

Wales-Armenia Solidarity Press Release

C/o The Temple of Peace, Cardiff

Tel: + 00 44 7718982732

(UK) 07718982732

eilian@nant.wanadoo.co.uk

Armenian Genocide Monument desecrated on 27 January 2008 - UK Holocaust Memorial Day -

Turkish protesters disrupt Holocaust and Hrant Dink Commemorations

Armenians and Welsh gathered to pray for victims of all genocides on the United Kingdom's Holocaust Memorial Day and to remember the first anniversary of the assassination of Hrant Dink, the journalist killed for raising the issue of the Armenian Genocide in the Turkish press.

The small Welsh Armenian community found that the ornate slate cross on the monument was smashed into pieces with a hammer left at the scene. The Armenian Genocide Monument was desecrated on a symbolic day designated to recall the events, consequences and lessons of the darkest days of human history in a deliberate and premeditated act of vandalism.

The ceremony went ahead. Eminent Welshman Robin Gwyndaf prayed in Welsh and English, Assembly Member Jenny Randerson called on the UK government to recognise the Armenian Genocide and Martin Shipton, representing the National Union of Journalists and chief reporter for the "Western Mail", gave the tribute to Hrant Dink. Solemn prayers for all genocide victims and speeches were disrupted by continual taunting by protestors using a megaphone. Copies of the book "Remember" were presented to the guest speakers representing the theme of the occasion.

One of the Welsh Armenians said *"This is our holiest shrine. Our grandparents who perished in the Genocide do not have marked graves. This is where we remember them"*

It is ironic that the main Holocaust Memorial Day commemoration in Liverpool again failed to remember the Armenian victims of the first genocide in the 20th century. The political decision runs against the core purpose of this solemn day, and shows that the lessons from the last century have yet to be fully grasped by even the organisers of HMD.

Eilian Williams of Wales Armenia Solidarity called on "Armenians and other sympathisers throughout the world to send messages of support to Wales Armenia Solidarity (eilian@nant.wanadoo.co.uk) to be forwarded to the Prime Minister of the National Assembly of Wales. We also challenge the UK government and the Turkish Embassy to condemn this attack on a peaceful ethnic and religious minority."

