



REPORT

Conference

'Bangladesh: Justice after genocide'

Screening of Documentary film, 'WAR CRIMES 1971'

Venue: Leiden University, The Hague

24 March 2022

&

Demonstration: In front of Broken Chair, UN Geneva

25-26 March 2022



International Conference

BANGLADESH *JUSTICE AFTER GENOCIDE*



24 March
14:30 - 18:30 CEST
Wijnhaven Campus
Leiden University

WWW.EBFORUM.EU



Sign Up Now!



Background & Justification of the Conference

During the 1971 Genocide in Bangladesh, the Pakistan military deliberately harmed to hundreds of thousands of Bangladeshi citizens. The horrors of 1971 are considered as one of the worst mass atrocities in the history. The damage they inflicted can be described in the following numbers - three million people were believed to have been killed, up to 200,000 women were violated and over 10 million people were forced to cross the border to India to seek shelter. All this happened only in nine months. The perpetrators were the Pakistani military, the victims innocent Bangladeshis. To achieve the goal of peace and justice after committing such crimes, it should have been widely acknowledged at the time. Bangladesh is still waiting for an official apology from Pakistan. Bangladesh has been looking to other countries to recognise what happened in 1971. A recognition from Pakistan

and other countries in the world, was not made. Politics and realpolitik are said to have gotten in the way.



The 1971 Genocide by the Pakistan Army is well documented and reported in the international media and also in the diplomatic correspondences during that period. The world media including The Telegraph, The Times, The Sunday Times, The New York Times and several news agencies reported the massacre of the Bengalis by the Pakistan Army. The story of the massacre of the fateful night of 25 March 1971 was highlighted in the international news media. There is a need for an UN-sponsored Resolution condemning

the atrocities and bringing the perpetrators to justice. The new generation must know what treatment was meted out to Bangladeshi people who deserve to enjoy equal human rights. Unfortunately, the 1971 GENOCIDE in Bangladesh committed by Pakistan has today become a forgotten chapter in the history and we know the common phrase, 'Justice delayed, justice denied'. Due to lack of international recognition, the history of that horror, Genocide has become faded in the world context today. We feel that the 1971 GENOCIDE should be recognised to give justice to the victims of the atrocities meted out by the Pakistan Army and its political leadership.

The Leiden University conference was a follow-up of the 30 November 2021 conference held at the Dutch International Media Centre at the Parliament building in the Hague, which attracted a sizeable number of students from Leiden University and Nijmegen University in the Netherlands. The subject of the 30 Nov conference (*International recognition of 1971 Bangladesh Genocide*), touched the international students, belonging to various European nationals. Many of them heard for the first time came to know that there was a Genocide in Bangladesh in 1971 and expressed surprise that the story has not reached to many Europeans and the perpetrators still remain unpunished. Hence, EBF took the initiative to organize the conference at the most prestigious university (Leiden University) in the Netherlands.

The Program includes:

- 1. Discussion**
- 2. Screening of the Documentary Film titled, 'War Crimes 1971'**
- 3. Two-day long Demonstration in front of the Broken Chair, United Nations, Geneva, Switzerland**



PROGRAM

Registration & Coffee/Tea (14:00-14:30)

1st Session (14:30-16:15)

Address of Welcome: Mr. Rohan Sharma, Leiden University International Studies & Head, SE and South Asia Club

Screening of Documentary Film – ‘War Crimes 1971’ (10 min)

Mr. Bikash Chowdhury Barua, President, EBF Netherlands- *Chair*

Ms. Mahjabeen Khaled, former MP (Member of Parliament) of Bangladesh & member of the Foreign Affairs Standing Committee of Bangladesh Parliament

Mr Chris Blackburn, Communications Director, Swiss Inter Strategy Group; 'Friend of Bangladesh' Award Recipient, London, UK- *'Bangladesh and the Spirit of 1971: Past, Present, and Future'*

Mr. Husain Haqqani, Former Ambassador of Pakistan to the United States & Director, South and Central Asia, Hudson Institute, Washington, USA- *'Bangabandhu and the Struggle for Bangladesh'*

Lunch (16:15 – 17:00)

2nd Session (17:00-18:15)

Mr. Bikash Chowdhury Barua, President, EBF Netherlands- *Chair*

Dr. Wolfgang-Peter Zingel, South Asia Institute (SAI), University of Heidelberg, Germany- *'The twelfth stage of genocide and the economics of a collective amnesia'*

Dr. Tommaso Virgili, Postdoctoral Research Fellow at WZB Berlin Social Science Center, Berlin, Germany- *'The threat of Islamism in Bangladesh - from the genocide to the present day'*

Q & A Sessions

Ms. Manju von Rospatt of Leiden University College and **Julienne Mai Li**, Nijmegen University/BASUG

Drinks / Socialisation

SPEAKERS PROFILE

Mr. Husain Haqqani is former Ambassador of Pakistan to the United States and currently Director of the South & Central Asia Hudson Institute in Washington DC in USA. In 1992 Mr. Husain Haqqani became one of Pakistan's youngest ambassadors, serving in Sri Lanka until 1993. He served as Pakistan's ambassador to the United States from 2008 to 2011. Considered an expert on radical Islamist movements, he is also Co-Chair of Hudson Institute's Project on 'the Future of the Muslim World' as well as co-Editor of the journal 'Current Trends in Islamist Ideology' published from Washington DC. His books include Pakistan Between Mosque and Military; Magnificent Delusions: US, Pakistan and an Epic History of Misunderstanding; India v Pakistan: Why can't we just be friends? and Reimagining Pakistan: Transforming a Dysfunctional Nuclear State. Haqqani has been a journalist, academic and diplomat in addition to serving as advisor to four Pakistani Prime Ministers, including the late Benazir Bhutto. He has written for Wall Street Journal, New York Times, Financial Times, Washington Post, and The Telegraph, among others. Mr. Haqqani received a B.A. degree with distinction in 1977 and a MA in International Relations in 1980 from the University of Karachi, Pakistan.



Dr. Wolfgang-Peter Zingel is an Associate Member of the South Asia Institute (SAI) of Heidelberg University; has studied Economics, History and Law. Diplom-Volkswirt (M.A. Economics), Dr. rer. pol. (PhD Economics). He joined the SAI in the Department of International Economics in 1971. Worked in the fields of agricultural, applied, development, regional and urban economics with a focus on South Asian countries. Representative of the SAI in Pakistan (1980-82) and India (1990-92). Visiting Fellow at the Academy of International Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, 2014-15. Visiting Fellow at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad and teaching at the National Institute of Pakistan Studies, NIPS. As a DAAD-fellow he taught public finance at Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla, in 1989 and economic history at the National Institute of Pakistan Studies (NIPS) of Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, in 2011. Working on food systems of Dhaka within the DFG programme "Megacities-Megachallenge". Visiting Fellow at the Academy of International Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, 2014-15. Published widely on South Asian economic, social and political affairs, e.g. Economy and ecology as factors in South Asian cooperation. Presently working on regional cooperation in South Asia, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and its economic policy, and Sri Lanka: The first welfare state of the Global South.



Ms. Mahjabeen Khaled is the former MP (Member of Parliament) of Bangladesh. As MP she was a member of the Foreign Affairs Standing Committee of Bangladesh Parliament, member of Climate Parliamentary committee, Caucus on Disability, Caucus on Children's Right, Caucus on Parliamentarian for Nuclear Non-Proliferation & Disarmament, and the Committee of the Parliamentarians for Global Action. She graduated from Loreto College, Darjeeling, India; represented Bangladesh in many international events including the UN General Assembly as part of Bangladesh delegation in 2014, 2016, 2018; spoke on Peace Security and Water at the UN Security Council, United Nations in 2016 and at the UN General Assembly on mainstreaming the migration in development agenda on the 24-25 July 2017. Ms. Mahjabeen Khaled is the Chairman of the Khaled Musharraf Trust, member, Sector Commanders Forum and Legislative Sponsor of BPUR International. As a member of the parliamentary standing committee for foreign affairs she worked tirelessly and extensively traveled to promote and develop existing diplomatic and political relation with Bangladesh. Ms. Mahjabeen Khaled is the daughter of Major General Khaled Mosharraf. Bir Uttam who led the 3 November 1975 coup d'état against the Khandkar Mushtaq government and on 7 November he was overthrown and assassinated. Under his command K-Force played a crucial role in the unconditional surrender of the Pakistani Army on 16 December 1971.



Mr. Chris Blackburn is the Communications Director of the Swiss Interstrategy Group based in Zurich, Switzerland. Chris started his career in the Middle East and moved his focus to South Asia in 2003. He helped setup the US National Intelligence Conference and Exposition (INTELCON) and The Intelligence Summits, both major conferences which were part of the United States 9/11 Commission's public outreach program in 2005. His investigations into al-Qaeda's political and charity networks have proved invaluable to the reduction in the groups impact around the world. He was a recipient of a 'Friend of Bangladesh' award by the Bangladesh government in 2010 for his work in counter-terrorism and supporting the need for



war crimes tribunals. He's worked closely with Channel 4, BBC Panorama, Voice of America and other media outlets. He is part of Global Friends of Afghanistan (GFA), a non-profit setup in the United States to help Afghans across the world.

Dr. Tommaso Virgili is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the WZB Berlin Social Science Center, (<https://wzb.eu/en>) where he works on Islamism and liberal Islam, with a focus on Europe and the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region. He is also a Research Associate at the Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies and a Visiting Fellow at the European Foundation for Democracy in Brussels. Dr. Tommaso holds a Ph.D. in Comparative Constitutional Law from Sant'anna School of Advanced Studies in Pisa, a Master of Arts in Middle East, Islamic Studies and Arabic from the American University of Paris and Cairo, and a Master's Degree in Law from Sant'anna School of Advanced Studies in Pisa. He is the author of the book "Islam, Constitutional Law and Human Rights. Sexual Minorities and Freethinkers in Egypt and Tunisia", published by Routledge.



Mr Bikash Chowdhury Barua is the Chairman of BASUG- Diaspora and Development, (www.basug.eu), a diaspora organisation registered in the Netherlands, Germany and Bangladesh. He is also the President of EBF, Netherlands. He is also one of the founding Directors of the Global Academy on Migration and Development (www.globalacademymnd.org/). He did B.A. with Honours and M.A. in English literature and language from the University of Chittagong. He started his career as a journalist and worked with Bangladesh Times, Press Institute of Bangladesh in Dhaka, Inter Press Service (IPS) in Amsterdam and later worked for Novib (now Oxfam-Novib) and Swiss organisation HEKS for some time in early 90s as Consultant on Bangladesh. He worked with the Royal Mail Netherlands as head of the Office of Exchange department for 18 consecutive years. Mr. Chowdhury has extensive expertise on migration and development issues and is a member of the International Steering Committee of Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) Civil Society and authored three books and writes a regular weekly column in a daily newspaper in Bangladesh.



Ms. Manju von Rospatt is the UNICEF Student Team The Hague General Volunteer Coordinator and Board Member. She is a student at the Leiden University College in Liberal Arts and Sciences. Manju also serves as an Executive Producer at Eutopya, an international student podcast and is one of the key organisers of this conference.



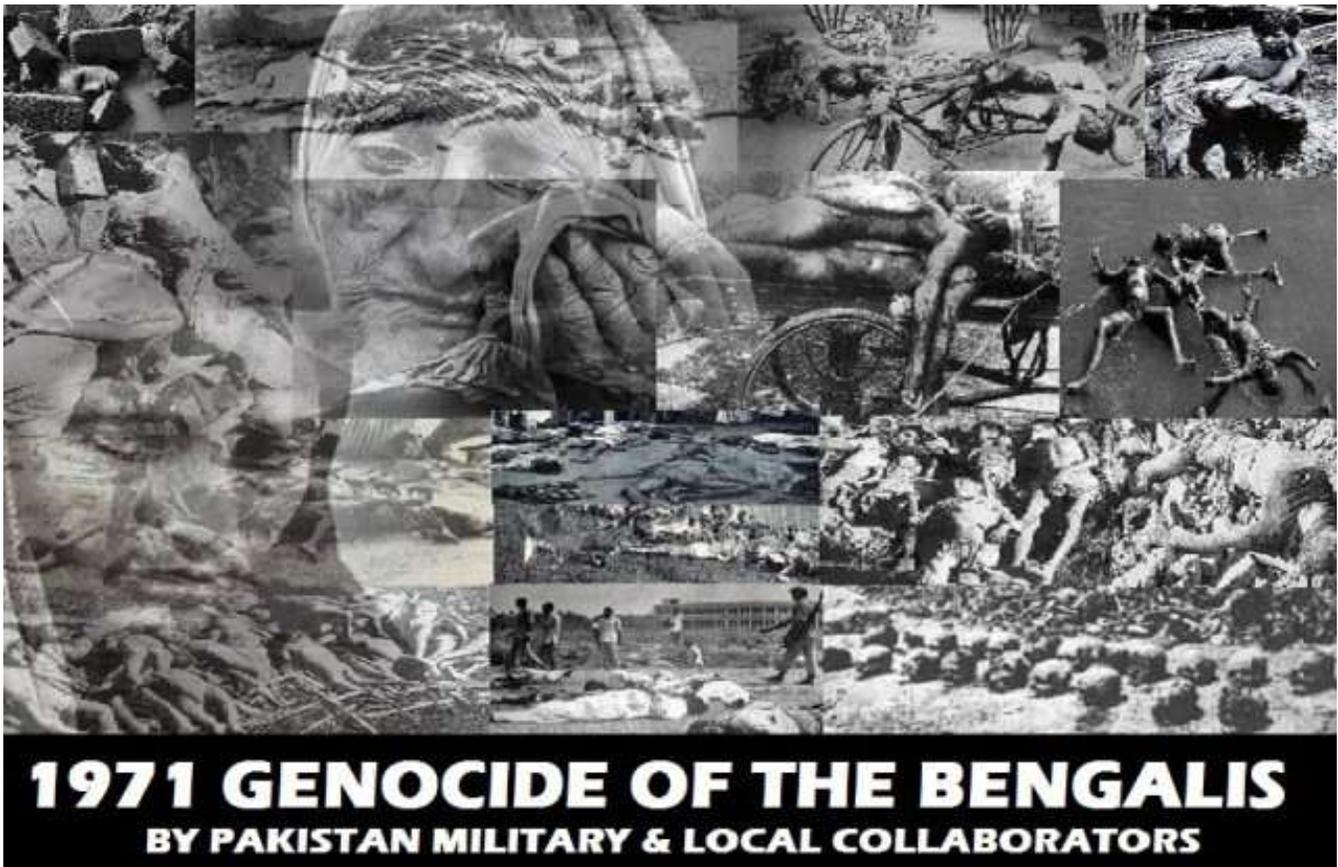
Mr. Rohan Sharma is a 2nd-year student at the Leiden University, studying International Relations and Organisations. He is also serving as the Head of the South East and South Asia Club and is one of the key organisers of this conference.



