



## Biden set to recognise Armenian genocide

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U.S. President Joe Biden is preparing to formally recognise the killing of 1.5 million Armenians by the Ottoman Empire as an act of genocide this week, a step that would further hurt fraught relations with Turkey.

Biden is expected to make the announcement on Saturday, Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day, media including the New York Times and Associated Press **reported** on Wednesday, citing U.S. officials.

Armenians are seeking international recognition for atrocities during World War I that they say left some 1.5 million of their people dead. An overwhelming majority of non-Turkish historians agree that April 24, 1915 was the beginning of a systematic mass murder and expulsion of civilian Armenians by the Ottoman Empire government, which meets the definition of genocide.

Biden has decided to issue the declaration, a U.S. official with knowledge of the administration's discussions said, according to the New York Times. Two other officials said it was widely expected.

Relations between Turkey and the United States have been deteriorating after Turkey purchased S-400 air defence missiles from Russia in 2019 and launched a military operation into Syria to battle Kurds allied with Washington and its battle with Islamic State (ISIS).

adherence to democratic principles.

“If the United States wants to make relations even worse, the choice is theirs,” Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu **said** in a televised interview on Tuesday. Such a move would not be legally binding, he said.

Turkey denies the accusations of genocide, saying hundreds of thousands of Armenians and Turks died in clashes after ethnic Armenians in Turkey sided with Russia in the war. It says any killing were not systemic or orchestrated and has strongly objected to all attempts at recognition internationally.

Biden’s designation of the killings would worsen relations with Turkey, but that is a risk the president appears willing to take to further human rights, the U.S. officials said. He has not made a final decision and may prefer to make a symbolic statement without designating the killings as genocide, they said.

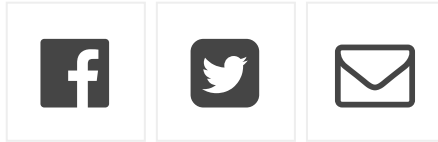
As of 2020, the governments and parliaments of 32 countries, including Germany, France, Italy, Canada, Russia and Brazil, have formally recognised the Armenian Genocide.

Biden’s predecessors refrained from labelling the mass deaths as genocide to not worsen relations with Turkey. But during his election campaign, Biden made a clear promise to support a resolution and make universal human rights a top priority for his administration.

The House of Representatives and the Senate **passed** resolutions at the end of 2019 with overwhelming majorities “expressing the sense of the Senate that it is the policy of the United States to commemorate the Armenian genocide through official recognition and remembrance”.

In a letter to Biden on Wednesday, 107 House members **called** on the president to clearly and directly recognise the Armenian genocide in his April 24 statement.

“Mr. President, as you said last year in your April 24 statement, silence is complicity. The shameful silence of the United States Government on the historic fact of the Armenian genocide has gone on for too long, and it must end. We urge you to follow through on your commitments and speak the truth.”



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