

## British MP Raises the Issue of the Genocide of Armenian, Assyrian and Greek Christians in the UK House of Commons

London, 20 June 2006—Steve Pound, a distinguished Labour MP for North Ealing, London, has recently raised for discussion in the House of Commons the issue of the Genocide of Turkey's Armenian, Assyrian and Greek Christians and called the British Government to formally recognize it.

"I wish to speak about the incidents in the then Ottoman empire, particularly in the spring of and throughout 1915, that led, I hope indisputably, to the planned, calculated genocide of the Christian community, which consisted principally of Armenians, Assyrians and Greeks. I shall seek to persuade that the time has finally come for Her Majesty's Government to join so many other countries, Parliaments and legislatures in recognising the genocide that occurred in that year... I hope that it is not contentious to say that 3.5 million of the historic Christian population of Assyrians, Armenians and Greeks then living in the Ottoman Empire had been murdered-starved to death or slaughtered-or exiled by 1923," Mr. Pound pointed out.

Alluding to the birth of modern Turkish nationalism, which led to the Young Turks Revolution in 1908 and subsequently to the systematic extermination between 1912-1923 of Turkey's indigenous Christian population of Armenians, Greeks and Assyrians, MP Pound said : "Genocide did happen -3.5 million people were killed or died in the desert. Why did it happen? Armenians, Greeks and Assyrians had lived in the Ottoman Empire for many hundreds of years, and some for even longer; and there was not a systematic programme or pogrom until late in the 19th century. Without doubt there were isolated incidents, but something changed, particularly during the caliphate of Sultan Abdul Hamid, and especially with the election of the Committee for Union and Progress."

The official acknowledgment of these genocides is according to Steve Pound, an unpaid duty of all civilized nations to the victims perished, the survivors and to their descendants: "I hope that we can be realistic, because only when we accept that ethnic cleansing and genocide take place can we confront their horrors. We owe that not only to our Armenian, Assyrian and Greek friends, or only to our Christian friends from the former Ottoman Empire, but to ourselves. How can we seek to combat the evil of genocide when the very existence of such a major example is denied?" Mr. Pound concluded.

Labour MP Steve Pound has long held an active interest in the issue of the Armenian, Greek and Assyrian Genocides and has in many occasions raised it before the Britain's House of Commons.