

## "No genocide in our past": Holocaust Commemorations in Turkey

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Turkey is the only predominantly Muslim country to participate in the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, as an observer country, and has commemorated the Holocaust on January 27th since 2011. In the context of Turkey's aspiration at the time to become an EU member and its convoluted diplomatic ties with the State of Israel, the institution of official Holocaust remembrance initiatives may at a first glance seem like a political instrument to gain international leverage. In light of this, it is important to examine whether these commemorations can function as a socio-cultural platform for Turkey to revisit and reinterpret past mass violence in its full complexity.

Based on a discourse analysis of Holocaust Remembrance Days, this paper has identified four dominant themes: 1) A hermetic multi-culturalism which valorizes the tolerance of the Ottoman Empire; 2) An untainted Turkish past in a Europe tarnished by the memory of the Holocaust; 3) Uniqueness as a tool to disassociate from a Genocidal History; 4) Jews as a Model Minority in Turkey. Turkish commemorations do not allow for possible disruption of a self-congratulatory national memory narrative.