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### PRESS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Zoryan Board Member and Founding Partner of GSP Rebuke Israeli Ambassador to Turkey**

Jerusalem — Noted genocide scholar and member of the Zoryan Institute Academic Board of Directors Yair Auron, along with Dr. Israel W. Charny, a founding partner with Zoryan of *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal*, responded to statements made by the Israeli Ambassador to Turkey denying the Armenian Genocide.

As reported by AZG Armenian Daily, the scholars sent an open letter to the Israeli Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tzipi Livni, criticizing statements made by Israeli Ambassador to Turkey.

We are writing to express our shock, disbelief and horror at the statements attributed to Ambassador to Turkey Gaby Levy by the website of Sabah News (Turkey) that “what we [Israel] did in Gaza is not genocide, just like there is no Armenian genocide.” These statements were reportedly in response to comments made by Prime Minister Erdogan of Turkey criticizing Israel’s response to the terror attacks from Gaza. We would like to believe that he was misquoted.

Ambassador Levy is insultingly wrong in denying the Armenian genocide.

There is an overwhelming body of historical evidence from many separate and independent bodies of information to show that the mass atrocities experienced by the Armenians were a result of an intentional policy on the part of the Turkish government at the time. It is precisely this evidence of intent to kill and destroy, in whole or in part, as defined by the UN Convention on Genocide, which is why these atrocities constitute genocide. They were adjudged genocide by Raphael Lemkin, the person who gave the world the word-concept of genocide, and have been so adjudged by any number of impartial commissions and professional authorities, including the International Association of Genocide Scholars.

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From left to right: Rimma Varzhapetian, Arman Kirakossian, Yair Auron, Yossi Sarid, Yehuda Bauer, Israel Charny.

Israel's relationship with Turkey is a matter of vital importance to the two countries. But this relationship does not require public displays of obsequiousness and participation in genocide denial.... We call upon the Government to repudiate the remarks attributed to him.

Sincerely,

Prof. Yair Auron, PhD, Dept. of Sociology, Open University of Israel  
Prof. Israel W. Charny, PhD (retired Tel Aviv University and Hebrew University), Executive Director,  
Institute on the Holocaust and Genocide, Jerusalem, Editor, Encyclopedia of Genocide  
Prof. Elihu D. Richter, MD, MPH, Genocide Prevention Program, Hebrew University-Hadassah  
School of Public Health and Community Medicine

According to Hurriyet, Ambassador Levy had said terrorism is a universal phenomenon and Israel views the actions taken by Hamas against Israel as parallel to those taken by the PKK against Turkey. Hurriyet reported his statement as follows:

.... As Israel, we do not recognize what occurred during World War I in the Ottoman times as a genocide. One of the most important reasons for this is that the events were geographically limited. At that period, nothing at all happened to Armenians living in Istanbul, in Halep, or even in Jerusalem. And now the Israeli operation which is underway is aimed only at militants in Gaza. There is no operation at all going on in the West Bank, where Arabs also live, but peace reigns.

The Zoryan Institute applauds the stand taken by these individuals against Ambassador Levy's statement. As genocide is a political act, its condemnation and prevention must be the responsibility of every nation, particularly those whose people have been victimized in this heinous crime. Even neutrality should not be acceptable, for "if you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor" (Desmond Tutu). Israel as a country whose people have experienced the Holocaust, understands this better than most.

Yair Auron, author of such distinguished books as *The Banality of Indifference: Zionism and the Armenian Genocide* and *The Banality of Denial: Israel and the Armenian Genocide*, has been a Zoryan board member since 1995. His publications and public lectures have emphasized the important links between the Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust, and he has worked tirelessly to make Israeli society more sensitive to the genocides of other peoples.

Israel Charny is a distinguished genocide scholar, author of numerous books and articles, Editor in Chief of the *Encyclopedia of Genocide*, and immediate past president of the International Association of Genocide Scholars. As president, he brought the IAGS into a fruitful partnership with the International Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies (A Division of the Zoryan Institute), which resulted in the joint publication of the renowned *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal* beginning in 2006.

The Zoryan Institute, parent organization of the IIGHRS, and co-publisher of *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal* and *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies*, is the first non-profit, international center devoted to the research and documentation of contemporary issues with a focus on Armenian social, political and cultural life, with the concern for the human rights of all. For more information please contact the Zoryan Institute by email [zoryan@zoryaninstitute.org](mailto:zoryan@zoryaninstitute.org) or telephone (416) 250-9807.