

International Figures Unite to Announce New Humanitarian Prize as part of 100 LIVES Initiative

*George Clooney and Nobel Laureate Elie Wiesel to Co-Chair Global Human Rights Award
Interviews with George Clooney and Elie Wiesel are available for download [here](#)*

NEW YORK, March 10, 2015– The [100 LIVES](#) initiative is launching today expressing gratitude to the individuals and institutions whose heroic actions saved Armenian lives during the Genocide 100 years ago.

The purpose of the 100 LIVES initiative is to address the issues of genocide, human rights violations and the power of positive action through three key elements:

- **Learning from the past** by issuing a global call to unearth the untold [stories](#) of survivors and saviors from the Armenian Genocide that will be brought to life on 100LIVES.com;
- **Delivering for the present** by introducing the [Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity](#), a new global humanitarian award that will be given to people who put themselves at risk to enable others to survive and thrive; and
- **Shaping a better future** by administering Gratitude Projects to organizations and in communities that played a prominent role in saving Armenian lives a century ago

The 100 LIVES initiative was founded by international businessmen and philanthropists Ruben Vardanyan and Noubar Afeyan and humanitarian Vartan Gregorian to demonstrate the impact of the Armenian Genocide and how many of the survivors and their families went on to lead successful lives making significant contributions to global culture, the arts, sports, science and business.

An estimated 1.5 million died during the Armenian Genocide between 1915 and 1923. Around 500,000 survived, many through the intervention of individuals and institutions and there are now Armenian Diaspora communities around the world from Argentina to Australia.

“The humanity, generosity, strength and sacrifice shown by those who saved so many Armenians compels us to tell these stories,” said Ruben Vardanyan, co-founder of 100 LIVES. “Now is the time to shine a light on those most extraordinary lives, to build on the lessons they teach us, and to express our gratitude for what they did.”

Along with honoring past survivors and saviors, the program will establish the [Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity](#) as a means to empower modern-day saviors. The annual grant of \$1 million will be awarded to a recipient who will, in turn, present it to the organization identified as the inspiration for their action.

The [Aurora Prize](#) brings together leading human rights luminaries from around the world including Academy Award winner George Clooney, Nobel Peace Prize winners Elie Wiesel and Oscar Arias, former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson, UN Secretary-General Advisor on Genocide, Gareth Evans, globally respected human rights activist Hina Jilani and President of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, Vartan Gregorian, to serve on its Selection Committee. Mr Clooney will award the inaugural Prize at a ceremony to be held in Yerevan, Armenia on 24 April, 2016.

“I am honored to be associated with 100 LIVES as it shares a common mission with my foundation, Not On Our Watch, to focus global attention on the impact of genocide as well as putting resources towards ending mass atrocities around the world,” said George Clooney. “It should weigh heavily on all of us that genocide still takes place today,” he added. “We have to tackle this head on—as individuals, as communities and as governments.”

Mr Clooney will join renowned human rights advocate and chairman of the American Holocaust Memorial, Elie Wiesel, as co-chairman of the Prize’s Selection Committee. Additional members will be named over the next few months to complete the committee and provide human rights expertise from every geographic region in the world.

“I have personally witnessed the devastation that genocide wreaks, which sadly continues today,” said Elie Wiesel. “But I also recognize the resilience of the human spirit,” he continued. “We must remember and honor the remarkable efforts of those saviors who intervened a century ago to prevent such atrocities from ever happening again.”

The [Aurora Prize](#) was named after Aurora Mardiganian who, as a child, was forced to witness the atrocities of the Armenian Genocide, including losing her father and brothers. Against the odds she survived and went on to devote her life to providing humanitarian relief and raising awareness of the Armenian Genocide, including starring in a famous film called *Ravished Armenia* in 1919.

The Prize is also inspired by the thousands of untold stories of courage and survival during these events a century ago.

“Resilience, strength, survival and gratitude are characteristics exhibited by Armenians, though not by us exclusively. They are found in all people,” commented Noubar Afeyan. “We developed the concept of #BeArmenian #BeAlive to encapsulate the strength of the human spirit—not just for Armenians, but for everyone.”

As part of its efforts, 100 LIVES also hopes to digitize the written record of the Armenian Genocide, a substantial undertaking, yet one which the founders believe can help safeguard the historical archive in perpetuity and ensure it can be accessed by anyone.

“There are a small number of survivors of the Armenian Genocide left with us. It is crucial that we ensure that, as we approach the centennial, we take this opportunity to leave a lasting imprint of what happened a century ago onto the world’s collective conscience,” remarked Vartan Gregorian.

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Photography, videos and press release for media use: <http://edelman.isebox.net/100lives>

NOTES TO EDITORS

100 LIVES

100 LIVES is a new global initiative rooted in the events of the Armenian Genocide, during which hundreds of thousands of Armenians were saved by the courageous and heroic acts of individuals and institutions. A century later, 100 LIVES seeks to express gratitude, to share remarkable [stories](#) of survivors and their saviors, and to celebrate the strength of the human spirit.

100 LIVES is launching a global call for the descendants of both saviors and survivors to share their remarkable [stories](#). It will bring these stories to life and tell many stories over the lifetime of the initiative.

100 LIVES will invest in projects, as a tangible expression of gratitude. We want our actions to help inspire others to stop, to think about those who have helped them during a crisis, and to express gratitude by doing something in return.

100 LIVES will leave a lasting act of gratitude through its fundraising and grants program. The funding will be invested in Gratitude Projects relating to Armenia, countries with a strong Armenian diaspora, or countries with links to the people, families, institutions or communities that saved and helped Armenians 100 years ago. Projects are aimed at expressing Gratitude to and raising awareness of the people and organizations that gave Armenians a second chance and creating a better future for younger generations.

www.100LIVES.com

Not On Our Watch

Not On Our Watch was founded by George Clooney, Don Cheadle, Matt Damon, Brad Pitt, Jerry Weintraub, and David Pressman to focus global attention and resources to stop and prevent mass atrocities. Drawing upon the voices of cultural leaders, our mission is to protect and assist the vulnerable, marginalized, and displaced.

www.notonourwatchproject.org

Elie Wiesel Foundation

Elie Wiesel and his wife, Marion, established The Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity soon after he was awarded the 1986 Nobel Prize for Peace. The Foundation's mission, rooted in the memory of the Holocaust, is to combat indifference, intolerance and injustice through international dialogue and youth-focused programs that promote acceptance, understanding and equality.

<http://www.eliewieselfoundation.org/>

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