THE REPORT

The Hague, 24 March 2022 : Speakers at the international conference at Leiden University in the Hague today reiterated the demand for international recognition of 1971 genocide in Bangladesh committed by Pakistan army. They said, it is of great importance and an absolute necessity to honour the victims of Genocide and their descendants through recognition. To achieve the goal of peace and justice after committing such crimes, it should have been widely acknowledged at the time. Bangladesh is still waiting for an apology and has been looking to other countries to recognise what happened in 1971.

They were speaking at the conference titled 'Bangladesh : Justice after genocide' at the Hague faculty of Leiden University. The conference which is a follow-up of the last event on 'International Recognition of Bangladesh



Genocide in 1971 was organized by the Europe based Bangladeshi diaspora organization European Bangladesh Forum (EBF) in collaboration with the Leiden University UNICEF Student Team the Hague & SESA (South East and South Asian) Club by CIROS (Community of International Relations and Organisations Students).

The conference was addressed by the visiting former Pakistani ambassador to the USA and currently Director, South and Central Asia, Hudson Institute, Washington, Dr. Wolfgang-Peter Zingel, South Asia Institute (SAI), University of Heidelberg, Germany Ms. Mahjabeen Khaled, former Member of the Bangladesh Parliament and daughter of Sector Commander in 1971 Liberation War Major General Khaled Musaffaf, Dr. Tommaso Virgili, Postdoctoral Research Fellow at WZB Berlin Social Science Center, Germany and Mr Chris Blackburn, Communications Director, Swiss Inter Strategy Group; 'Friend of Bangladesh' Award Recipient, London. Mr. Rohan Sharman of Leiden University International Studies & Head, South East & South Asia Club gave the

welcome address and Bikash Chowdhury Barua, President of EBF chaired the sessions. Ms. Manju von Rospatt of Leiden University College : Liberal Arts and Sciences & General Volunteer Coordinator and Board Member of the UNICEF Student Team and Ms. Mai Li Julienne of Nijmegen university conducted the Question & Answer Session. Ms. Mahjabeen Khaled and Mr Chris Blackburn took part in the conference through zoom.

A 10-minute *Documentary film* titled, ‘**War Crimes 1971**’ was also screened on the day. The conference was live telecast by the London-based British Bangla News.

Speaking on the day **Dr. Wolfgang-Peter Zingel** said, *‘initiatives like this conference are needed to keep up the memory. So what else could be done, he questioned saying, a first step would be that historians and other researchers from Bangladesh and Pakistan and/or representatives of the civil society meet personally on neutral ground and together examine historical evidence. This, he continued, will be not easy, but easier now, after none of the major actors are still alive.*

In her speech former Member of the Bangladesh Parliament **Ms. Mahjabeen Khaled** said, *We hope that in the 21st century, the global community will stand alongside with the Bangladeshis to not just remember but also recognise the Bangladesh genocide of 1971.*

Addressing the conference, the visiting former Pakistani diplomat and writer **Mr. Husain Haqqani** said, *the fact that the atrocity happened in Bangladesh is something that needs not only acknowledgment but also a **collective apology by the state and government of Pakistan**, so that this chapter at least, cannot be closed, but can be brought to some kind of closure.* Paying rich tributes to Bangabandhu, founder of Bangladesh the former ambassador of Pakistan in USA said, *‘had he lived, I am certain he would have supported the idea of a formal apology from Pakistan for the tragedy inflicted on the people of Bangladesh during their war of liberation. This demand is supported by fair-minded people, like Pakistani dissidents like me, the Pakistan diplomat said adding, collective apologies help heal wounds and enable nations to deal with past wrongdoing.*

In his video message from London **Mr Chris Blackburn** said, *‘the issue of recognition for the 1971 genocide is very important. We need to keep reminding people of this genocide issue. Pakistan is labouring under guilt and lies Mr Chris said adding, it hasn’t learnt any lesson from 1971 because it has never been made accountable for its behaviour. A new generation of Afghans, Balochis, and others are the direct victims of global failure to hold Pakistan to account. I believe we need to make them pay, he concluded.*

Speaking on the day **Dr Tommaso Virgili** said, *in 1971 Bangladesh was born as a secular state, but this character was progressively lost in time. In 1975, Jamaat e Islami was made legal again. In 1977 the reference to God Almighty was introduced in the Constitution, and secularism deleted (before being restored in 2010) ; in 1988 Islam became the state religion.*



1971 Genocide At A Glance (by Asif Munir)

- **3 million:** Estimated number of Bengalis killed during the liberation war
- **100,000 – 200,000:** Number of Bengalis killed in ‘Operation Searchlight’
- **10,000:** Number of Bengalis, mostly of Hindu community, killed around the largest killing field in Chuknagar, Khulna district
- **20,000 – 25,000:** Number of people killed and buried at Jalladkhana in Dhaka, one of the largest killing fields in the country
- **200,000 - 400,000:** Number of Bengali women raped by the Pakistani army and its collaborators during the course of the war
- **5000:** Number of war babies born and mostly adopted by Christian missionaries around the world
- **10 million:** Number of Bengali refugees who fled to India
- **30 - 40 million:** Number of Bengalis internally displaced
- **1,000:** Approximate number of Bengali intellectuals and professional killed by Pakistani army and collaborators to create an intellectual vacuum for the future. Out of that, more than 200 intellectuals abducted, tortured and killed in the 2 weeks of December, based on a hit list of Pakistan army general
- **80,000:** Number of troops of the Pakistan Army involved in the Genocide, equipped with heavy artillery, arms and ammunition
- **75,000:** Approximate number of the members of the different para-military forces involved in the genocide, formed with local Bengali collaborators of the Pakistan Army
- **175,000:** Number of liberation fighters with limited arms and ammunition, a combination of troops loyal to the then East Pakistan (Bangladesh) and guerrilla forces
- **250,000:** Number of Indian troops who joined to support Bangladesh in November 1971

CONFERENCE

The conference started with the welcome speech given by the **Mr. Rohan Sharma**, Leiden University International Studies & Head, SE, and South Asia Club:

Good afternoon, everyone present and watching online. I am Rohan, Chair of SESA and Welcome to Wijnhaven. On behalf of SESA by CIROS, UNICEF student team the Hague, and EBF (European Bangladesh Forum) I would like to thank you all for joining us in this important conference on Bangladesh in Justice for Genocide.

First of all, let me welcome and introduce our wonderful panel of speakers, who have been kind enough to grace us with their honorable presence. They are Mr. Hussain Haqqani, Former Ambassador of Pakistan to the United States and the current Director, South and Central Asia, Hudson Institute, Ms. Mahjabeen Khaled, Former Member of Parliament of Bangladesh and member of foreign affairs standing committee (online), Mr. Chris



Blackburn, Communications Director, Swiss Interstrategy Group; 'Friend of Bangladesh' Award Recipient, (online), Dr. Wolfgang-Peter Zingel is an Associate Member of the South Asia Institute (SAI) of Heidelberg University, Dr. Tommaso Virgili, Postdoctoral Research Fellow at WZB Berlin Social Science Center Berlin, Germany and the President of EBF Netherlands, Mr. Bikash Choudhary Barau. And today's event will be moderated by Mailli Brendel from BASUG foundation and Manju von Rospatt, Board member UNICEF student the Hague.

Three days ago, the United States government recognized the violence taking place against Rohingyas in Myanmar as genocide. Just north of the country lies another South Asian nation, Bangladesh, which witnessed similar violence against its own people exactly 51 years ago starting on 26th March 1971 with the beginning of Operation Searchlight by West Pakistan. East Pakistan as Bangladesh was known then was fighting for the recognition of the Bengali language and culture against an Urdu-speaking West Pakistan. This eventually led to the independence of Bangladesh in December 1971 and the formation of a new nation in South Asia.

In South Asian and world history, several dark chapters of majoritarian violence against minorities have occurred often ending without justice for its victims and impunity for its perpetrators. That is why it is important that we have gathered here today to ask important questions and learn from history what the cost of impunity can be. Even today, estimates vary from how many Bengalis were killed in this atrocity. The government of Bangladesh approximates around three million killings during the 1971 genocide by the Pakistani Army. Even though several women fought in the war for freedom, numerous women were tortured, raped, and killed during this war as well.

Despite 51 years that have passed since the war today few recognize the slaughter and suffering that took place during the war to Bengalis, Hindus and women. While the international community, the United States, and many others looked the other way then, we must acknowledge that in this century that must not be allowed to happen. That is why we have present here among us an excellent panel of speakers, to examine with us this fight for Justice and its importance in History.

SESA as a representative of the South Asian community in Leiden's IRO program organized this event to shed light on this event, UNICEF's concern for the rights of women and children as well as BASUG and EBFs commitment to the cause of Justice have made today's event possible. I would like to emphasize the views of all the speakers are their own of course and not of the hosting organizations. We must honor academic freedom here

at Leiden University as students, participants, and organizers. Furthermore, we will be starting with a small documentary on the war crimes committed during the 1971 war to hear the voices of the people who had to live through the suffering.



Mr Bikash Chowdhury, President of EBF who chaired the two sessions in his speech expressed thanks and gratitude to the Leiden University authority for ‘allowing us to hold this conference in this beautiful building, located in the heart of the city, The Hague, widely known as the ‘City of Justice’. And we are here- today to talk, discuss on the subject, ‘Bangladesh: Peace After Genocide’. We are also grateful to the two student groups – 1) the UNICEF Student Team the Hague & 2) the South East and South Asian Club by Community of International Relations and Organisations Students- for joining us in organizing this event. Without their support, it would not have been possible to be here today. I, as the President of EBF express, my thanks to these two organisations and the leaders - Manju von Rospatt, Rohan Sharma and Annabel Witsch for their work.



We are really overwhelmed to see the response and interest of the international students, mainly from Europe, to know about the history of Bangladesh, how it emerged as an independent country, the bloody history of its 9-month long liberation war, the sad history of the 1971 Genocide in Bangladesh.

GENOCIDE- It is an issue, which still remains, unresolved, unattended, unnoticed and sadly, ignored by the international community. That is the reason, we, the Bangladeshi diaspora in Europe, are here today, to draw the attention of the international community, to one of the worst atrocities, the world witnessed in the 20th century. In 1971, Genocide in Bangladesh, the Pakistan occupation army and its local collaborators, 3 million people, violated over 200.000 girls and women, and forced 10 million people, to cross the border and take shelter in India.

The 1971 Genocide is well documented and reported in the international media and also in the diplomatic correspondences, during that period. Unfortunately, 50 years after these, world has totally remained silent to this issue. Due to lack of international recognition, the history of that horror, the 1971 Genocide has become, faded, in the world context today. We feel that, the 1971 GENOCIDE, should be recognised, internationally, to give justice, to the victims of the atrocities.

Every Genocide, every crime against humanity, deserves, to be recognized. It helps the victims, and the generations, that follow. Simply, we need to start talking about it: at schools, at work, with your friends and with your families. It is shocking, when people hear it, for the first time, but it is important, to break the silence and raise awareness. As an individual, but also collectively. As a community. We need to strengthen our efforts, to open the eyes of the global community. This effort, would be an important tool, to seek justice and redress. Worldwide recognition, should be our goal. Strong relationships, with like-minded activists, working in human rights and law, is an important step.

Europe, has been one of the main theatres, where crimes against humanity, have taken place. It is worrying, what is happening now in Ukraine, What Russia is doing in Ukraine today. We see the atrocities still going on against the Baloch and other ethnic minorities in Pakistan. If the 1971 Genocide could be addressed, and the perpetrators were given exemplary punishment, such atrocities, perhaps, would not have taken place today.

Important thing is that, the ‘culture of impunity’ must go and, as long as this culture of impunity remains’, atrocities will continue to take place, and it is taking place today in Europe once again. It seems, like almost every nation, lives in denial, about the horrors of 1971. They are either uneducated, or feign ignorance, of the eyewitness testimonies of survivors, and those, that had to help repair the broken country. Nobody wants to admit officially in public, what inhumane crimes, took place in Bangladesh, for whatever unexplainable reason.

‘A genocide not recognized, is a genocide denied’. This makes it, a global issue for our time. People choose to look away. One nation, must be the first to recognise, the genocide of 1971. Those that follow, that brave nation, should find it pretty easy. The evidence is clear. Has been for decades. We want to encourage that first nation, other than Bangladesh, to recognise the horrors, that took place. We need to make, state murder and crimes, against humanity accountable. Justice for these acts is something, that impacts everyone, on this planet. Genocides should be consigned, to the history books, but if we don’t address justice, it haunts the present day. It denies the next generations, a chance at a peaceful future. By raising our voice, by standing by the victims, and by recognizing, what happened in 1971, we are one step closer, to global peace. Let’s break the silence!

Ms. Mahjabeen Khaled, former Member of Parliament of Bangladesh and member of the foreign affairs standing committee of Bangladesh parliament in a video message sent from Dhaka said, today’s topic is very personal to me and to my family. War of liberation actually defines me and what I am today, and for that reason I think I should share my story with you all.



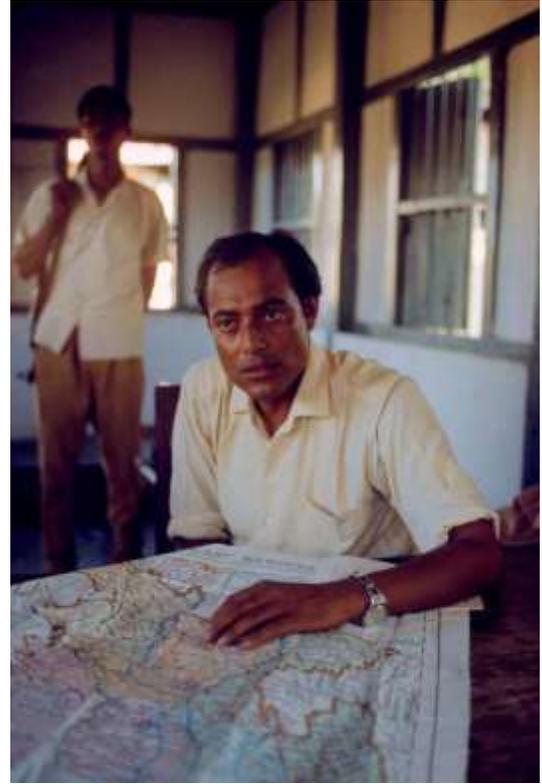
In 1971 after a bloody 9-month war with West Pakistan, the east Pakistan got liberated. It was victory and the creation of the new nation called Bangladesh. It was a great loss for Bangladeshis, about 300,000 people were killed and 200,000 Bangladeshi women were violated in a systematic campaign of genocide. The systematic eradication of the Bangladeshi people by the Pakistani army during the Bangladesh Liberation War, targeted Hindus, academics, professionals and

university students. *(Photo below: Major General Khaled Musharraf in 1971)*

The genocide committed in Bangladesh in 1971 is widely considered to be one of the worst genocides in history. According to Asia Times, 'at a meeting of the military general of west Pakistan Yahya Khan declared, 'Kill three million of them, the rest will eat of our hands'.

