



RAMAPO COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY
Office of Communications and Public Relations

Press Release

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PANEL AT RAMAPO COLLEGE TO DISCUSS ISLAMICIZED ARMENIAN WOMEN AND ORPHANS IN TURKEY AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

(MAHWAH, NJ) – The Gross Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at Ramapo College of New Jersey is sponsoring a panel discussion on the experiences of the children and grandchildren of the women and orphans who were Islamicized during the Armenian Genocide. These individuals are today increasingly reasserting their intertwined religious and ethnic identities as Christians and Armenians. The event, which is free and open to the public, will take place at Ramapo College on October 8 at 7:30 p.m. in the Trustees Pavilion. The program is possible in part due to the generous support of the Armenian National Committee-New Jersey.

The program, entitled *Islamicized Armenian Women and Orphans and the [Re]emergence of Armenian Identities in Turkey A Century after the Armenian Genocide*, will cover a broad range of perspectives. The panelists will develop, through narratives, interviews, photos and personal histories, a framework for what constitutes new Armenian identities in light of the increasing prevalence of Islamicized Armenians reclaiming their former heritage.

Panel members include:

- **Ishkhan Chiftjian**, who teaches at Hamburg University, Germany. He will focus on genocide, language and collective identity. He is the editor of two books, *Voices from Germany* and *New Voices from Germany*, both in German. The books include interviews with and articles by German scholars about the Armenian Genocide.
- **Rakel Dink** is the widow of slain Turkish-Armenian journalist and activist Hrant Dink. She will relate her own experience growing up in a family of the Varto clan. Although never forgetting its Armenian Christian roots, the clan escaped persecution by assimilating into the surrounding Kurdish population.
- **Elyse Semerdjian**, associate professor of Islamic World/Middle Eastern History at Whitman College. She will expand on the findings of her acclaimed book, *Off the Straight Path: Illicit Sex, Law, and Community in Ottoman Aleppo*. She will explore the connections between ethno-religious persecution and the subjugation of women and Islamic law in the Ottoman Empire as it relates to the collective memory of the Armenian

Genocide in Turkey and Syria.

- **Marc Sinan** was born to a Turkish-Armenian mother and a German father. His grandmother, Ani, was “Islamicized” during the Armenian Genocide. Appearing on international concert stages since his youth, Sinan is a much-admired guitarist and composer. He will speak about how his music and that of others relates to the experience of Islamacization during and after the Armenian Genocide.

For more information, visit the Gross Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at <http://www.ramapo.edu/holocaust/> or call 201.684.7409 to reserve a seat for the event.

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Ranked by U.S. News & World Report as sixth in the Best Regional Universities North category for public institutions, Ramapo College of New Jersey is sometimes mistaken for a private college. This is, in part, due to its unique interdisciplinary academic structure, its size of approximately 6,008 students and its pastoral setting in the foothills of the Ramapo Mountains on the New Jersey/New York border.

Established in 1969, Ramapo College offers bachelor’s degrees in the arts, business, humanities, social sciences and the sciences, as well as in professional studies, which include nursing and social work. In addition, Ramapo College offers courses leading to teacher certification at the elementary and secondary levels. The College also offers seven graduate programs as well as articulated programs with Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, New York Chiropractic College, New York University College of Dentistry, SUNY State College of Optometry and New York College of Podiatric Medicine.