



DO NOT STAND IDLY BY

SAVE
DARFUR

April 24, 2009

Dear Member of Congress:

We are not military people. Nor are we politicians. We are men and women of conscience, and together we ask our government to recognize what we know as true: that 1.5 million Armenians were systematically slaughtered in a government-sponsored campaign of genocide against them.

As Jews, a community with first-hand knowledge and experience of the ravages of genocide, we have a particular moral obligation to remember. My ancestors did not cry out "Never again" for their people alone. They were not that small and not that parochial. Never again means that we, all of us, will not turn a blind eye to anyone of any race, any religion or any ethnicity that experienced the unspeakable suffering of genocide and genocidal threats.

As a matter of conscience, this recognition of suffering, of devastation, of world callousness must be publicly known. It must be understood not only for the sake of history, but for our sense of the future. If amnesia takes hold of our past, it will overwhelm us in the future. Concerns about communal and national relationships during World War II kept faith and world leaders from acknowledging that a Holocaust was occurring in Europe. To repeat this historical injustice now is not in the best interest of the United States and the world community. In fact, it is tantamount to continued denial.

What is at stake here is not semantics, but the moral stature of the US. For the last five years the US has led the world in action to end genocide in Darfur. Let us not now, and not ever, allow ourselves to be bystanders; not in the face of ongoing atrocities in Darfur, and not in the face of the consistent and irresponsible denial of the Armenian genocide. To die is tragic, but to be told after death that you have not lived is humiliating.

I am disappointed that members of Congress – those that are meant to represent me and the community of conscience to which I belong – are being asked not to support House Resolution 252, the Affirmation of the U.S. Record on the Armenian Genocide. I recognize the competing interests at issue. Nevertheless, it is denigrating to think that we would allow anyone, any nation, to shut down our moral sensitivity. There is no debate – historically, academically, truthfully – on the Armenian genocide. I ask our members of Congress to remember what is right and what is just and to put their votes behind H.Res. 252.

Enclosed is a DVD of *The River Ran Red*, the final film of documentarian Dr. J. Michael Hagopian's trilogy *The Witnesses*. *The River Ran Red* is a powerful film about Dr. Hagopian's epic search for survivors of the Genocide who were sent to their fate along the Euphrates River to the Syrian Desert and Der Zor. Michael Hagopian is a Genocide survivor himself, and a friend of mine. I urge you to watch this film, **and put your vote to work recognizing the Armenian Genocide by endorsing H.Res. 252.**

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Harold M. Schulweis".

Rabbi Harold M. Schulweis
Founder
Jewish World Watch