Accordingly, on the night of 25 March 1971, the Pakistani Army launched 'Operation Searchlight' to crush Bangladeshi resistance in which Bangladeshi members of military services were disarmed and killed, students and the intellectuals all able-bodied were just picked up and gunned down. It was one of the largest genocides in the modern known history.

Coming back to my personal story, my father General Khaled Musharraf, then a major in the Bangladeshi military was well known for his role in the Bangladesh Liberation War. He was the Sector Commander of Bangladesh forces sector 2, leader of K Force Brigade commander during that time. On the 26th of March 1971 he led his brigade in Bramonbaria following the declaration of independence on behalf of the father of the nation Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Khaled Musharraf successfully led the Crack Platoon, a guerrilla unit in the sector 2. He raised this special guerrilla force comprised of the students of the city's major education institutions, young professionals and political activists of Dhaka. Under his leadership crack platoons valiant fighters carried out major operations in and around the capital and constantly routed the Pakistani army. Pakistan high command acknowledged the bravery of Major Khaled Musharraf and quoted 'we have trained Major Khaled so well that even a major General from the Pakistani army wasn't enough to beat him'.



While the war was going on, my mother and we two sisters were left behind in Dhaka to defend ourselves which was very difficult as the Pakistan army were looking for Major Khaled's family. They were confident that if they captured the family, Major Khaled would come to rescue his family but unfortunately, they miscalculated. He did not come to rescue us as he was fighting a war. At one point when hiding became very difficult, my mother, decided to join my father in Agartala, in India which was the largest training center and operation headquarter for Bangladesh freedom fighters under my father Sector2. It was a very dangerous route but she managed walking 40 days to reach Agartala and reunite with my father.



Me and my younger sister aged 5 and 2 were left behind with distant relatives as she thought it would have been too dangerous for such young children to take the dangerous route. According to her, she knew she would convince her husband who is a commander can, send people to fetch us later.

Meanwhile, the Pakistani army found out the hiding place where we two sisters were. They arrested us and took us to the cantonment where we were ready to shipped out to Pakistan. Pakistani army generals were confident that Major Khaled will surrender now, but they were wrong again.

My mother begged my father to look for us but his only attention and priority was the war and the freedom fight. While the Pakistani army were preparing to send us to Pakistan, one of the renowned principals of a school in Dhaka, Mrs Monsoor came to rescue us. She had heard about us that Major Khaled's two young daughters have

been captured and they are ready to be sent to Pakistan. Mrs Monsoor convinced the Generals by singing a bond which allowed her to keep us at her residence. Later, when asked she said if it was her grandchildren, she would have saved them, the same way she saved us. This is how we started our new journey at Mrs. Monsoor's residence during the liberation war while the Pakistani army guards patrolling the apartment area 24/7. But at Agartala my mother was hysterical losing us. At the end my father agreed to send freedom fighters to look for us. Finally, when they found our whereabouts, they came to rescue us which itself was a big operation. They managed to kidnap me from Mrs Monsoor's residence but as they fired guns the patrolling guards were alerted. Freedom fighters could only manage to take me with them but unfortunately my younger sister was left behind.

My travel to Agartala was another horrific ordeal. Every check post was informed about my kidnapping by the freedom fighters. The freedom fighters had to make change to my appearances as a boy, changing my clothes and cutting off my hair. Finally, after one month I reached my family by foot. My family was overjoyed but unfortunately my younger sister's whereabouts was unknown to us till the end of the war when we found her again.

Today the reason for sharing with you my personal story because of the Pakistan armies' systematic atrocities. Not only our family, but a lot of other Bangladeshi families went through sufferings for 9 months. Although Major Khaled was injured seriously on his forehead by a sprinter during one of the battles, he recovered by the Indian doctor's assistance. Following the Bangladesh war of Independence, Major Khaled was appointed as the Staff Officer to the new HQ of the new Bangladesh army in Dhaka and later appointed to the post of Chief of General Staff. He was awarded the military honor of 'Bir Uttam' for gallantry by independent Government of Bangladesh in 1971.

In 1975, 15th August when the Father of the Nation was assassinated along with his family members by the renegade army officers, General Khaled decided to stop the killers as he prepared a coup d'état among the army on the 3rd of November 1975. He managed to bring back chain of command in the Bangladesh army but unfortunately on the 4th day, a mutiny broke on the 7th of November consisting of left wing non-enlisted personnel in the army and led by radical wing JSD leader Abu Taher, which resulted in the assassination of General Khaled Musharraf. General Khaled once a commander and vigilant freedom fighter unfortunately was killed by his own people in free Bangladesh. A tragic death of a war hero.

Telling you my story has a *purpose*, because we understand 50 years after the war, 1971 remains a sad history both at the people's level and the state level in Bangladesh. Just because 1971 does not factor into mainstream discourse significantly does not mean that it has not left lasting imprints on us. It stands out as one of the most hateful human rights crimes the world has ever seen. In fact, 1971 remains one of the most defining events in Bangladesh's history, shaping its self-identity and regional policies.

1971 Liberation War has narrated thousands of personal stories; stories like mine, blood leaks through the lines of these events when one reads them closely. It is evident that any long-lasting closure will be unusual unless the public recognizes its collective moral responsibility in finally bringing this disgraceful chapter of human history to an end and learns from the failures of the past. This forgotten Genocide in 1971 and the world's silence to it, makes a very strong case that permits international punishment.

At the end I would like say that the 20th century was marked victims of mass atrocities in Bangladesh 'remembering' what was called a forgotten Genocide. *We hope that in the 21st century, the global community will stand alongside with the Bangladeshis to not just remember but also recognise the Bangladesh genocide of 1971.*

Mr. Chris Blackburn, Communications Director, Swiss Inter Strategy Group; 'Friend of Bangladesh' Award Recipient, London, UK in his paper present at the conference titled '*Bangladesh and the Spirit of 1971: Past, Present, and Future*' said, I would like to thank the University of Leiden for co-hosting this event with the European Bangladesh Forum (EBF). A great partnership. EBF has been at the forefront of efforts to bring the horrors of the 1971 Liberation War in Bangladesh to new generations.



EBF is working with partners across Europe to build awareness and education. I would like to thank Leiden University and EBF for raising awareness. It's a very noble pursuit. Especially in these dangerous times. Leiden University is helping educate new leaders in various fields. Some of you here today will hopefully go on to shape organisations such as the United Nations, the European Parliament, The Dutch Foreign Office, and other organisations working for the good of the Netherlands and the rest of humanity. Hopefully, today, we speakers can imprint on you too. Because I remember all of the external speakers and their lectures I had while I was at university. They stood out apart from the haze of alcohol-soaked parties, the cramming for exams, and endless lectures and seminars.

PAST: Speaking on the Past Mr. Chris Blackburn said, War crimes have been brought to Europe again. This city of international justice is watching current events with great trepidation. We thought war crimes were consigned to the history books. Francis Fukuyama said that Liberal Democracies had won- It was the End of History. We know now that unfortunately it's not true.

The Netherlands is still haunted by the ghosts of World War 2. The Nazi Occupation and the death of thousands of Jews, like Anne Frank, are woven into the national fabric. We can't forget the dehumanisation, gas chambers, and the barbarity. We shouldn't forget they continue to happen again and again. We are told 'never again', but we know realpolitik and selfish national interest get in the way. Profit and power before people. The Balkans are still raw because of the ethnic cleanses of the 1990s and today Ukraine is under intense bombardment. This city is feared by war criminals and despots. Ukrainians are also being dehumanised as neo-Nazis and corrupt drug addicts. Russia has committed war crimes. It's clear to see. We've all seen the cluster munitions sticking out of the ground next to the zebra crossings and playground swings in Ukraine. The Geneva Conventions were one of mankind's greatest achievements. Trying to gentrify and civilise warfare was always going to be a tough sell. It's been even harder to enforce.



Mr Chris continued, in 1971, the Pakistani Army under the command of Lt. Gen. Tikka Khan launched 'Operation Searchlight' against the civilian population in East Pakistan, now Bangladesh. Pakistan's attacks on civilian leaders and intellectuals were spiteful, evil, and calculated. They wanted to deny Bangladesh from having a positive future. Those that were at the top of society were collectively punished. The Pakistani Army working with Islamist death squads also slaughtered students in their dormitories. Teachers in their schools. People shopping, working, trying to survive daily life. Doctors and nurses were shelled in their hospitals and medical centres. **Al-Badr and al-Shams**, two groups associated with **Jamaat Islami the leading Islamist fundamentalist movement**, created lists of people that the Pakistani military wanted to be removed. We know that **convicted criminal Chowdhury Mueen-Uddin** used his role as a journalist, to help death squad organisers to compile lists of those who were deemed a threat to West Pakistani rule. Mueen-Uddin informed on his associates and colleagues. He also went out with squads to pick up and kidnap targets from their homes and places of work. Their corpses later found in puddles and ditches.



Chris Blackburn who also worked for BBC and other newspapers in the UK said, a few months ago, I had a conversation with a British activist working on recognition for the war crimes of 1971. We became stuck on whether Bangladesh was a '**forgotten genocide**' or not. **I don't believe it is forgotten. I believe its misunderstood and underutilised.** When I go on Twitter or Facebook and listen to debates on South Asia, it's pretty clear to me that a new generation of Balochis, Sindhis, Afghans, Indians, Bangladeshis, and others are quoting the horrors of 1971 at current Pakistani misadventures. **Imran Khan, the Prime Minister of Pakistan recently said the Taliban had broken the 'shackles of slavery' for the Afghan people. Hundreds of thousands used the genocide of 1971 in response to his outrageous comments. Pakistan is making the same mistakes that it made in 1971. Afghanistan and Baluchistan are also facing human rights abuses, kidnappings by death squads, and Islamist proxies trying to seize power in society. So, 1971 is clearly not a forgotten genocide.** When reading the history and reaction to 1971, it was clear that western politicians and activists at the time knew there were atrocities, massacres and genocide going on in Bangladesh. I was reading the transcripts of a US Congressional session on Foreign Relations in the United States from the early 1970s, all the witnesses, even those from the US State Department said the Pakistani Army had engaged in a deliberate war against civilians rather than an insurgency.

Le Monde and other newspapers at the time compared the West Pakistan Army with the Nazi SS and Gestapo. One article which was published in Le Monde written by the late Prof. Luis Dumont, talked about the massacre at Dhaka University. Le Monde had managed to transcribe a radio communication between a Pakistani commander and his officers. He said that they killed 300 in the operation. The Pakistani Army forced university staff to dig

mass graves after tanks and infantry had attacked the student dormitories. When the university staff were finished dumping the bodies of their students and colleagues into the graves, they were also shot on the spot.

Then we have the brave *'Birangona'*, women victims of the Liberation war, who were systematically raped with numbers of up to 200-400,000 affected during the conflict. Aid agencies set up abortion centres to deal with unwanted pregnancies. Bina D'Costa and others have documented the abuses carried out by the Pakistani army and their proxies. The International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) and the United Nations combined to help perform late-term abortions in Bangladesh after the war ended. In an interview with researchers, Dr Geoffrey Davis of the IPPF said: "...Probably the numbers [200-400,000] are very conservative compared with what they did. The descriptions of how they captured towns were very interesting. They'd keep the infantry back and put artillery ahead and they would shell the hospitals and schools. And that caused absolute chaos in the town. And then the infantry would go in and begin to segregate the women. Apart from little children, all those who were sexually matured would be segregated. And then the women would be put in the compound under guard and made available to the troops...Some of the stories they told were appalling. Being raped again and again and again. A lot of them died in those [rape] camps. *There was an air of disbelief about the whole thing. Nobody could credit that it really happened! But the evidence clearly showed that it did happen.*" The brutal attacks were documented. The whole world knew. Pakistan escaped accountability because of realpolitik.



Present

Mr Chris Blackburn said, Bangladesh started its international crimes tribunals in 2009. Bangladesh had a suspension of democracy by the Caretaker Government (CTG) in 2006-2008. Bangladesh had a unique parliamentary system where during a general election, they would give control of the official government to the caretaker system for short period of 90 days. This was done because of endemic corruption and political pressure on the incumbent government to rig elections and stuff ballot boxes.

Bangladesh's progress towards democracy and a pluralistic society has been fraught with problems. The caretaker system came to the realisation that the ghosts of 1971 was haunting the present. Jamaat-i-Islami leaders at the time were suspected war criminals and were actively engaging in militancy and terrorism. Bangladesh was being torn apart by al-Qaeda inspired terrorism. Jamaat's student cadre were bullying university campuses and general society. Student politics in Bangladesh is brutal. Islamist students have been known to cut the tendons of people celebrating Hindu festivals or Valentine's Day. Jamaat's senior leaders had used military coups and foreign pressure to keep them at the centre of Bangladeshi society rather than being ostracised and shunned. This coup for all of its faults wanted them to be finally made accountable. The caretaker government and others believed it was becoming caustic to the body politic. Justice and accountability were being traded for short term gains and Bangladesh was suffering.

Future

Bangladesh is in discussion with countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada for requesting the extradition of convicted war crimes suspects. It's been a national goal to bring back the leaders of death squads responsible for the kidnappings and murders of Bangladesh's intelligentsia.

Bangladesh is also wanting international recognition for the genocide of 1971. Amazing really when we consider the amount of time that has gone by. *The United States Congress has only just recognised the genocide in Armenia. A genocide that took place in 1915. So, why did it take so long? Contemporary politics and lobbying. It's shameful, but that's where we are. If Turkish President Erdogan had behaved, the US wouldn't have pushed for recognition.* International relations aren't all about game theory and isms. Sometimes it is childish and irrational. Emotive and immature. That's why the actions of nations need to be in compliance with a rules-based international order. Laws and treatise must be followed and enforced. We can't pick and choose to follow the rules only when we see fit.



