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### US Congressional panel claims Turkey committed genocide

A United States Congressional panel has passed a resolution describing Turkey's killing of Armenians in World War I as genocide, over objections from the White House, which said Saturday that it will seek to block the measure.

The panel, the House Foreign Affairs Committee, passed the resolution, which calls on President Barack Obama to "characterize the systematic and deliberate annihilation of 1.5 million Armenians as genocide," by a vote of 23 to 22. The passage came even after the White House warned the panel that the vote would harm talks between Turkey and Armenia, and US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton asked the panel not to proceed with the vote. Additionally, a Turkish parliamentary delegation aimed at convincing panel members to defeat the resolution also had gone to Washington to plead their case.

Just minutes after the US resolution passed, Turkey issued a statement condemning "this resolution which accuses the Turkish nation of a crime it has not committed." Additionally, Turkey said that their ambassador to the United States had been immediately recalled for consultation. Armenians, both in America and overseas, welcomed the vote, however, with the Armenian government calling the passage of the resolution "an important step towards the prevention of crimes against humanity."

While the efforts of Turkey and the White House to block the measure had no effect on the passage of the resolution, both the White House and the State Department said on Saturday that the administration would "work very hard" to prevent the measure from proceeding to the House for a full vote. On Friday, Secretary Clinton, speaking for the White House, said that she believed the US Congress would take no further action on the topic.

The fallout from the vote threatened to disrupt talks between Turkey and Armenia intended to return the two countries to normal diplomatic status. These talks which were acknowledged by President Obama earlier this week in a telephone call to Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan thanking him for his efforts in the negotiations. Additionally, the resolution significantly dampens relations between America and Turkey, which is America's staunchest Muslim ally. The US government is dependent on Turkey for its access to northern Iraq, as well as its efforts to regionally isolate Iran, and the government will undoubtedly be working to limit the diplomatic fallout from the resolution.

The events that prompted the resolution were the deportation of Armenians from the Ottoman Empire, the precursor to the current Turkish state, in 1915. Either disease, starvation or deliberate killings by Turkish troops killed around a million and a half Armenians during the deportations and other events during World War I. Since then, more than 20 countries worldwide have officially condemned the actions as genocide. Turkey, however, has rejected the term, and maintains that there was no deliberate attempt to annihilate the Armenian people.

### BBC: Ethiopian famine aid 'siphoned off' to buy weapons according to rebels, report

An investigation by the [BBC](#) has revealed that millions of dollars in famine relief aid money, including the money raised from the charity supergroup [Band Aid](#) and the [Live Aid](#) concert held by [Bob Geldof](#), was "siphoned off" by [Ethiopian](#) rebels to buy weapons. One rebel said that at least US\$ 95 million (£63 million) from — Western governments and private charities — was diverted into rebel coffers.

This was also noted in a declassified [Central Intelligence Agency](#) assessment of the famine situation titled *Ethiopia: Political and Security Impact of the Drought*, in which the report states, "Some funds that insurgent organizations are raising for relief operations, as a result of increased world publicity, are almost certainly being diverted for military purposes."

During the 1984-1985 famine, Ethiopia was fighting Eritrean and [Tigray rebels](#) in those two northern provinces, although [Eritrea](#) has since

gained its independence. Since the countryside was out of the government's control, aid was brought in from neighboring [Sudan](#). Some aid came in the form of food, while other aid came as cash which would be used by the aid agencies to buy grain from Ethiopian farmers.

Rebels would disguise themselves as traders and merchants to get their hands on the currency. "I was given clothes to make me look like a Muslim merchant. This was a trick for the NGOs," said Gebremedhin Araya, a senior member of the [Tigray People's Liberation Front](#) (TPLF).

One such aid worker that brought the grain was Max Peberdy, who worked for the charity [Christian Aid](#). Peberdy is seen in a photo with Araya buying grain.

Araya said that only some of the sacks were filled with grain; the rest were filled with sand. The transaction was overseen by a member of the Relief Society of Tigray (REST), the humanitarian wing of the TPLF. The money was then given to TPLF leaders, including chairman [Meles Zenawi](#), who has been Prime Minister of Ethiopia since 1991. Zenawi has not commented on the allegations.

