

## Armenian Atrocities in and around Bitlis

"It is understood from the testimony of Osman Bey (son of Kalfatchi) from the quarter of Kizilmescid, that fifty year old mother of Mehmet (son of Reshid), the woman by the name of Nigar, from the quarter of Hersan, was wounded by dagger and killed afterwards by Armenians and an innocent little girl who was in the house of the above-mentioned was also killed and her body was thrown to dogs in the street and that this grievous scene was witnessed by many others.

... the ninety year old father of Mehmed (son of Hasan) from the quarter of Tash was martyred and his house was plundered by Armenians.

... Faris from the quarter of Tash was taken away from his house and nothing was heard of him since then. Armenians also killed the ten year old son of Faris, Kadir, as well as two other sons, Tevfik and Sherif, by crushing their heads with blows of rifle butts and trampling the heads with their boots. The wives of Dursun (son of Tahir), who is the uncle of Faris, the women by the names of Mentan, Kishmish and Ziyet, were repeatedly violated and his cousin, Esat, was cut into pieces by sword." (*Aspirations and revolutionary movements of the Armenian parties. pp. 309-318*).

The document (BOA. HR. SYS. HU, kr. 110, dos.12-2, nr. 117-123 (See: Annex-15) dated July 1, 1916, kept in the Ottoman Archives says that

"The subgovernor of Mardin conducted an investigation into the brutalities inflicted upon the muslim population by Armenians during the occupation of Van and Bitlis and found out on the basis of the testimonies of those who had been saved from the massacres that Russians and Armenian bands savagely slain and cut into pieces everybody even though they were willing to surrender, killed the inhabitants of villages already surrendered and burned everybody, children included, in furnaces used to bake bread and that the band attacked to Aramek, an Armenian from Van, put to death all the inhabitants of a village of 70 to 80 houses even though they had surrendered."

Another document (BOA. HR. SYS. HU, kr. 110, dos.12-2, nr. 34-55 (See: Annex-16)) "...testifying to the atrocities and destruction inflicted upon muslims by Armenians in Bitlis and its environs embodies the sworn statements of those who failing to escape remained in Bitlis and were victimized by Russians and Armenian bands, lists the names of those muslims who were killed under torture or violated by Russian and Armenian bands, muslims whose money, goods and houses were plundered, muslims whose houses were burnt down as well as the names of destroyed mosques, schools, tekkes, places of visit, official buildings, bridges and warehouses in the quarters of Kizilmescid, Zeydan, Hersan, Tash, Aynulbard, Avih, the quarters of Erkuzan, Kömüs, Mahallebasi, Adilcevaz of Ahlat, the district of Karchikan, in the villages of Yako, Tatargazi, Patnos, in the quarters of Hamtos, Marmutlu, Kurubulak. Nahoshnud, Mabekor, in the villages of Azad, Kerekoglan, in the village of Şirvanşeyh of Malazgirt."

As for the savagery, atrocities and genocide carried out by Armenians in Mush: "The following is the sworn statement of Mehmed Resul, from Mush: 'I was a soldier engaged in war. Because of my wound, I failed to follow the detachment retreating towards Bitlis. I stayed behind together with three other soldiers wounded or disabled like me.

Shortly afterwards, Armenian bands, guiding Russian Cossacks, reached us. They first gouged out the eyes of Hüseyin from Harput, one of our comrades and then asked him "Get up and try to see if Ottoman troops are coming?" and then killed the poor one by shooting. They removed some skin from the right hand side of the other soldier and fashioned some sort of pocket and then asked him "Put in your hand and see if there is any money of your Padishah in

there?" and martyred him under torture. They laid down the third soldier on ground, cut off his genital organ and put it into his mouth and told him "blow this pipe so that assistance may come to you from the Ottoman troops." After insulting him badly, they martyred him as well.

Then they took me to a brook. Making a fire they heated the spits of their rifles and with them they branded me 24 times. They did not pay any attention to my cries and entreating. Just at that moment, several Russian soldiers arrived. One of them saved me from death. He secretly whispered to my ear that he was of Russian muslims. Russian Cossacks, Armenians and I set out altogether for Bitlis. We encountered convoys of fugitives on the road. Armenians savagely attacked these defenceless women, children and elderly people and pitilessly killed all of them. An Armenian from among them, whom I knew that he was from the village of Ziyaret of Mush, brought six muslim girls together with his seven friends. Taking off their clothes, they told them to bow and in this position violated them. While committing such wickedness on the one hand, they said "from nowon we shall make muslims pray in this manner" on the other." (Aspirations and revolutionary movements of the Armenian parties. pp. 319–321.)