Conclusion

In conclusion the *Shahbagh Movement* and the work of campaigners on the war crimes issues was a very important step for Bangladesh. However, we know there was a vicious counter-movement in reaction.

Hefazat-e-Islam Bangladesh reacted to the ideals of Shahbagh. Shahbagh wanted justice and accountability. However, Islamists around the world that were in collaboration with Jamaat-i-Islami deliberately spun the war crimes tribunals as an attack on religion. Jamaat and its lobbyists in the Middle East and Washington spun this narrative too.

They tried to make it look like Sheikh Hasina and the Awami League-led government were using secularism and the tribunals to free Bangladesh from religion. It was false, but a very clever defensive tactic from Islamists and war crimes suspects. Mr. Blackburn warned, "we can't rest on our laurels, the issue of recognition for the genocide of 1971 is very important. We need to keep reminding people of this genocide issue. Pakistan is labouring under guilt and lies. It hasn't learnt any lesson from 1971 because it has never been made accountable for its behaviour. A new generation of Afghans, Balochis, and others are the direct victims of global failure to hold Pakistan to account. I believe we need to make them pay. It's the only think that will cut through the

arrogance and dogma. Time is running out for the people of Pakistan to have a better future. Bangladesh wants international recognition for the crimes against humanity. It's probably the most promising time to achieve that goal. Like Erdogan and the genocide in Armenia, Imran Khan's belligerence and pugilistic nature must be punished. We need to burst his bubble. He represents the worst impulses of Pakistan's barbaric history''.

Mr. Husain Haqqani, former Ambassador of Pakistan to the United States & Director of South and Central Asia, Hudson Institute, Washington, USA said, first of all, let me thank the EBF, the South and South East Asia club at the University of Leiden, the UNICEF student team for organizing this event. It is a privilege for me to speak at the '*Bangladesh: peace after genocide*' conference here in Leiden. This marks the 50th anniversary of the liberation of Bangladesh and the birth centenary of the founding father of Bangladesh Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Today Bangladesh has one of the fastest-growing economies in the world, Literacy rate was only 17% at the time of independence and has risen to over 72% percent. Bangladeshis can rightly be proud of what their country has accomplished, but in 1971 Bangladesh was described as a 'basket case' by none other than Henry Kissinger, all its indicators were very poor. Now my paper today that I have prepared originally for the presentation was titled '*Bangabandhu and the struggle for Bangladesh*'. You can find that paper and read it and it talks about the five stages of Bangabandhu's struggle- Phase one before the partition of India during western colonial rule, then the struggle for recognition of Bengali as one of Pakistan's national languages and the third stage was basically struggling against the military rule in Pakistan and then the next stage was



when he (Bangabandhu) contested for the election the Pakistan held in 1970 hoping that there will be some sense and that the people of the then East Pakistan would be given their democratic right. He and his parties swept the election and they won all but two seats in the national assembly from what was then East Pakistan, and yet the military of West Pakistan chose not to recognize the election result and its consequences and in fact, started in military action. So, after that started the independence struggle for Bangladesh.

Instead of focusing only on the topic that I have covered in the paper, I will move to a slightly more specific point of the subject of the atrocities that were committed by Pakistani forces in 1971. After the increasing international recognition of the Armenian genocide, almost a hundred years after the genocide was committed, a lot of people in my country of birth Pakistan, have tried very hard to try and see if they can either minimize or deny what happened in 1971 in Bangladesh and there has been a movie that has come out by one of Pakistan's former Minister of Information Mr. Zaved Jabbar. There have been books, there have been some scholarly works, at least claiming to be scholarly work, the book by Sharmila Bose- all of which tried to say, well you know there was war, some things happened, but it is not really how it has been portrayed. And I think that this effort is part of an effort to try and ensure that Pakistan can not, at some future point, be criticized and condemned like Turkey has been for the Armenian genocide. Because even though countries take a long time, Chris Blackburn made this point, that sometimes countries and their governments look at their own political interest and so they are not willing to contend even in the United Nations recently at least 30 countries choose not to, they obtained under resolution condemning the aggression of Russia and Ukraine in international relation, self-interest, unfortunately, comes before every principle but because war crimes, genocide, mass murder, these are issues on which

cognizance can be taken many years later. Therefore, trying to make the issues fuzzy is important for those who want to cover up and I think that this is happening in my country Pakistan.

So, therefore, the Pakistani diplomat said, it is important to set the record straight. And for this purpose, I am only going to catch Pakistan's military officers and their accounts, which actually make the case for a **collective apology from Pakistan**. I am a strong supporter as a Pakistani, ***I regret what happened***, I was only 14 years old at that time but had I been older, perhaps I would have been able to say something. There were a few voices in Pakistan against that injustice *but I think even at this stage it would be good if Pakistan Parliament passed the resolution, apologizing to people who were the citizens of Pakistan at that time when these atrocities were committed. I am a believer that mass apologies or collective apologies are helpful in transitional justice.*

Many of the perpetrators of those crimes are dead, it has been 50 years so who were Generals at that time or military officers are dead and so acknowledging may be a way for Pakistan and Bangladesh to move forward and find peace. But most importantly, it will set the historic record right, and setting the historical record right is important, so that something similar does not occur elsewhere without some fear of global condemnation, of becoming a pariah of actually having some retribution.



Today is the 24th of March, tomorrow is the 25 of March which is the day the Pakistani army started what it called a military action in Bangladesh and Brigadier Siddique Salik, who was at that time the Public Relations spokesperson for the Pakistan army, he wrote a book called '**Witness to Surrender**' after he came back from being a prisoner of war in India. And in this book, he writes about I quote, that night of the event, he was watching it from the porch of the Pakistani military commander General Tikka Khan's office and he writes "the first column from the cantonment, which is the Pakistani military cantonment at that time, met resistance at Farm Gate about 1 km from the cantonment. The column was halted by a huge tree trunk fell across the road, the side gaps were covered by with the hauls of old cars and disable steamrollers. On the city side of the barricade stood several hundred Begalis shouting 'Joy Bangla' slogans. I heard their spirited-shout while standing on the veranda of General Tikka's headquarters. Soon some rifle-shots mingled with the 'Joy Bangla' slogans, a little later a burst of fire from an automatic weapon shrilled though the air. Thereafter, it was a mixed affair of firing and firey slogans punctuated with the occasional shatter of a light machine gun, 15 minutes later the noise began to subside and the slogan started dying down. Apparently, the weapons had triumphed. This is a Pakistani military account of that particular night. The violence, and the massiveness is quite apparent the other side was only shouting slogans. All that they could manage to do, they tried to stop this column of tanks and military vehicle by cutting down a tree and throwing it on the street and there is no mention that on the Bengali side there was any military capability whatsoever at that point and this is the beginning.

The thrive that they expected that the weapons would thrive did not come. People fought back, we all know and those numbers are disputed, but again I have actually found in the record and the accounts of the various Pakistani military officers who served in Bangladesh at that time. For example, the Pakistani official account is that the number of refugees was exaggerated. There were ten million people who actually escaped from East Pakistan into India and the Pakistani government always denied that there were that large number of refugees but actually the number two of the Pakistani army in East Pakistan gentleman by the name General Farmal Ali, he admitted to an American official that as many as 6 million refugees may have gone to India. So, six million he is admitting, not 10 million, but 6 million is still much larger than what people are acknowledging now and that the army wanted to clear all Hindus from East Bengal from East Pakistan and that was actually said to an American official that kept the record, and that record, of course, has been declassified as part of the normal process of the classification of all documents.

Now the international media of course, at that time covered the injustice, the violence, the genocide, but Pakistani own media did not cover it. So, those who were there in Pakistan at that time, we knew little until we accessed international records but it is really interesting that several books that the military officers of Pakistan have written, actually admit many of the things that have been said. Even if they tried to quibble about the numbers. My point is that whether it was 3 million dead or one million dead, ***it is still a mass murder, whether it is 118 thousand women raped or 200 thousand raped, it is still an atrocity.***

Lt General Kamal Matinuddin wrote a book called, '*The Tragedy of Errors – East Pakistan crisis 1968-1971*'. He was a three-star General in the Pakistan army. In this book, he writes and I quote "elements of the Pakistan army went berserk and took their revenge by spring bullets at random, setting whole villages on fire and committing wanting acts of murder." So, if setting whole villages on fire is not an atrocity and it is not an instrument of genocide then what is? Similarly, Major General Khadim Hussain Raja, who was the General Officer Commanding, he wrote a book which was published after his death, because he later wrote to his family that this book should not be published while he was alive. He did not want to be criticized by his fellow officers, so the book was published after his death. The book is called "*Stranger in my own country.*" In it on page 98, he writes that when General Niazi arrived, the General who surrendered on the 16th of December 1971, he arrived in April of 1971 and took over from General Tikka Khan who had originally started the military action. He gave a speech in the cantonment in Dhaka and he said "I will change the genes of these people", meaning the Bengalis, so what does changing the genes mean, if it is not a threat of mass rape? So, one General is acknowledging that his one rank senior General said this and then they come up with an explanation of why it was not as bad.

Mr Haqqani continued, atrocities are bad whatever the level and whatever the scale. Lastly, General Niazi himself wrote a book called the '*Betrayal of East Pakistan*' and it is very interesting that in this book he is trying to absolve himself and put all the blame on the General who was there before him, but in the process, he admits to a lot of mass crimes. So, he wrote in the book "on the night between 25th and 26th of March 1971 General Tikka struck. Yhhe peaceful night was turned into a time of veiling crime and burning. General Tikka let loose everything at his disposal as if reading an enemy, not dealing with his own people. General Niazi talking about the chief of Pakistan army in East Pakistan "the military action was a display of struk cruelty or merciless than the massacres at Bokhara and Baghdad by Genghis Khan and Halagu Khan. General Tikka resorted to the killing of civilians, his orders to his troops were, "*I want the land and not the people*" what is that? It is, eliminate the people, genocide, kill them, clean the land but I will keep this land for Pakistan. Major General Farman Ali whom I have quoted just before because he was talking about someone else. Every one of them is talking about someone else, it wasn't me, it was him but basically, collectively you can put together a picture. So, he says, Major General Farman has written in his diary, '*The green land of East Pakistan will be painted red. It was painted red by Bengali blood.*' General Niazi also admits in his book that the Razakar, these were the Bengali collaborators that had been induced into these units. whose jobs were primarily to take off other Bengalis who have given up on the idea of Pakistan and now wanted an independent Bangladesh. They were mostly employed in areas where army elements were around to control and utilize them.

This force was useful where available. So, on the one hand he blames his predecessors for atrocities on the other he said, I was very smart in using Bengalis against Bengalis, I was very smart in making these groups of Razakars and volunteers and using them. And then these people were given targets and the targets were intellectuals. Professors of universities were targeted, found and killed. Even the night before Pakistan's army surrendered on the 16th December of 1971, several professors, academics and scholars were rounded up and killed by these people. Because they thought that even now that Bangladesh looks inevitable, what we will do is eliminate those people who stand for a secular ideology. So, if the professors and the scholars and the Inteligencia is no longer there, then we can use the radical Islamic ideology to try and create a new idea in Bangladesh which will not be secular. It may not be the victory that we wanted but it will be a good second position to have and therefore, they killed people even the night before surrender.

Moving forward, today I think it is important in a world in which everybody is fearful and concerned, I believe that we will hear on the economics of denial of genocide after me, and I am really curious to both read that paper and learn about it. But the fact of the matter is that whether it is an economic concentration or political concentration of the fact that Pakistan now possesses nuclear weapons and therefore not many countries want to cross paths, it is important to make the point that mass murder is not acceptable.

We want a world free of war. But if there has to be war, the war should be between soldiers who are equally armed and not between soldiers with heavy weaponry and ordinary people. And the fact that this happened in Bangladesh is something that needs not only acknowledgment but also a **collective apology by the state and government of Pakistan** so that this chapter at least, cannot be closed, but can be brought to some kind of closure.

2nd Session

The 2nd Session started with the speech given by **Dr. Wolfgang-Peter Zingel**, Associate Member of the South Asia Institute (SAI) of Heidelberg University, Germany.

Presenting his paper titled, '*Bangladesh: The 12th stage of genocide and the economics of a collective amnesia*'



said, Gregory Stanton famously worked out the ten stages of genocide: Classification, symbolization, discrimination, dehumanization, organization, polarisation, preparation, persecution, extermination, and denial. After the last Balkan war and Srebrenica, an eleventh stage was singled out: triumphalism. In the case of the Bangladesh Genocide 1971 we have to observe a twelfth stage: willful forgetting. Forgetting, of course not on the side of the victims, but of the perpetrators, because today, half a century later, few people in Pakistan remember what crimes were committed in their name. A kind of collective amnesia has befallen the nation. One explanation would be demography: With high rates of population growth, the median age in Pakistan is (CIA, 2020) just 22,1 years, six-and-a-half years less than in Bangladesh (28,6) and half as much in the Netherlands (44,0). This means that the parent generation and most of the grandparents have no own memories of the war of 1971, and Pakistan history books are mum about the atrocities. The year 1971 usually is bypassed as quickly as possible, referred to as the East

Pakistan 'debacle'. To be added is that the past half century has not been too kind to Pakistan. Gone are the days when Pakistan was proud to be ahead of India. Now they are told that they have been overtaken even by Bangladesh.

Going by the Human Development Index (HDI), in 2019 Bangladesh was ranked at 133th position, just behind India (131th), but ahead of Pakistan (154th). 24.6 per cent of the population were considered poor, less than in India (27.9%) and far less than in Pakistan (38.3 per cent).

Not remembering and a very selective interest in history has banal reasons. An important one is economics. Partitions of 1947 and 1971 led to forced migrations under chaotic circumstances. They created losers and winners, and some belonged to both groups. I remember the sealed shops in New Market in Dhaka, marked as enemy, abandoned or vested property. Discussing the legality of appropriation of such property still is a taboo, raising public interest only when a politician falls out of grace. And we know of instances that academics who dared to discuss such issues received death threats. There are little known government institutions that look after some of such properties in the three states. But since so many fear that they might have to part with some of their wealth, there should be no wonder, why there is so little enthusiasm to start any serious discussion of genocide and justice and to face the economic consequences.



I was alarmed when I taught Pakistan Studies in the country's best university in Islamabad. Students had not heard much why their country lost their eastern 'wing', and that little they knew was only that it was all the result of the machinations of the evil neighbour. It was not so much the wish not to be confronted with the violence exerted in the name of their country, by people they knew or even were related to. They simply did not know anything about the language movement, regional disparities and the war of 1971.