Peberdy disputes the claims that he was duped, saying, "As far as we were concerned and as far as we were told by REST, the people we were dealing with were merchants." He added, "It's 25 years since this happened, and in the 25 years it's the first time anybody has claimed such a thing."

However, an exiled TPLF commander who lives in [the Netherlands](#), Aregawi Berhe, is backing Araya's story. He said the group got their hands on over US\$100 million (£66 million) of which 95% went to buy weapons and build up a hardliner Marxist party inside the rebel movement. The remaining five percent would go to famine victims. Berhe told the BBC that the group would put on a "drama" to get the money. Berhe said, "The aid workers were fooled."

In response to the allegations, the charity Christian Aid issued a statement saying, "There are allegations in the story which are against all of Christian Aid's principles and our initial investigations do not correspond to the BBC's version of events."

Nick Guttman, who is director of emergency relief operations for the group, says the "story has to be put into context". "We were working in a major conflict, there was a massive famine and people on all sides were suffering," Guttman said, adding, "Both the rebels and the government were using innocent civilians to further their own political ends."

Bob Geldof, the Irish rock star who help organized Live Aid, said, "We are talking about a disgruntled, exiled general. The essence of the report also is not just about Live Aid. It's that all monies going into Tigray — that would be [Oxfam](#), [Save the Children](#), [UNICEF](#) and Christian Aid — somehow, we were all duped and gulled. And that's simply not the case. It just didn't happen."

### **Two police officers injured in Pentagon shooting incident**

An armed man opened fire at an entrance to the [Pentagon in Washington, D.C.](#) on Thursday at 6.40 p.m (0140 UTC), injuring two police officers, before being shot and killed by them. According to the officers, the man calmly approached an entrance to the building near the Metro station, pulled a gun from his coat pocket and opened fire at them. No one else was injured in the incident. The attacker has been identified as 36 year old John Patrick Bedell of [Hollister, California](#). He was armed with two nine millimeter semiautomatic weapons and several magazines of ammunition and acted alone.

Chief of the [United States Pentagon Police](#) Richard S. Keevill conducted a press conference two hours after the incident. He said that the wounds to the two officers were not life threatening as the bullets just grazed

them. The suspect was critically injured as he was not wearing a bullet-proof vest. The two officers were taken to [George Washington University Hospital](#) for treatment and were released few hours later. He praised Officers Jeffrey Amos and Marvin Carraway for acting "quickly and decisively to neutralize him as a threat" without hurting anyone else. Bedell died hours after being admitted in critical condition.

Keevill added, "About 6:40 tonight, a person came [to] the Pentagon ... area ... [and] appeared to be pretty calm. As the officers started to ask him for his pass ... he drew a weapon from his pocket and started shooting. ... He did not say anything." Keevill confirmed that the shooter was a American citizen but denied knowledge of any motive behind the shooting. He said, "We have a theory, but it's still a theory. It's going to take time to develop that."

Bedell's car was driven from California and more ammunition was found there. Keevill said there is a surveillance video showing the suspect that "pretty much confirms what we've been saying, that he acted alone." He has dismissed the possibility of Bedell being a terrorist.

An Internet posting has come forward where a user named JPatrickBedell argued that the [9/11 attacks](#) and death (ruled a suicide by court of law) of Marine Col. James Sabow in Orange County in 1991 had been "cover-ups" and that he was determined to uncover the truth. In the same posting he protests strict [US marijuana](#) laws and has included links to a 2006 court case in [Orange County](#) where he was prosecuted for cultivating marijuana and resisting a police officer. Online Court records show the date of birth mentioned by the user JPatrickBedell matches that of the John Patrick Bedell. Bedell said in an online video, "The moral values of individuals and communities are increasingly attacked by a political system where deceit is routine and accepted and the only standard is power."

