in your opinion, what are the most valuable works of the AGMI in recent years?

Various interdisciplinary research works related to the Armenian Genocide are carried out in the AGMI, which are published in local and international journals and

books. The AGMI publishes two journals: one in Armenian and the other in English. For AGMI researchers, the Armenian journal remains the main platform for publicizing their research. We are taking the International Journal of Armenian Genocide Studies in English on the path of globalization.

Importantly, the study of large and small archives of different countries has been initiated, which will contribute to the implementation of new, more in-depth research.

Back in 2019, the project of publishing the memoirs kept in the AGMI were initiated. As a result, more than ten memoirs have already been published in Armenian, English, Russian, and French.

Among the books published in recent years, I would like to point out the monographs of our senior researcher, Robert Tatoyan, titled "The Armenian Population of the Pitis Province of Western Armenia on the Eve of the Medz Yeghern" and "The Number of Cilician Armenians on the Eve of the Armenian Genocide", as well as the collective monograph "Turkification of Armenian Children during the Armenian Genocide" published under my co-authorship with my colleagues Regina Galustyan, Shushan Khachatryan, and Elna Mirzoyan, with an introduction by Narine Margaryan.

I should note, that besides the works of our researchers, we also publish the works of other genocide scholars.

This year is the 109th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. What events does the AGMI plan to organize?

This year, we have already managed to organize two temporary exhibitions dedicated to the two months of Francophonie. The exhibitions titled "Pro Armenia, For You, Armenia" and "The Armenian Genocide in the Works of French-Armenian Artists" present the humanitarian efforts of France and the French to save the Armenian population of the Ottoman Empire from the Hamidian po-



In this photo, Armenian refugees are seen on the deck of a French cruiser that rescued them in 1915 during the massacre of the Armenian populations in the Ottoman Empire. To this day, the Turkish state denies that a systematic annihilation ever occurred.
● GETTY IMAGES



The Armenian Genocide Museum
● armradio.am

groms to the Armenian Genocide, as well as the works of five famous French-Armenian artists: Levon Tyutyunjian, Zareh Mutafyan, Zhansem (Hovhannes Semerdjian), Asilva (Silva Aragelyan), and Jean-Pierre Seferian. All mentioned artists are Armenian Genocide survivors or descendants of survivors, whose works reflect shades of the national pain. The opening of our main temporary exhibition is expected ahead of April 24, which, this year, is dedicated to the Armenian woman and is entitled "Armenian Woman as a Genocide Victim and Hero". In September, we are planning an exhibition on the theme of Nagorno-Karabakh.

In October, an international conference on "The International Recognition of the Armenian Genocide: Memorial, Political, and Geopolitical stakes of a Decades-Long Unfinished Struggle" will be organized in cooperation with the MIMMOC (Mémoires, Identités, Marginalités dans le Monde Occidental Contemporain) [in English: Memories, Identities, Marginalities in the Contemporary Western World] laboratory at the University of Poitiers (France). Besides this, AGMI will also implement educational programs.



The Armenian Genocide Monument in Yerevan
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