

now, with the opportunity arising to excel over past practices in this prison cell, the Turk displays his supremacy in the most abhorrent sexual performance on a prisoner ever recorded in any book on torture techniques in that little house of *hukumet* (*hükümet*, courthouse) in the city of Bakir, “a few days journey in the donkey cart from Erzerum” (p. 162).

Vartan was meant to survive this ordeal, and so did boys and girls who were sexually assaulted. What was their experience like, and what does sexual violence entail? According to a report by the UN Special Rapporteur on this issue, it means

“any violence, physical or psychological, carried out through sexual means or by targeting sexuality,” thus including “both physical and psychological attacks directed at a person’s sexual characteristics, such as forcing a person to strip naked in public, mutilating a person’s genitals, or slicing off women’s breasts” as well as “situations in which two victims are forced to perform sexual acts on one another or to harm one another in a sexual manner.”¹⁹

William King reported such an assault against Armenian male victims early in February 1915 in the town of Ardanutem at the beginning of the massacres. Here, “50 Armenians were taken from the local jail, stripped naked and compelled to leap to death into the frightful abyss of Jenemdere, also called ‘The Devil’s Gap’.”²⁰

¹⁹ Final report submitted to the UN Commission on Human Rights by Ms. Gay J. McDougal, Special Rapporteur, on “Contemporary Forms of Slavery: Systematic Rape, Sexual Slavery and Slavery-like Practices during Armed Conflict,” E/CN.4/Sub.2/1998/13, paras 21–22, cited in Sivakumaran, “Sexual Violence Against Men” (2007), p. 261.

²⁰ King, *Complete History* (1922), p. 168.