Pentagon entrances were locked

shortly after the shooting, during the evening rush hour but all were reopened with the exception of the Pentagon Metro entrance which is adjacent to the main entrance of the Pentagon in [Virginia](#), across the [Potomac River](#). [Transit officials](#) decided to close the busy Pentagon subway station for Friday as a part of the investigations. The Pentagon police department, the [Arlington County Police Department, U.S. Secret Service](#) and the [FBI](#) are investigating the incident.

The Pentagon has total five entrances: Mall Terrace Entrance façade, the River Terrace Entrance façade, the Concourse Entrance (or Metro Station) façade, the South Parking Entrance façade, and the Heliport façade.

### **Explosion, fire temporarily halts cereal production at General Mills plant**

[Buffalo, New York](#) - Production was temporarily halted at the [General Mills](#) cereal plant in Buffalo, New York after malfunctioning equipment exploded, causing a fire.

According to communications between fire crews, a fan in a [hopper](#) exploded on the 4th floor just before midnight ([EST](#)). Fire crews responded within minutes, but the fire had been extinguished prior to their arrival. Fire crews say that a "faulty motor in a hopper" exploded, igniting dust around the equipment which caused a fire.

The explosion forced the company to shut down all of their mills and power to most of their facility for a short time as a precaution. Production and normal operations began to resume around 12:15 a.m..

No one was injured. Fire officials estimate the damage to be around [US\\$100,000](#).

### **Earthquake, tsunami combo caused devastation in Pichilemu, Chile**

[Pichilemu, Chile](#) - Last Saturday,

[Chile](#) was hit by a [8.8 earthquake](#). Many coastal towns were also hit by a tsunami, and [Pichilemu](#) was one of them. Its inhabitants were surprised by the giant waves that destroyed the most of the *costanera* and that reached the city square.

[Pichilemu](#), that means in [Mapudungun language](#) *small forest*, is one of the most famous Chilean resort towns in the central zone of Chile. It is recurrently visited by surfers from all the world, because the [Punta de Lobos beach](#) is considered one of the best for surf practice worldwide.

Central Pichilemu was not severely damaged by the earthquake, but the tsunami caused significant destruction. The Fisherman Creek, located in front of the beach, was completely destroyed, and its machines are now unusable. Most of the [Agustín Ross architecture](#) that characterized the city, three of them being [National Monuments of Chile](#), were damaged. The Agustín Ross Mirador, a famous location in front of the beach, located less than 200 meters from the Fisherman Creek, was completely destroyed. Its famous [balustrades](#) were washed away or thrown asunder. Many restaurants, kiosks and a circus were affected by the tsunami.

The rural parts of Pichilemu, like Ciruelos, Rodeillos and Espinillos feature houses constructed from [adobe](#). Many were more than 100-years old, and were destroyed or are now uninhabitable.

The most powerful aftershock was produced almost 40 kilometers in front of the coast of Pichilemu, at the 03:10 local time (07:10 UTC) in March 2, with an intensity of 5.5 in the Richter scale, according to the USGS.

The [Intendant](#) of the [O'Higgins Region](#), Juan Núñez, had a meeting with the Governor of the [Cardenal Caro Province](#), Loreto Puebla, the [Mayor of Pichilemu](#), Roberto Córdova, and naval and military authorities, *juntas de vecinos* representatives. They decided to

leave the [Carabineros police force](#) to maintain the security of the city.

### **Five construction workers shot dead in Afghanistan**

According to reports from officials, four [Pakistani](#) and one Afghan road construction workers were killed in [Afghanistan](#) yesterday by armed men.

The interior ministry reported that the attack happened on Thursday morning, in the Panjwayi district in the [Kandahar](#) province, and noted that one other Pakistani and Afghan labourer were injured. The workers were reportedly en route to a building site operated by the SAITA construction firm.

"They were going to work when this incident took place. We are arranging transportation of their bodies back to Pakistan," commented Ajmal Farooqi, an executive with the company.

Police official Agha said that two gunmen motorcycle opened fire on the workers, conflicting with reports from the interior ministry, which says that there were three gunmen.

