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This wasn't genocide

Sir, - While the Armenian deaths in WWI were a great tragedy, they were not genocide. The Armenian population was in almost total revolt against the Ottoman Turks. Armenian soldiers deserted the Turkish army in droves and went over to the Russian invaders. There are over 50 documented cases of Armenian massacres of Turkish populations while the Turkish army was retreating from the Russian invasion.

When the Turkish army repelled the Russians and forced them to retreat, almost 200,000 Armenians, fearing retribution from the advancing Turks, fled to the Caucasus with the Russian army. There, in the region of Guba, they murdered thousands of Azeris, and over 3,000 mountain Jews. (Azerbaijan's Jewish leaders just recently requested that President Aliyev erect a memorial to the murdered Jews.)

The Turks were at war, and their first obligation was to win the war and protect the local population. The Armenians' collaboration with the invaders led to their forced evacuation from all areas where they might undermine the Ottomans' campaign against Russia.

Official documents show that the army was instructed to provide them with food and supplies on their forced march. Warnings were sent to the military commanders that neither the Kurds nor any other Muslims should use the situation to exact vengeance. A special commission was established to safeguard the property of the expelees and to provide for their return when the crisis was over.

What happened was far from what was planned. The army was in almost total disarray. It couldn't protect the expelees. Kurdish bandits harassed the Armenians. Food was almost non-existent. The tragedy was horrific, but it was not planned by the government to wipe out the Armenian population.

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