The plundering of East Pakistan had happened in the name of development, following a dogma of growth first – distribution later. Alienation started with the Jinnah's insensitivity to cultural differences. It is an irony of history that the man, who preferred the language of the colonial masters thought the people of the new nation would need a state language that was alien to the majority of the people. As the economic disparities grew, so did Bangla nationalism. As we know, Operation Searchlight was started to decapitate the Bangla Desh movement. A country-wide uprising most probably was beyond the Pakistan elite's imagination and they did nothing to stop mass violence. But this is not my point.

I am more interested in the question why young Pakistanis know so little about the Bangladesh War. My students thought that the Ayub Khan regime was Pakistan's Golden Age and had no idea that their part of the country prospered at the cost of the other. K. K. Aziz's seminal analysis of history text books, aptly titled 'The murder of history' brought out their poor quality, and teachers were neither inclined nor encouraged to discuss the events outside the official narrative. For family talk, it most probably is the same as everywhere: Some families engage children in a learned discussion from an early age on, others rather not. Things are seen more critically in groups and regions that had to suffer from centralist and authoritarian governments.



Coming back to those who gain from violent changes: These include the many who benefit indirectly: Irrespective of circumstance, under perfect conditions increasing the supply of goods and services lowers their price, but more than often abandoned property was not auctioned off, but simply grabbed, or 'taken care of' for the time being. Such informal ways create uncertainty, that might be preferred to the risk of losing any new acquisitions. With partitions of 1947 and 1971, property and possessions of former owners were distributed or given away at throw-away prices, careers were started where other people had to leave their jobs. Would any of those, who benefited, risk well-being and status for the benefit of those expropriated?

The fear of losing such gains also has far reaching social and political implications: When a group of scholars in Dhaka started discussing the Vested Property Act, they were branded to be un-Islamic and received death threats. And that was in Bangladesh, while Pakistan refused the so called 'Bihari', who felt to be the real Pakistani, to move to 'their' country.

As understandable as it is that Bangladesh seeks international recognition of the Genocide 1971, given the present standoff, the international community may not be ready to force Pakistan, a country that has been coddled by the great powers because of its strategic location, into taking over any responsibility or even asking for forgiveness. Unfortunately, there are not too many examples, where perpetrators of genocides could be brought to accepting responsibility. It worked in the case of the Shoa, but only after Germany was beaten and the country totally destroyed. Allied rule for decades allowed a democratic respectively socialist restart, backed up by hundreds of thousand Allied troops, creating conditions, if not to say forcing, Germans to discuss the atrocities of the 'Third Reich' and dissociate themselves from the 'Nazi' ideology. In case of Bosnia, despite several rulings, governments of Republika Srpska and Serbia, declined to accept Srebrenitsa as genocide.

In the case of Pakistan there are few who even mentioned the mass killings in Bangladesh. Ambassador Husain Haqqani is one of them. In his book 'Reimagining Pakistan. Transforming a dysfunctional nuclear state' (2018) he dealt with the uprising in East Pakistan, but turned to Archer Blood's assessment of the horrors as 'Selective

Genocide’ (p. 93): he did criticize the army, but pointed out that the razakars (volunteers) and mujahideen terrorized critics of the Pakistan state’. (p. 94). In his earlier book ‘India vs. Pakistan: Why can’t we just be friends’, he was more careful, and just wrote: ‘... the People of East Pakistan came out in open rebellion and the military tried to suppress the Bengali revolt by force.’” (p. 34).

There have been others, like Siddiq Salik, who wrote ‘Witness to surrender’ (also in Urdu) and A. R. Siddiqui, who wrote ‘East Pakistan: The endgame’.

If Bangladesh really wants to start a discussion in Pakistan, it has to reach the people there: not only the small elite that follows a learned discussion in English language, for example, Wikipedia has an entry on ‘1971 Bangladesh Genocide’ in several languages, including Persian and Arabic, but not in Urdu, although there is an entry of the 1971 war in Urdu. However, entries can differ a lot between languages, so it might be advisable, to check such entries in those languages that Pakistani usually follow.

Generally, the internet made gathering information so much easier: Among the first things Zulfikar Ali Bhutto did, when he was installed as Martial Law Administrator and assumed the office of President of Pakistan, he set up a commission to inquire into the 1971 war. Only parts of the Hamudur Rehman Report have been declassified and published in Pakistan, so Pakistani researchers are turning to a website from Bangladesh, Bangla2000.com, where the full (?) Supplementary Report can be found.

As we know, Bhutto always tried to dissociate himself from Army action, although he himself, together with General Yahya Khan, Chief Martial Law Administrator and President, and General Tikka Khan, Governor of East Pakistan, in the fateful meeting on the eve before Operation Searchlight, made the final decision to start the military crackdown, the beginning of what became the Bangladesh Genocide. Tellingly, Bhutto and Yahya left Dhaka in time before the mass murder started. The blame game began immediately after Pakistan Army’s surrender in the Eastern Theatre. On December 20, Bhutto took over as Martial Law Administrator.

Initiatives like this conference are needed to keep up the memory. So, what else could be done? A first step would be that historians (and other researchers) from Bangladesh and Pakistan and/or representatives of the civil society meet personally on neutral ground and together examine historical evidence. This will be not easy, but easier now, after none of the major actors are still alive.

As for collective responsibility, the problem lies in the definition and interpretation of the term ‘Genocide’: *genos* is Greek and means race or tribe, the Latin suffix *cide* means killing. The UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide describes in Article II ‘genocide as a crime committed with the intent to destroy a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, in whole or in part.’ A major issue is to accept the standard definition of ‘genocide’ and to work out what ‘intent’ actually means: Should not the acceptance of mass violence already count as ‘intent’ and would not the citizens of an ethnically homogenous province count as a ‘national, ethnic or religious group’?

Dr. Tomasso Virgili, Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the WZB Berlin Social Science Center, Berlin was the last



speaker at the conference. He said, I am deeply honoured to be here in this day of remembrance. Memory cannot change the past or amend the atrocity. But it can contribute to make justice, address responsibilities and, above all, to avoid history repeating itself.

Therefore, I would like to start with a memory. It is contained in the memoir of the genocide written by Brigadier Siddiqi, where we find the following quote from a high-ranking official of the Pakistani army: “We have nothing against the Bengali masses as such; they are a simple God-fearing people. It is the middle class - the teachers, lawyers, intellectuals (mostly Hindus), who are behind all

the un-Islamic ideas and motivation amongst the youth”. And those had to be annihilated. The genocide was about the Bengali identity, language and culture. But it was also about religion, and specifically religious fundamentalism. Jamaat-e Islami, an Islamist entity founded by radical thinker Abul A'la al-Mawdudi and linked to the Muslim Brotherhood, played a key role in the 1971 genocide in Bangladesh. Many people fell victims to its violent fanaticism.

Hindus endured an ethnic cleansing. They were specifically targeted and slaughtered due to their faith, their property confiscated and redistributed among Muslims. They were labeled with a yellow “H”, in an all too well known, appalling reminiscence... Fatwas from Pakistani imams branded Bengali freedom fighters as apostates and “Hindus”. This enabled militias to systematically rape women as a religiously-sanctioned “booty of war”. Hundreds of thousands were raped (or even interned in rape camps) with the blessings of Pakistani imams - a horror we have recently witnessed again in the territories conquered by ISIS.

Ji's militias Al Shams and Al Badr, with the support of Islamists in then-East Pakistan (Razakars), massacred “impious” intellectuals. In 9 months, they systematically tortured and killed more than 1000 among teachers, poets, journalists, artists, writers, doctors, engineers. 14 December is now celebrated in Bangladesh the “day of martyred intellectuals”, to remember those from Dhaka University who were tortured and killed in December 1971. All difference in magnitude made, these atrocities are not confined to a distant past, as Islamists continue to attack and murder secular intellectuals today. It may seem paradoxical that an entity such as Ji that actively took part in the genocide, as confirmed by the International Crimes Tribunal, is legal today in Bangladesh. Indeed, Ji was initially banned due to its role in the genocide, but this banishment didn't last long. It must be recalled that in 1971 Bangladesh was born as a secular state, but this character was progressively lost in time. In 1975, Ji was made legal again. In 1977 the reference to God Almighty was introduced in the Constitution, and secularism deleted (before being restored in 2010); in 1988 Islam became the state religion.



In 2013, a strong civil society movement demanded of the government to dismantle the Ji due to its responsibility in the genocide, and to severely punish the Islamist leaders recognized guilty by the International Crimes Tribunal. These requests were met with an aggressive mobilization by the Islamist Hefazat group. Hefazat has not only mobilized politically, but also violently, targeting public buildings, Hindus, secularists and “impure” women. Macron's defence of the cartoons of Muhammad was a galvanizing moment. The Durga Puja season (a Hindu festivity) in 2021 was yet another one, with generalized violence against Hindus. Hefazat has also addressed the government with extreme demands, such the ban on gender mixing, the refusal of equal inheritance rights for women, and even death penalty for blasphemy against “atheist leaders and bloggers”.

To better enact their homicidal plan, Islamists compiled and published a list of “blasphemous” bloggers who were accused of apostasy by Hefazat leader Ahmed Shafi, who explicitly invoked their murder. And murdered they were. Since 2013, individuals linked to jihadi and Islamist organizations have slaughtered dozens of intellectuals considered “foes of Islam”. The government and the police have not done much to stop this spiral of violence, and they have actually contributed to further harass “atheists” and “blasphemers”. The government has condescended to some of the Islamist demands by expanding religious education and passing a more severe blasphemy law. Since 2018, anyone who “hurts religious sentiments” face 7 years in prison under the Digital Security Act. “We won't allow blasphemy in our country”, as a ministry said.

But who are these dangerous “blasphemers”? I want to conclude by remembering one of them, butchered by Islamists' machetes in front of a book fair in Dhaka in February 2015. He was called Avijit Roy, and he was a Bangladeshi humanist who founded the blog Mukto Mona (freethinkers), with the following mission: “Our aim is to build a society which will not be bound by the dictates of arbitrary authority, comfortable superstition, stifling tradition, or suffocating orthodoxy but would rather be based on reason, compassion, humanity, equality and science. We argue for a rational and scientific approach to human problems as an alternative to religious dogmas, strongly defend freedom of thought and civil liberties, and strive for the secularization of politics, society and educational system.” These are the “poisonous” ideas that Islamists and authorities want to eradicate. These are the dangerous blasphemers” that authorities are persecuting and Islamists are killing. Avijit Roy's most famous quote was: “Let the light of reason free us”. I hope his legacy won't die in the darkness of religious fanaticism.

Q & A Session

The Question and Answer (Q&A) session was moderated by **Manju von Rospatt** of Leiden University College and was assisted by **Mai Li Brendel** of Nijmegen University. Mai also works with EBF.

Manju von Rospatt: thank you so much to our incredible panel for your contributions. Thank you so much for



your insights and for bringing us into these different fields. It is really an honor that you come from far away places and make the time to speak with us. I think we still shifted some opinions or you maybe heard something new today that we can share with other people in our lives and our network. That way we can keep this memory what we have been talking about alive and I think this issue extends to other conflicts and crisis throughout other parts of the world, especially right now with Ukraine, something I am thinking about is how do we keep that alive and also talking about genocides and conflicts in the past, how did we hold them all together and how do we collectively grief and also bring justice to the perpetrators and specifically here in Bangladesh. But I am also thinking of Myanmar, I am thinking of Ukraine right now and I am thinking about countless other crisis. So, a

question I would like to pose to the panel and feel free, whoever feels most inclined to answer, maybe we can go one by one. *I would like to understand better what are the concrete steps for recognizing the genocide, I just heard three days ago, the Us officially acknowledged the genocide against the Rohingya in Myanmar and that was a great victory for many activists who have been fighting for this, so I wonder what do you think are the next steps of recognition in this conflict, is it civil society? should it come from youth? should it come from Pakistani youth should? Does it come from the elite? should it come from the UN? where do we start this advocacy.*

Dr. Wolfgang-Peter Zingel: At the moment I don't see things coming that way, I don't think these things will be happening very soon. That has to do with politics and these days you can watch the reemergence of the cold war set-up. The various blocks try to assemble as much support and they wouldn't mind who that actually is. So, if you think back to the times of the cold war, any dictator would find a welcome even when he was joining .. and nobody would ask a question. Keep the memory or better, use the time. Those of you who study, those of you who think to maybe write a thesis, there is a lot of work to do, to go to further sources specially to interview people who still have a memory of it. It is 50 years ago. So, that means people by the age of 70 plus have or should have a memory. Collect memories, ask people to go out, you need in-depth interviews or maybe recording with people who simply tell what happened to them and what appeared. Then countries that look positively at this could take this forward and Pakistan certainly will not support this for the time being but it could also mean nothing is impossible. It could also be that at one stage people in Pakistan will be asking these questions. So, I



I think time could be used, then find out what are the ways. a good example is when you follow the affair which is well documented and how the various parties tried to defend their positions. Most probably in countries like Bangladesh much more hope is set in international institutions than in larger countries. I think it has to be, like Bikash, who will stay on the subject, this really has to be admired and I think this is very important. To give you one example from Germany- one of the major groups of the Nazis, the Germans you can say were, Sinti and Roma, they always have to be second-class victims

and over the years they have worked out the documentation center in Heidelberg.

Manju von Rospatt: Manju: thank you so much would anyone would like to add to that question?

Dr. Tomasso Virgili: I have nothing much to add but stressing once again the importance of remembering because often these sorts of recognition would come from pressure from the bottom of society and also from pressure from above. Maybe international powers. if the recognition of the genocide were part of a sort of international political bargain and trade-off Pakistan could be pushed into admitting what they did. But to be honest, right now I don't see such attention from big war power, what happened in Bangladesh to force this kind of behavior on Pakistan. Now the region is absorbed with the issue of the Taliban and I hope I am wrong but I don't see this happening anytime soon.