[Agence France-Presse](#) reports that this incident bears the hallmarks of the [Taleban](#); however, Taleban spokesman Yousuf Ahmadi remarked that "[o]ur friends did not say anything about it, we don't have information about the incident".

### **Britain thinks Africans are barbaric, claims South African President**

[Jacob Zuma](#), President of [South Africa](#), claimed [Britain](#) believed [Africa](#) is "barbaric", hours before a state visit to [Queen Elizabeth II](#). These claims were made after the [Daily Mail](#) described him as a "sex-obsessed bigot and vile buffoon."

Zuma accused Britons of considering themselves to be culturally superior owing to their past colonial activities. "When the British came to our country they said everything we did was barbaric, was wrong, inferior in

whatever way. Bear in mind that I'm a freedom fighter and I fought to free myself, also for my culture to be respected. And I don't know why they are continuing thinking that their culture is more superior than others, those who might have said so," stated Zuma in an African newspaper.

According to him, he had never "looked down upon any culture of anyone" and that no one has the authority of judging other cultures. Zuma added, "The British have done that before, as they colonised us, and they continue to do this, and it's an unfortunate thing. If people want an engagement, I'm sure we will engage on that issue."

The President's comments were published in a local private newspaper. Zuma, who has three current wives, made these comments after arriving in Britain with Thobeka Madiba, 38, his third wife.

The Queen will welcome them at the Horse Guards Parade and take them to Buckingham Palace thereafter. A state banquet will also be held in his honor at the palace, where he is set to spend two nights.

Zuma, a member of the Zulu tribe, was compelled to make a public apology following a love child with the daughter of a friend. This incident triggered the articles in Daily Mail and Daily Mirror which attacked Zuma.

Zuma, whose state trip includes meetings with [Gordon Brown](#), [David Cameron](#) and Nick Clegg, as well as a speech to members of parliament, plans to continue with the visit. This was confirmed by officials today.

Vincent Magwenya, Zuma's spokesman said the incident would have no impact in Zuma's trip.

Magwenya stated: "Mr Zuma is in the UK for wide-ranging programme of substantial and serious issues. The comments he made were not aimed at the British public in general but at certain sections of the media which have lambasted him for what he

considers to be his culture. Mr Zuma had a meeting with British journalists yesterday and was asked not one question about his private life".

He also added that Zuma did not "appreciate reading things which he considers are patronising to his culture" and claimed that it was obvious that "his comments will have no bearing on the state visit." The President, according to Magwenya, looks forward to the visit and will continue with the full schedule.

Meanwhile, the Democratic Alliance, South Africa's principal opposition party, stated that the reports in the British newspapers did not warrant Zuma's lashing out at Britain.

Kenneth Mubu, of the opposing political party said, said: "Instead of rising above predictable criticism from a particular quarter of the British press, he has allowed himself to be dragged down to the level of the tabloids. By accusing the British people of believing that Africans are barbaric and inferior, he has insulted his hosts, and no doubt undermined the entire purpose of the state visit - which is to strengthen relations between South Africa and the United Kingdom."

The youth sector of the African National Congress supported the President. It expressed its disgust at the British reports.

"British media seem to have developed a habit of rubbishing our president and constantly portray him as barbaric and of inferior belonging," the youth league said. "It is quite apparent that the British media is the one that is characterised and defined by the worst form of barbarism, backwardness and racism. These British racists continue to live in a dreamland and sadly believe that Africans are still their colonial subjects, with no values and principles. They believe that the only acceptable values and principles in the world are British values of whiteness and subjugation of Africans," stated the party.

### Commons Picture of the Day



The Scapegoat by William Holman Hunt (1827-1910)

### Quote of the Day

A man contains all that is needed to make up a tree; likewise, a tree contains all that is needed to make up a man. Thus, finally, all things meet in all things, but we need a Prometheus to distill it.  
~ Cyrano de Bergerac ~

### Word of the Day

vulnerary *adj*

- Useful or used for healing wounds; healing, curative.
- (*archaic, rare*) Causing wounds, wounding.

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