

AN OPEN LETTER TO KCET, LOS ANGELES

Mr. Al Jerome, CEO
Ms. Mary Mazur, Director of Production
KCET
4401 Sunset Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA
FAX: 323-953-5523

Dear Mr. Jerome and Ms. Mazur:

We are writing to urge you to screen the PBS documentary, *The Armenian Genocide*, by Andrew Goldberg on April 17 at the same time that audiences across the United States and around the world will be viewing this very important film.

The PBS film, *The Armenian Genocide*, has been publicly praised by many Armenian-American organizations, the Armenian Foreign Minister, and Armenia TV. Officers of the International Association of Genocide Scholars have pre-viewed it, and found it to be accurate and well done. Virtually every major PBS market in America is airing this film on April 17. It also has been sold to the major networks in nearly a dozen foreign countries, including Canada, Australia, Italy, Spain, Finland, Greece and others in Europe and around the world. Why should viewers in Los Angeles not be allowed to see it at the same time?

To the best of our knowledge, no other film in the history of this subject so clearly describes and addresses the issue of Armenian genocide denial. Andrew Goldberg begins his film with the problem of denial and his interviews with Turkish deniers, including professors and ordinary people-on-the street, show powerfully that denial remains a central issue about the Armenian genocide. The man-on-the-street interviews also demonstrate that many Turkish citizens now acknowledge the genocide, an unprecedented revelation in a country that still makes discussion of the Armenian genocide a criminal offense. The issue of denial is of paramount importance since denial -- which we know today is the very last stage of genocide -- not only hurts the victims and descendants of victims of the genocide, but invites future perpetrators to commit genocide again and again. When you decide not to air a widely scheduled film that deals strongly with this subject, there may even be a sense in which you too become complicit in denial.

We understand you have announced plans to show a different film on the Armenian Genocide on the night of April 17, which is good in its own right. We are also aware that another Los Angeles PBS station with much less viewer coverage than KCET will show the PBS film, but at a later date. Nevertheless, we can't see the justification for depriving the greater Los Angeles community, including its large Armenian-American population, from the world-wide experience and discussion of Goldberg's outstanding documentary film on April 17.

We agree with KCET's decision that it would be openly disrespectful of a survivor- community's sensibilities to bring on deniers in a panel immediately following a documentary about the reality of the Armenian Genocide -- though we have only the highest regard and trust in the scholars whom PBS chose to answer the deniers, Professors Taner Akcam and Peter Balakian.

As for the documentary film itself, it seems to us unjustified for KCET, the flagship PBS station on the West Coast of the United States, not to show it on April 17. We urge you to reconsider your scheduling and to show it on the night of April 17.

Sincerely,

Israel W. Charny

Prof. Israel W. Charny
President, International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS)
Editor-in-Chief, *Encyclopedia of Genocide*
Executive Director, Institute on the Holocaust and Genocide, Jerusalem

Gregory H. Stanton

Prof. Gregory H. Stanton
First Vice President, International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS)
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James Farmer Professor of Human Rights, University of Mary Washington