Ambassador Husain Haqqani: I might add for a very quick comment, I think that one of the best examples we have of global consensus on recognizing genocide and actually condemning it at university came after the holocaust and that was a unique moment. The second world war had left all the European powers economically and militarily exhausted. The Soviet Union was still standing but it had also paid a huge price in the war. The Soviet Union and the United States had emerged as the two superpowers. The United States at that time accounted for almost one-third of the world GDP. There was a process of decolonization taking place. New countries were emerging and between them the United States, Britain, France the Soviet Union, they were able to create the consensus of being very clear about the holocaust, and of course, in some European countries there are specific

laws against holocaust. That doesn't mean there are still people who are denying it. So, you can imagine now if there was a powerful government that denied it, then things would be much more complicated. So, in each instance there is vested interest of the government that has perpetrated or attempted the genocide to deny, as I said in international relations it is about interest. So, getting that consciences is easier for example for the Ruanda genocide was easier because there weren't that many countries, especially major countries in the world that had that kind of political, economic interest with Ruanda. But it is more difficult for a country that has nuclear weapons, has one of the world's largest armies. and then of course. There are other interests that play. China vs. India-Pakistan is right there, China vs. United States. Pakistan has a role, Pakistanis an Islamic countr. Muslim countries and that block's politics come in. So, all of these factors influence these decisions. *Now you might see this as a small event but if more events like this take place all over the world and people start taking notice and the issue becomes significant and I think that comments were particularly significant that if Bangladesh is serious, they will also have to create circumstances. This can not be an annual thing. This has to be an on-going process and can somebody put the resources and the time and energy and of course young people like you can volunteer but somebody has to organise. **There is enough footage and material available to put together. There has never been a feature film. How many films have you*** and I see, in all languages about the holocaust, but this is as unique as I said, much bigger than most events but if the people most affected by it, the people of Bangladesh set their minds to it then who knows then we could have movies, we could have other things that would make a difference, so that other people's minds get focused and more parliaments start approving. If you see the process of the Armenian genocide recognition, it took a hundred years but only in the 15 to 20 years it has taken speed in Parliaments- Austrian parliament, Finnish parliament **and that is the process that will have to be created with some momentum some commitment and some involvement of people.**

Dr. Wolfgang-Peter Zingel: Do you know the largest number to my knowledge of Bangladeshi in Europe is in Britain and the second largest in Italy. So, it would be expected that if an initiative comes should have some success it might come to these countries, other countries say like Germany where we have a very small number of Bangladeshis and another thing for those of you who are younger, there is a very famous cartoon book by the name of "Maus" by the German spelling. The author is a very famous cartoonist and his father was a survivor of the holocaust. and of course, in all these traumatized families as a child you know what you talk about and what you better not talk about. So, when the father became very old, he finally dared to ask his father whether he could ask him questions and the father finally agreed. So, he took a little recorder, sat together with him, and asked some questions and when his father was tired of it, they stopped it. And on another day, they repeated it and continued. In the end, he thought, what do I do with the material now since he was a cartoonist, he made a world-famous cartoon book out of it. There was documentation and others. So, I don't ask you to draw cartoons but to find adequate ways to think about it but use the time to ask people about it, ask parents and this is also in private affairs. There might be things that you would have never dared to ask in these years and all of a sudden, these people are gone and you cannot ask them anymore. Now that is a turn when you think for yourself, you should have asked. So, I think this is a way to deal with it, it is not a really confrontational way but I think it is an opportunity.

Manju von Rospatt: Ok, thank you so much for your comments and your reflections. I see that we don't have that much more time only about 15-20 minutes, so it would be wonderful if we could open up the floor. I will be walking around with the microphone. So, if you (participants) have any questions, please raise your hand and I will come to you. You have the floor.

Q: My name is **Aviraj**, I am a student at Leiden University, doing my Masters in International Relations and Diplomacy. First of all, thank you for organizing and putting this together. Recognition is really important, in terms of international recognition in terms of atrocities, genocide and ethnic cleansing and one matter of remembrance which is rather sinister as we have noticed in south Asian politics is electorate propaganda where



Bodies of three women, three children, and an old man. Pakistani troops killed these people and others on April 1st. The people appeared to have been beaten to death or beyonnetted

political parties use these memories, remembrances for the purpose of their agendas in elections time and time again and I think India has perfected this model in terms of the BJP, in terms of Congress after independence. So, my question is- since in Bangladesh we have the BNP, the AL that who are more successful after 71, has the narrative of genocide been used in any way in Bangladeshi electoral politics and whether there has been a shift in understanding throughout the seventies, the eighties and in contemporary electoral scenarios.

Ambassador Husain Haqqani: none of us are really experts in domestic Bangladeshi politics but I am sure that it has been a political fact that at least on part of the Awami League as AL is the party that led Bangladesh to independence partly because the price for the liberation of Bangladesh was paid most heavily by the Awami League, not only in 1971 but the repression of the Awami league goes back. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman went to prison 22 times in 24 years from 1947-1971 and that the people who are targeted for killing Awami league members or lot of them were members of Awami league or supporters. So, the Awami league has naturally a more political dimension to this. In fact, I would argue that the domestic politics *of Bangladesh has kind of harmed the cause of international recognition* of Bangladesh genocide. Because the Awami league wants it and because the Awami league wants it, Awami league's rivals will try to play it down. So Ershad government was not interested in it at all. The BNP government also tried to play it down a little bit. Because you know Begum Zia was always trying to have better relationship with Pakistan. So, those of us in Pakistan who actually wanted an apology or demand for an apology and it would make life easier for us in our domestic policies if Begum Zia demanded and we would say yes, yes, yes, but that did never happen because she never took interest in this subject. So, in the domestic political context Awami leagues is the only party in Bangladesh that has taken a serious stance on it and it should actually be a stance of all political parties and groups in Bangladesh.

Q: I am a Master's student at Leiden University, studying Crisis and Security management and I shared brief words with the former Ambassador and Dr. Virgili and as I mentioned to you before as a Korean who also with the history and relations with Japan, I really much appreciate the actions that you are doing here today. Also, when it comes to matters of apology, education plays a big part in it to try to change the frames of the people in your country regarding the event. So, *I am curious if you know anything about the current Pakistani education*



systems perspectives on the genocide, how they teach the subject?

Ambassador Husain Haqqani: They don't. In fact, in my book, I cited that the Pakistan's approach is dismissed in two lines. Entire fact is that in 22 years Pakistan was part of Pakistan and dealt with it and 2 to 3 lines from 1947-1971 Pakistan had an Eastern wing. The Indians encouraged separation and succession and after a war in which India intervened, East Pakistan became Bangladesh or it stopped being part of Pakistan. That is about it. The denial is complete and the younger generation of Pakistanis actually have no idea. Part of it is Pakistan's domestic politics- remember Pakistan had military rule for most of its life, now the most dishonorable moment for the Pakistan's military was 16 December 1971 when the Pakistan army was surrendering to the combined forces of India and Bangladesh. Although the new country of Bangladesh has not been formally created but in the instrument of surrender, even though the main force was India, the Bangladeshi people had participated in it and the lady (*Bangladesh MP Mahjabeen Khaled*) who talked here today told you about that today. Those were Bengali of the Pakistan army who had gone across. So, that was a very small number but much larger of volunteers who had decided to fight for Bangladesh independence and so for Pakistan army to even remember that moment of dishonor undermines its standing within Pakistan. So, in fact, they often call people like me traitors, etc. because on the 16th of December we always make a point of putting up the picture of surrender on Twitter, social media and the support of our military rule in Pakistan. They don't like that. Because that means you are reminding us of a moment of dishonor so the Islamic parties were responsible for what happened or part of it. They don't want a discussion of that tragedy either. The few Pakistani Generals who have written some memoirs also tried to, on the one hand, acknowledge it because it is difficult and the way they acknowledge it is "It was not me it was him" so General Niazi is talking about Tikka Khan's atrocities but not of his own. Khadim Hossain is talking about Niazi's atrocities but doesn't acknowledge that he did anything wrong. So, that is a little bit but those books are not textbooks. Textbooks talk about it very minimally, there is no mention of the fact. You must remember the on-going problems in Pakistan as Mr. Barua mentioned earlier. Baluchistan, Sindh, there are moments in Pakistan for identity and recognition and rights. So, to talk too much about maybe we made the mistake and Pakistan could keep East Pakistan as part of the federation by recognizing it had at that time more East Pakistan had more population than West Pakistan. So, it is the only time that when the minority tried to

colonize the majority by force of arms. Pakistan had its first election in was held in 1970 because they denied the right because they couldn't solve the problem, because if there is going to be a majority it was going to be Bengali majority. Then they didn't allow Bengali to be the national language as one of the national languages until 1956 which is the first time after a lot of protests. So, the Bengali people had to fight every step. Remember one thing Pakistan describes itself as an ideological state it is the first country to use the name Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Therefore, there is this whole notion of what it means to be Pakistani, and in that context, disowning these 24 years is important for them to try and move forward with all they have left.

Dr. Wolfgang-Peter Zingel: I don't know if you came across the term "principals" as a new term that is usually used for Iran, which means that you subordinate everything to certain principles and in that sense, Pakistan is a principalist government. So, the backbone of the country in their own understanding is the army and in such we call the army the savior of their county or the army itself did nothing for Pakistan. In 1947 it was the army of the colonial power; it was absolutely apolitical and only under the rule of the colonial power. The army



kept themselves totally out of the independence movement. There were minor incidents like the Indian nationalist army. Then came 47 that the army was a bystander for various reasons. The whole carnage of 1947 was possible because the army simply stood back, so out of a sudden within a few months, army became the savior of the country in their own feeling and as such the army can not do wrong.

Q: My name is **Monowar Mohammad**. I am from Bangladesh and I am doing Masters in UK and I am also



General Secretary of ICDB (International Centre for Democracy in Bangladesh). We also organized similar program in the past, our friend Dr Peter Custers was involved with it. We organized programs in European Parliament on 1971 war crimes issues. My point is in Bangladesh the minority people including people in Chittagong Hill Tracts are suffering while the current government is a secular government. So, why there is this problem. I come from a freedom fighters' family and 9 members of my family were killed in the 1971 liberation war. Why Pakistan after 50 years has not yet offered apology to Bangladesh?

Ambassador Husain Haqqani: The answer is quite simple. I already answered it. Unfortunately, Pakistan has not come to terms with reality, has not taught its younger generation the reality of Pakistans media, which means half of the population is under 18 years. They will only learn what they are taught. And this is not taught. The generation which was responsible for these actions especially those who were in power and the military made sure that the younger generation does not find out about genocides. So, those of us who have educated ourselves, I was 14 years old at that time, I had some knowledge, some understanding based on what I understood but not based on what I read in Pakistan. It was mainly based on what was published all over the world. Secondly, I think success the Bangladeshi government has also blown hot and cold at different times and asking about the apology very frankly Bangladesh has also taken a very consistent position that there should be an apology before we can have normal relations. Then things would have been, maybe, different but the real problem remains that the Pakistani military does not want to acknowledge that is the real reason.

Dr. Wolfgang-Peter Zingel: Why did it take so long? I think this is quite understandable. I was in Dhaka when Mr Bhuto visited Dhaka, I think 2 and a half years after the war. He was not greeted very friendly but it was also not that people were protesting against him. The shock that the country had suffered was so immense and for the Bangladeshi for having the daily life going on, 2 years ago it was already distant past so much were the pressing needs of the time. Pakistan until the release of the 19.000 prisoners of war from India. That was the overriding topic until the last one had been released. Bangladesh's demand for putting these people under trial was not led by India. Then another thing other crisis. Now is a time after half a century when especially in Pakistan the new generation could come up and ask why did we lose half of the country? That is there to come and I wouldn't be surprised if it comes.

Dr. Tomasso Virgili: You asked how come minorities are still persecuted now, I think there are some issues that really go beyond strong ideologies and have to do with easy consensus. So, regarding the example, I was making of atheist bloggers according to the polls, there is 1% of people in Bangladesh that declared themselves as atheist. So, for the government even for a secular government it is much easier to give in to the demands of sentencing blasphemous to prison and they can actually catch two bears with one stone. Because in the end, they kind of go towards the demands of Islamics, on the other hand, they are appeasing what is the sentiment, the popular, cultural feeling of millions of people who are maybe against Islamic people. I will take another example, in Bangladesh there is a section of the penal code that sentenced homosexual offenders to life imprisonment. Homosexuals were targeted in the latest rounds of killings by Islamists. Now the parliament discusses twice the abolishing of the section of the penal code in 2009 and 2013 and in both occasions refused to repeal this section of the penal code. Why? Because even though you are a secular government. when you are touching well-entrenched taboos you don't want to go beyond because at that point you are not keeping Islamists all those who are linked to the genocide, you are really going at that heart of popular feeling that is why these things keep happening. and the government keeps a blind eye on them.

Q: My name is **Ranjika**. I am studying International Relations here at Leiden University. I am from India, so I guess my question comes from a similar understanding as Aviraj. In terms of use of memory politics...In terms of politics is something we see is used a lot to polarize sections of society, especially for example in west Bengal a

negative narrative toward the Bangladesh diaspora coming in. So, I guess I have a more general question- how can this using effect memory politics and remembering we live in a world that is enhancing polarizing parts of society and how could it be incorporated into the politics without being inherently polarizing sections of the community against each other.

Dr. Wolfgang-Peter Zingel: Bangladesh has a very fine tradition of theatre they are small theatre groups going through the villages and you even have a Bangladesh institute of theater art where they have nice seminars and so on. So, I think this is a way that they use the traditional forms. You cannot force them but maybe it would be interesting to have a look at this institution and see what themes of these days are been taken up by this group and



how much are they still mainstream or what kind of resistance do they need.

Dr. Tomasso Virgili: I think memory can stop such an issue from polarizing only after

many years even after the last survivors have died. One example is the institution of the international Crimes Tribunal. So, how come that it took 40 years to be established and also there were many opponents from Pakistan, from the Islamist that were actually claiming that it would have been useless and uselessly for arising now but when you have to make justice, memories also are useful to make justice for these responsibilities. So, as long as these events are so fresh, as long as the protagonist of these events is still alive, I don't think there is any way to make them any less polarizing only when there is a consent. We have seen with the holocaust that these consensus never went to 100% only when we approach 100 percent consensus on something which is deeply more wrong, then memories stop being so much polarising.

Q: My name is **Ziggy** and I am a student of Japan studies, so a whole different faction. My question regards the representation that is facilitated through arts, because I have learnt of the Bangladesh liberation war museum which actually has its anniversary this week the 26th. I was wondering, knowing that there is both a Bangladeshi liberation war museum and also looking at for instance the concert at Madison square park in 1971, there has been some international recognition but how does it translate to the current situation.

Dr. Wolfgang-Peter Zingel: When I was last in Dhaka and I had a guided-tour through the Liberation War Museum and then we sat down to watch a film on the Rohingya crisis. That means the liberation war museum takes care of these things and it was basically for university students' classes who were also attendant.

Manju von Rospatt: Thank you so much for all your responses. Thank you so much for asking your questions. I hope you learned something new and maybe some of you haven't heard of that Genocide before and this is just a testament to attending an event like this, can also broaden your horizons and we can learn something new.

