

Boston Commemorates April 24 at Armenian Heritage Park

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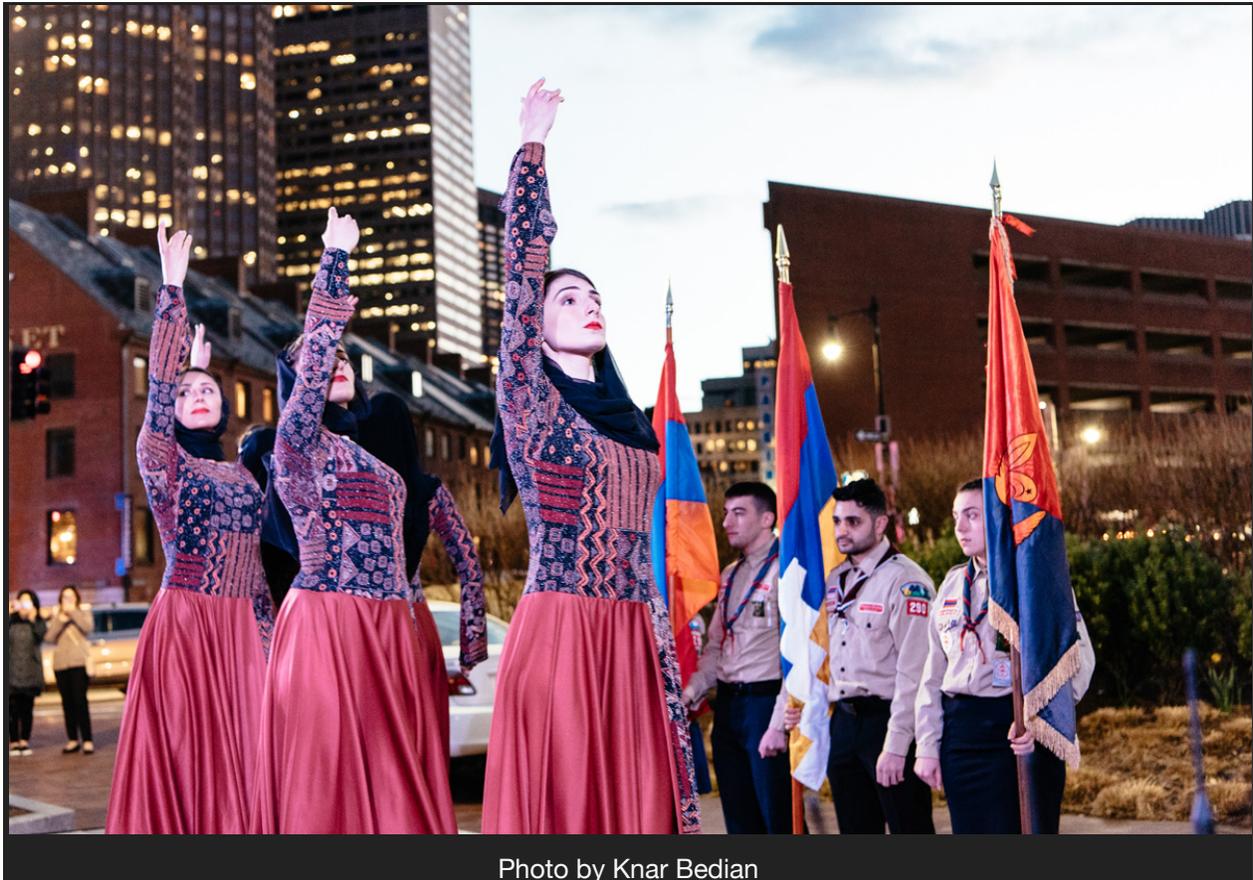


Photo by Knar Bedian

BOSTON, Mass.—More than a century after the 1915 Armenian Genocide, hundreds of Armenians from the Greater Boston area paid tribute last week to the struggle of the Armenian experience.

“We not only survived,” said veteran Boston Globe journalist and descendant of Genocide survivors, Stephen Kurkjian, “We somehow found a way to thrive.”

One of the keynote speakers at the Armenian Heritage Park commemoration, Kurkjian described his sentimental trip with his father to the village of Keghi two decades prior. His father was three years old when his family was forced to flee during the Armenian Genocide. “Among the reasons we are here tonight is to decry the brutality that took place to our people that began 104 years ago and to continue to insist to demand on the recognition,” said Kurkjian. He also noted the one year anniversary of the Velvet Revolution, the challenges that still face Armenia and how Diasporan Armenians can fill those needs. “You can bring your energy and idealism to Armenia to help meet the challenge,” he said, calling upon young listeners to tap into their strengths in technology.

One of those challenges remains the calculated denial of genocide by today's Erdogan-led Turkish government. During her formal remarks, Dr. Pamela Steiner, a prominent specialist in conflict resolution and the great-granddaughter of Henry Morgenthau, US ambassador to the Ottoman Empire during World War I, suggested a more ambitious conflict resolution process. "The dialogue that has taken place so far with Armenians and Turks has not achieved enough," said Dr. Steiner, who wants to see more sustained and deep conversations among Armenians about difficult issues.

In a rather captivating and sobering moment that resonated with many, Eklas Ahmed, a survivor of the Darfur Genocide who fled Sudan in 2003, recited an original poem called "Sounds of Gunshots." "It is quiet in Darfur," she began. "It is not the silence of peace. But it is the silence of death. My home, my home that once carried history of generation is now burned ashes on the ground waiting for the wind to blow them to their final destination."

The commemoration also highlighted the unshakable spirit of the Armenian people with a set of stirring and festive performances by Sayat Nova Dance Company of Boston. Renowned pianist Dr. Marina Margarian Kavlakian also performed a medley of Komitas Vartabed pieces.

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