



The Armenian Genocide

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Why in News

Recently, the **US President** officially **recognised the mass killings of Armenians by Ottoman Turks in 1915-16 as an act of genocide.**

The Armenian diaspora marks **24th April** as **Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day.**

Key Points

- **Genocide (Meaning):**
 - According to **Article II of the United Nations (UN) Convention on Genocide of December 1948**, genocide has been described as **carrying out acts intended “to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group”**.
 - **Raphael Lemkin**, the Polish lawyer, **coined the term “genocide” in 1943.**

- **Armenian Genocide:**

- The Armenian Genocide is **called the first genocide of the 20th century.**
- It refers to the **systematic annihilation of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire from 1915 to 1917.**
- After the **First World War** broke out in **November 1914**, the Ottoman Turks participated in the war, siding with Germany and the Austro-Hungarian empire.
- The Ottoman Turks **believed the Armenians would side with Russia** in the war. This resulted in the **Ottoman Turks engaging in a mass-removal campaign of Armenians from the border areas along the Eastern Front.**
- On **24th April, 1915**, Ottoman Turkish government officials **arrested and executed thousands of Armenian intellectuals.** It was the **start of the Armenian Genocide.**
- **Armenian families**, including small children, were forced to walk for days without food, water and shelter in the deserts of Syria and Arabia.
- According to estimates, **approximately 1.5 million Armenians died** during the genocide, either in massacres and in killings, or from ill treatment, abuse and starvation.



- **Significance of this Recognition:**

The acknowledgement by the US government will have **little legal impact on Turkey**, other than becoming a cause for embarrassment for the country and **giving other countries the impetus to also acknowledge the genocide.**

According to the Armenian National Institute, **30 countries officially recognise the Armenian Genocide.**

- **Turkey's Response:**

- Such moves would **only set back the already strained relationship between US and Turkey**, both of whom are **North Atlantic Treaty Organization allies**.

Ties between the US and Turkey have been strained over **a range of issues** that include Turkey's purchase of Russian **S-400** defence systems, foreign policy differences with regard to Syria, human rights and other intersecting legal issues.

- Turkey has **acknowledged that atrocities were committed against Armenians, but denies it was a genocide** (which comes with legal implications) and challenges the estimates that 1.5 million were killed.

- **India's Stand:**

India, that has **not formally recognised the Armenian Genocide** has primarily adopted this stance **in the interests of its wider foreign policy decisions and geo-political interests in the region**.

- India **does not have any domestic law on genocide**, even though it **has ratified the United Nations Convention on Genocide**.
- This was even observed by the Delhi High Court in ***State v. Sajjan Kumar*** (2018). The case **concerned the mass killing of Sikhs during the anti-Sikh riots in 1984 in Delhi** — and throughout the country.

- Other Related News to Armenia:

- **Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict:**

- Recently, Russia has brokered a new peace deal between **Armenia and Azerbaijan**. Both countries have been in **a military conflict over the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh** in the South Caucasus.
- Nagorno-Karabakh, the centre of the conflict, is located within Azerbaijan but is populated, mostly, by those of Armenian ethnicity (and mostly Christian compared to the Shia Muslim majority Azerbaijan).

Source: TH