DEMONSTRATION

EBF also organized a 2-day long demonstration and human chain in front of the Broken Chair at the Geneva UN building on 25-26 March 2022 reitering its demand for 'international recognition of the 1971 Genocide in Bangladesh'. A tent was set up with banners, posters and placards placed around it. There were also steel railings with similar posters, pictures of the 1971 atrocities committed by the occupying Pakistani forces in Bangladesh. The square in front of the Broken Chair was packed with viewers and passers-by who showed interests in the photos and banners with different slogans and demands. The 2-day long demonstration Live telecast by the London-based British-Bangla News.



Members of the Bangladeshi diaspora from different parts of Switzerland and Europe including Germany, the UK, Germany and Netherlands took part in the demonstration. It was a candle-light demonstration on the first day. At one stage of the demonstration on the first day, the visiting State Minister for Labor and Employment of the Government of Bangladesh, Begum Munnujan Sufian joined the human chain. Addressing the demonstration the Bangladeshi Minister said, "it was time for recognition of Bangladesh genocide by Pakistani army and its accomplices. It is high time for honoring the victims of genocide and their descendants through recognition. Unfortunately, the genocide against Bengalis has become a forgotten chapter in history today and we all know that 'Justice delayed, justice denied.' She said, 'We have to learn from the history. We need to understand the mistakes of the past and work together to build a better world for the new generation in Bangladesh and Europe'".

The demonstration and human chair were addressed among others were: Mr Khalilur Rahman, Director of International Human Rights Commission Bangladesh, Switzerland, Mr. Ami Rahman Pial, exiled blogger from Bangladesh who now lives in Switzerland, Mr. A H M Abdul Hai, media expert from Germany, Mr Nazrul Islam, President of Switzerland Awami League, Mr Shyamal Khan, General Secretary, Switzerland Awami League, Abdul Hai, EBF Representative, Palash Barua, General Secretary of International Forum for Secular Bangladesh

(IFSB) , Switzerland, Mashiur Rahman Sumon, Vice President, Switzerland Awami League, Mr Arun Barua, President of Bangladesh Minority Council Switzerland, Mr Sasim Gauri Charan, Chairman of Ekusher Alo Foundation, Ms. Nipu Barua, Ms Sajia Rahman, Mr Sumon Chakma, Mr Akbar Ali, Mr Hasan Imam Khan, advisor of IFSB Switzerland, Mr Abdur Rob, Mr Ashraful Alam Liton, Mr Asharful Alam Azad and Mr Mia Abul Kalam, Organizing Secretary of the All European Freedom Fighters Association. Dr. Mojibur Doftori, a writer and senior researcher from Finland facilitated the program.

The 2-day long demonstration can be seen at the following links, was telecast LIVE by the London-based TV channel, British Bangla News:

MEDIA COVERAGE

The Leiden University event and the Geneva demonstration got wide electronic and print media attention in the Netherlands, Bangladesh, the UK, United States and Germany. Two TV channels from the United States telecast the news of the conference on their news slot. Here are the links of the two TV news:

LINKS OF VIDEOS, TV NEWS AND NEWSPAPERS

LIVE telecast of the Conference by London-based Channel, British Bangla News:

1. **British Bangla News link LIVE telecast of Leiden University conference on genocide on 24 March 2022 (1ST Part)**
<https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=search&v=257490713142364>
2. **British Bangla News link LIVE telecast of Leiden University conference on genocide on 24 March 2022 (2nd Part) – 149 views**
<https://www.facebook.com/Britishbanglanews/videos/693934482021807>

Demonstration links- LIVE by London-based Channel, British Bangla News:

FACE BOOK (BBN): 1st Day demonstration link (face book): 25 March 2022

<https://www.facebook.com/Britishbanglanews/videos/548013643138811/>

2nd Day demonstration link (face book): 26 March 2022

<https://www.facebook.com/Britishbanglanews/videos/282055854081901/>

YOU TUBE (BBN): 25 -26 March 2022

1st Day demonstration link (you tube): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WC_9MW9YFtc

2nd Day demonstration link (you tube): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VxTBywh20r4>

TV NEWS LINKS:

BANGLA CHANNEL, USA: https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1016552648944717&extid=CL-UNK-UNK-UNK-AN_GK0T-GK1C&ref=sharing

NCN, USA: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=656730848773059>

NEWSPAPERS LINKS:

ANP, Netherlands: <https://www.persberichten.nl/home/detail/3bae2f4a-d0ff-4a32-ad77-4e310dfec825/title/the-hague-conference-reiterates-demand-for-recognition-of-1971-bangladesh-genocide>

ANP, Netherlands: <https://www.persberichten.nl/home/detail/5c21d00d-0f46-417e-95e8-9818d514325e/title/international-conference-on-bangladesh-justice-after-genocide-on-24-march-2022>

Daily Sun: <https://www.daily-sun.com/post/612452/Experts-demand-international-recognition-of-E-Pakistan-genocide>

Bangla Mirror News, London: <https://banglamirrornews.com/2022/03/25/hague-conference-demands-international-recognition-of-bangladesh-genocide/>

Our Voice, Germany: <http://our-voice-online.com/blog/demand-for-international-recognition-of-bangladesh-genocide-1971/>

British Bangla News, London: <http://britishbanglanews.com/?p=2722>

Business Insider Bangladesh: <https://www.businessinsiderbd.com/national/news/19592/intl-recognition-of-1971-genocide-demanded-in-europe>

Business Insider Bangladesh: <https://www.businessinsiderbd.com/national/news/19593/demo-held-in-geneva-demanding-trial-of-1971-genocide-perpetrators>

The Economic Times: https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/world-news/experts-demand-international-recognition-of-e-pakistan-genocide/articleshow/90458023.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst

The Malaysian Sun: <https://www.malaysiasun.com/news/272420991/international-conference-in-hague-demands-recognition-of-1971-bangladesh-genocide>

The Malaysian Sun: <https://www.malaysiasun.com/news/272410063/the-hague-bangladeshi-diaspora-to-hold-conference-on-1971-genocide>

EU Daily Digital: <https://eudailydigital.com/2022/asia-news/bangladeshi-diaspora-in-europe-seeks-ints-recognition-of-1971-genocide/>

London Times, 26 March 2022: <https://www.thelondontimes.uk/the-hague-conference-demands-recognition-of-bangladesh-genocide/>

Republic World: <https://www.republicworld.com/world-news/rest-of-the-world-news/global-conference-in-the-hague-demands-recognition-of-bangladeshi-genocide-of-1971-articleshow.html>

Republic World: <https://www.republicworld.com/world-news/europe/netherlands-bangladeshi-diaspora-to-hold-conference-on-1971-genocide-at-leiden-university-articleshow.html>

ANP Pers Support



The Hague conference reiterates demand for recognition of 1971 Bangladesh Genocide

28-03-2022 10:16 | 3 dagen geleden

<https://www.persberichten.nl/home/detail/3bae2f4a-d0ff-4a32-ad77-4e310dfec825/title/the-hague-conference-reiterates-demand-for-recognition-of-1971-bangladesh-genocide>

The Hague, 26 March 2022: The celebrated Pakistani diplomat and writer Mr Husain Haqqani at an international conference at the Leiden university in the Netherlands said yesterday that

after the increasing international recognition of the Armenian genocide, almost a hundred years after the genocide had been committed, a lot of people in his country of birth Pakistan, have tried very hard to try and see if they can either minimize or deny what happened in 1971 in Bangladesh. “What happened in Bangladesh is a crime”, said Mr Haqqani adding, “the atrocities that took place in 1971 in what is now Bangladesh needs not only acknowledgment but also a collective apology by the state and government of Pakistan so that this chapter at least if cannot be closed, but can be brought to some kind of closure”.

Other speakers at the conference reiterated the demand for international recognition of 1971 genocide in Bangladesh committed by Pakistan. They said, it is of great importance and an absolute necessity to honour the victims of Genocide and their descendants through recognition. To achieve the goal of peace and justice after committing such crimes, it should have been widely acknowledged at the time. Bangladesh is still waiting for an apology and has been looking to other countries to recognise what happened in 1971.

They were speaking at the conference titled ‘Bangladesh: Justice after genocide’ at the Hague faculty of Leiden University. The conference which is a follow-up of the last event on ‘International Recognition of Bangladesh Genocide in 1971’ was organized by the Europe based Bangladeshi diaspora organization European Bangladesh Forum (EBF) in collaboration with the Leiden University UNICEF Student Team the Hague & SESA (Southeast and South Asian) Club by CIROS (Community of International Relations and Organisations Students).

A total of around 72 participants, mostly university students from different universities in the Netherlands joined the conference and took part in the discussion during the two Q&A sessions. The conference was addressed by the visiting former Pakistani ambassador to the USA and currently Director, South and Central Asia, Hudson Institute, Washington, Dr. Wolfgang-Peter Zingel, South Asia Institute (SAI), University of Heidelberg, Germany Ms. Mahjabeen Khaled, former Member of the Bangladesh Parliament, Dr. Tommaso Virgili, Postdoctoral Research Fellow at WZB Berlin Social Science Center, Berlin, Germany and Mr Chris Blackburn, Communications Director, Swiss Inter Strategy Group; ‘Friend of Bangladesh’

Award Recipient, London. Mr. Rohan Sharman of Leiden University International Studies & Head, Southeast & South Asia Club gave the welcome address and Bikash Chowdhury Barua, President of EBF chaired the sessions. Ms. Manju von Rospatt of Leiden University College:



Liberal Arts and Sciences & General Volunteer Coordinator and Board Member of the UNICEF Student Team and Ms. Mai Li Julienne of Nijmegen University conducted the two Question & Answer Session. Ms. Mahjabeen Khaled and Mr Chris Blackburn took part in the conference through zoom. A 10-minute Documentary film titled; 'War Crimes 1971' was also on the day. The conference was live telecast by the London-based British Bangla News.

Speaking on the day Dr. Wolfgang-Peter Zingel who is also an expert on Bangladesh said, 'initiatives like this conference are needed to keep up the memory. So, what else could be done, he questioned saying, a first step would be that historians and other researchers from Bangladesh and Pakistan and/or representatives of the civil society meet personally on neutral



ground and together examine historical evidence. This, he continued, will be not easy, but easier now, after none of the major actors are still alive.

In her speech former Member of the Bangladesh Parliament Ms. Mahjabeen Khaled shared her personal story saying, 'that topic is very personal to me and my family' and 'The war of liberation defines me and what I am today'. She further states, '1971 liberation war has narrated thousands of personal stories' and Ms. Mahjabeen Khaled said 'We

will hope that in the 21st century the global community will stand alongside with Bangladesh, not just to remember, but also to recognise the Bangladesh Genocide of 1971'

Paying rich tributes to Bangabandhu, founder of Bangladesh the former ambassador of Pakistan in USA said, 'had he lived, I am certain he would have supported the idea of a formal apology from Pakistan for the tragedy inflicted on the people of Bangladesh during their war of liberation. This demand is supported by fair-minded people, like Pakistani dissidents like me, the Pakistan diplomat said adding, collective apologies help heal wounds and enable nations to deal with past wrongdoing. Bangabandhu's life and struggle make him a hero for the people of Bangladesh and other nations but in a fairer world, he would not have had to face the repression and injustice that he fought at great cost to himself and his family, Mr. Haqqani further said.

War crimes have been brought to Europe again. This city of international justice is watching current events with great trepidation. The Netherlands is still haunted by the ghosts of World War 2. The Nazi Occupation and the death of thousands of Jews, like Anne Frank, are woven

into the national fabric. We can't forget the dehumanisation, gas chambers, and the barbarity. We shouldn't forget they continue to happen again and again. We are told 'never again', but we know realpolitik and selfish national interest get in the way. Profit and power before people. The Balkans are still raw because of the ethnic cleanses of the 1990s and today Ukraine is under intense bombardment.

In his video message from London Mr Chris Blackburn said, 'the issue of recognition for the 1971 genocide is very important. We need to keep reminding people of this genocide issue. Pakistan is labouring under guilt and lies Mr Chris said adding, it hasn't learnt any lesson from 1971 because it has never been made accountable for its behaviour. A new generation of Afghans, Balochis, and others are the direct victims of global failure to hold Pakistan to account. I believe we need to make them pay, he concluded.

Speaking on the day Dr Tommaso Virgili said, in 1971 Bangladesh was born as a secular state, but this character was progressively lost in time. In 1975, Jamaat e Islami was made legal again. In 1977 the reference to God Almighty was introduced in the Constitution, and secularism deleted (before being restored in 2010); in 1988 Islam became the state religion.

In the Q&A sessions the participants wanted to hear more about the next steps needed for the recognition of the 1971 Bangladesh Genocide in Bangladesh. Mr Haqqani pointed out how important small events are, to keep the memory and gain in depth information from the people who remember this Genocide, as Dr. Wolfgang-Peter Zingel said. Dr. Tommaso Virgili agreed and indicated the importance of Recognition for the 1971 Bangladesh Genocide "Memories are used to make justice", he opined.

DEMONSTRATION IN GENEVA HELD



EBF ALSO organized a two-day long demonstration in front of the historic 'Broken Chair' at the UN building in Geneva, Switzerland on 25-26 March 2022. The demonstration was organized in collaboration with the International Human Rights Commission Bangladesh, Geneva and Switzerland Secular Forum. The demonstration reiterated the demand for trial of the perpetrators responsible for the genocide in Bangladesh and international recognition of the 1971 genocide committed by Pakistan army. The demonstration was live telecast by

the London-based British Bangla News.

Dr. Mojibur Doftori, a writer and senior researcher from Finland facilitated the demonstration. The demonstration was addressed among others by Khalilur Rahman Mamun, Director of International Human Rights Commission Bangladesh, Nazrul Islam, President of Switzerland Awami League, Shyamal Khan, General Secretary, Switzerland Awami League, prominent exiled blogger from Bangladesh Omi Rahman Pial, EBF Representative of EBF AHM Abdul Hai, Palash Barua, General Secretary of International Forum for Secular Bangladesh (IFSB), Switzerland, Mashiur Rahman Sumon, Vice President, Switzerland Awami League, Arun Barua, President of Bangladesh Minority Council Switzerland, Local Awami League leaders Sasim Gauri Charan, Nipu Barua, Sajia Rahman, Sumon Chakma, Swiss Awami League organizing secretary Akbar Ali, IFSB Switzerland advisor Hasan Imam Khan, Switzerland Awami League adviser Abdur Rob, Ashraful Alam Liton, Asharful Alam Azad, Mia Abul Kalam, Organizing Secretary of the All European Freedom Fighters Association.

At one stage the visiting State Minister for Labor and Employment of Bangladesh, Begum Munnujan Sufian joined the demonstration. Addressing the demonstration, the state minister who is on an official visit said, it was time for recognition of Bangladesh genocide by Pakistani army and its accomplices. It is high time for honoring the victims of genocide and their descendants through recognition. It is important to recognition of genocide and to bring perpetrators to justice. Unfortunately, the genocide against Bengalis has become a forgotten chapter in history today and we all know that 'justice delayed justice denied.' She said, 'we have to learn from history. We need to understand the mistakes of the past and work together to build a better world for the new generation in Bangladesh and Europe. Today we face social injustice all over the world and as politicians and people we cannot remain silent.

Bangladeshi expatriates, politicians, academics, researchers and human rights activists took part in the protest. The programme of protests and human chain were broadcast live on various television channels in Bangladesh and the London-based British Bangla News channel.

ANP Pers Support 

International Conference on 'Bangladesh: Justice after Genocide' on 24 March 2022

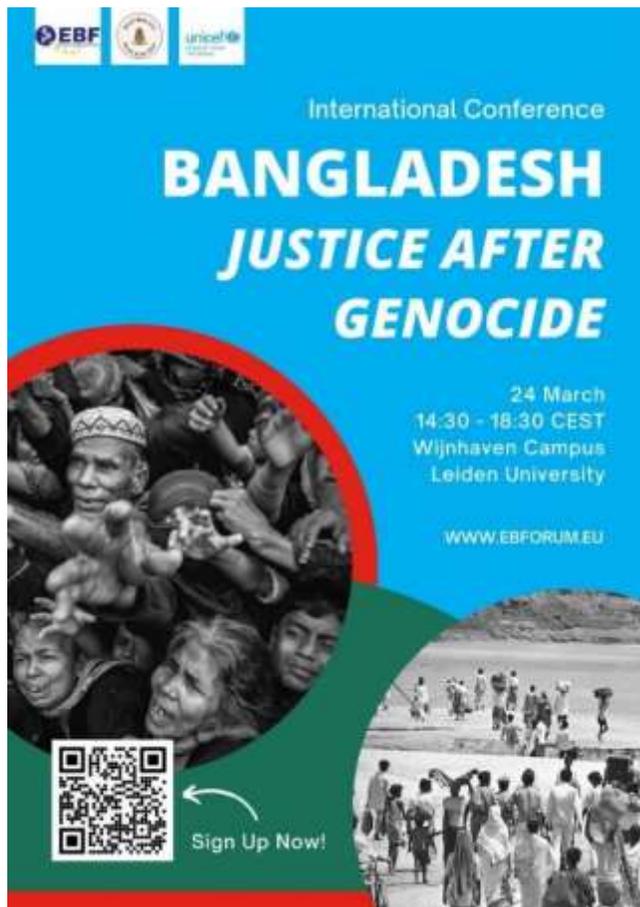
21-03-2022 10:42 | 1 week geleden

<https://www.persberichten.nl/home/detail/5c21d00d-0f46-417e-95e8-9818d514325e/title/international-conference-on-bangladesh-justice-after-genocide-on-24-march-2022>

International Conference on 'Bangladesh: Justice after Genocide' at Leiden University, the Hague on 24 March 2022

European Bangladesh Forum (www.ebforum.eu), a platform of Bangladeshi diaspora in Europe will organize an international conference on **'Bangladesh: Justice after Genocide'** at Leiden University, Wijnhaven Campus, the Hague, Lecture Hall 2.02 on Thursday 24 March 2022 at 14:00-18:15. The conference is being organized in collaboration with the Leiden University UNICEF Student Team the Hague & SESA (South East and South Asian) Club by CIROS (Community of International Relations and Organisations Students).

A number of experts, academics, diplomats, university teachers, researcher from U.K., USA (Washington), Germany, Netherlands and University student leaders will take part in the conference as speakers. The speakers include: Mr. Husain Haqqani, Former Ambassador of Pakistan to the United States & Director, South and Central Asia, Hudson Institute,



Washington, USA- 'Bangabandhu and the Struggle for Bangladesh', Dr. Wolfgang-Peter Zingel, South Asia Institute (SAI), University of Heidelberg, Germany- 'The twelfth stage of genocide and the economics of a collective amnesia', Mr Chris Blackburn, Communications Director, Swiss Inter Strategy Group; 'Friend of Bangladesh' Award Recipient, London, UK- 'Bangladesh and the Spirit of 1971: Past, Present, and Future' Dr. Tommaso Virgili, Postdoctoral Research Fellow at WZB Berlin Social Science Center, Berlin, Germany- 'The threat of Islamism in Bangladesh - from the genocide to the present day' and Mr. Bikash Chowdhury Barua, President EBF Netherlands. From among the student groups, Mr. Rohan Sharma, Leiden University International Studies & Head, SE and South Asia Club, Ms. Manju von Rospatt, Leiden University College: Liberal Arts and Sciences & General Volunteer Coordinator and Board Member, UNICEF Student Team and Ms. Annabel Witsch, Leiden University, International Relations & Organisations & Head of Awareness team of UNICEF student team will also speak on the day.

A 10-minute Documentary film titled, **'War Crimes 1971'** will also be screened on the day.

It may be mentioned that during the 1971 Genocide in Bangladesh, the Pakistan military deliberately harmed to hundreds of thousands of Bangladeshi citizens. The horrors of 1971 are considered one of the worst mass atrocities in history. The damage they inflicted can be described in the following numbers. 3 million people were believed to have been killed, up to 200,000 women were violated and over 10 million people were forced to cross the border to

India to seek shelter. The perpetrators were the Pakistani military, the victims innocent Bangladeshis.

The poster for the International Conference on "Bangladesh: Justice after Genocide" features a red and green background. At the top left, it lists the venue: Leiden University, Lecture hall 2.02, Wijnhaven, Turfmarkt 99, 2511 DP The Hague, The Netherlands. The title "International Conference on 'Bangladesh: Justice after Genocide'" is prominently displayed in the center. To the right, it states the date and time: Thursday, 24 March 2022, 14:00-18:15 (CEST). Below the title, there are several small images: a newspaper clipping titled "1971 Bangladesh genocide", a group of people, a newspaper clipping titled "GENOCIDE", and a group of people. At the bottom, it lists the organizers: European Bangladesh Forum (EBF), UNICEF Student Team, The Hague, and SESA - South East and South Asian Club by CIROS, Leiden University, The Netherlands. Logos for UNICEF Student Team, The Hague, EBF, and SESA are also present.

To achieve the goal of peace and justice after committing such crimes, it should have been widely acknowledged at the time. Bangladesh is still waiting for an apology. Bangladesh has been looking to other countries to recognise what happened in 1971. A recognition from Pakistan and other countries in the world, was not made. Politics and realpolitik are said to have gotten in the way.

Without further delay, there needs to be an UN-sponsored Resolution condemnation against Pakistan for its role in 1971 in Bangladesh. The perpetrators of the 1971 Genocide must be brought to justice. The new generation must know what treatment was meted out to Bangladeshi people who deserve to enjoy equal human rights. Due to lack of international recognition, the history of that horror, the 1971 Genocide committed by Pakistan has become faded in the world context today. Bangladesh community in Europe feel that the 1971 GENOCIDE should be recognised by the international community to give justice to the victims of the atrocities committed by the Pakistan Army and its political leadership in 1971.

LIVE TELECAST: The conference will be live telecast by the London-based British Bangla News (britishbanglanews.com/) and can be watched at the following links.

Facebook: www.facebook.com/18932914...

YouTube link: youtu.be/OOQ-dMBqSS0

DEMONSTRATION IN FRONT OF 'BROKEN CHAIR', UN IN GENEVA

EBF will also organize a two-day long demonstration in front of the historic 'Broken Chair' at the UN building in Geneva, Switzerland on 25-26 March 2022. The demonstration is being organized in collaboration with the International Human Rights Commission Bangladesh, Geneva. The demonstration will reiterate the demand for trial of the perpetrators responsible for the genocide in Bangladesh and international recognition of the Bangladesh genocide committed by the Pakistan army and the government. The demonstration will also be live telecast by the London-based British Bangla News at 4:30 p.m. local time.



Here are the links to watch live demonstration in Geneva.

Facebook Link : www.facebook.com/18932914...

You Tube link : youtu.be/WC_9MW9YFtc

TRUE AND IMPARTIAL
daily sun

<https://www.daily-sun.com/post/612452/Experts-demand-international-recognition-of-E-Pakistan-genocide>

Monday, 26 March, 2022

An international convention at Leiden University within the Hague has referred to as for international recognition of 1971 genocide in Bangladesh dedicated by Pakistan. Thousands have been killed in East Pakistan on the evening of March 25, 1971, in a marketing campaign (Operation Searchlight) by Pak Army.



The audio system on the meet mentioned it's of nice significance and an absolute necessity to honour the victims of genocide and their descendants by means of recognition. To obtain the aim of peace and justice after committing such crimes, it ought to have been extensively acknowledged on the time. Bangladesh has been trying to different nations to recognise what occurred in 1971.

They have been talking on the convention titled 'Bangladesh: Justice after genocide' on the Hague school of Leiden University on Friday. The convention which is a follow-up of the final occasion on 'International Recognition of Bangladesh Genocide in 1971' was organized by the Europe based mostly Bangladeshi diaspora group European Bangladesh Forum (EBF) in collaboration with the Leiden University UNICEF Student Team the Hague & SESA (Southeast and South Asian) Club by CIROS (Community of International Relations and Organisations Students).

The convention was addressed by Hussain Haqqani former Pakistani ambassador to the USA and at present Director, South and Central Asia, Hudson Institute, Washington, Dr Wolfgang-Peter Zingel, South Asia Institute (SAI), University of Heidelberg, Germany Mahjabeen Khaled, former Member of the Bangladesh Parliament, Dr Tommaso Virgili, Postdoctoral Research Fellow at WZB Berlin Social Science Center, Berlin, Germany and Chris Blackburn, Communications Director, Swiss Inter Strategy Group; 'Friend of Bangladesh' Award Recipient, London.

A ten-minute documentary movie titled; 'War Crimes 1971' was additionally on the day. The convention was reside telecast by the London-based British Bangla News.

Zingel who can be an knowledgeable on Bangladesh mentioned, ‘initiatives like this convention are wanted to protect the reminiscence. He prompt as a primary step can be that historians and different researchers from Bangladesh and Pakistan and/or representatives of the civil society meet personally on impartial floor and collectively study historic proof. This, he continued, might be not straightforward, however simpler now, after none of the key actors are nonetheless alive.

Khaled shared her private story saying, ‘that topic is very personal to me and my family’ and ‘The war of liberation defines me and what I am today’. Khaled mentioned “We will hope that in the 21st century the global community will stand alongside with Bangladesh, not just to remember, but also to recognise the Bangladesh Genocide of 1971”

Paying wealthy tributes to Bangabandhu, Haqqani mentioned, “had he lived, I am certain he would have supported the idea of a formal apology from Pakistan for the tragedy inflicted on the people of Bangladesh during their war of liberation. This demand is supported by fair-minded people, like Pakistani dissidents like me, the Pakistan diplomat said adding, collective apologies help heal wounds and enable nations to deal with past wrongdoing. Bangabandhu’s life and struggle make him a hero for the people of Bangladesh and other nations but in a fairer world, he would not have had to face the repression and injustice that he fought at great cost to himself and his family.”

In his video message from London Blackburn mentioned, “the issue of recognition for the 1971 genocide is very important. We need to keep reminding people of this genocide issue. Pakistan is labouring under guilt and lies Chris said adding, it hasn’t learnt any lesson from 1971 because it has never been made accountable for its behaviour. A new generation of Afghans, Balochis, and others are the direct victims of global failure to hold Pakistan to account. I believe we need to make them pay.” Virgili mentioned, in 1971 Bangladesh was born as a secular state, however this character was progressively misplaced in time. In 1975, Jamaat e Islami was made authorized once more. In 1977 the reference to God Almighty was launched within the Constitution, and secularism deleted (earlier than being restored in 2010); in 1988 Islam grew to become the state faith.

EBF can be organizing a two-day lengthy demonstration in entrance of the historic ‘Broken Chair’ on the UN constructing in Geneva, Switzerland on Friday & Saturday. The demonstration is being organized in collaboration with the International Human Rights Commission Bangladesh, Geneva. The demonstration will reiterate the demand for trial of the perpetrators answerable for the genocide in Bangladesh and international recognition of the 1971 genocide dedicated by Pakistan military.

Source: Pehal News

Business Insider Bangladesh, Dhaka: <https://www.businessinsiderbd.com/national/news/19592/intl-recognition-of-1971-genocide-demanded-in-europe>

Home**National**

Int'l recognition of 1971 genocide demanded in Europe

BI Report || *BusinessInsider*

Published: 21:14, 26 March 2022 Update: 21:22, 26 March 2022



Bangladeshi political leaders, Bangladeshi diaspora leaders, foreign diplomats and foreign friends of Bangladesh have reiterated the demand for international recognition of 1971 genocide in Bangladesh committed by Pakistan.

Speaking at an international conference in the European city of Hague on Friday they said it is of great importance and an absolute necessity to honour the victims of genocide and their descendants through recognition, according to a press release issued Saturday.

They also said that to achieve the goal of peace and justice after committing such crimes, it should have been widely acknowledged at the time. Bangladesh is still waiting for an apology and has been looking to other countries to recognise what happened in 1971.

The conference titled “Bangladesh: Justice after genocide” at the Hague faculty of Leiden University was a follow-up of the last event on “International Recognition of Bangladesh Genocide in 1971”.

It was organised by Europe based Bangladeshi diaspora organization European Bangladesh Forum (EBF) in collaboration with the Leiden University UNICEF Student Team the Hague and Southeast and South Asian Club by CIROS (Community of International Relations and Organisations Students).

A total of around 72 participants took part in the discussion during the two sessions.

Speaking on the day Dr Wolfgang-Peter Zingel, who is also an expert on Bangladesh, said, “A first step would be that historians and other researchers from Bangladesh and Pakistan and/or representatives of the civil society meet personally on neutral ground and together examine historical evidence.”

In her video message, former Member of the Bangladesh Parliament Mahjabeen Khaled, “We will hope that in the 21st century the global community will stand alongside with Bangladesh, not just to remember, but also to recognise the Bangladesh Genocide of 1971.”

Paying rich tributes to Bangabandhu, Husain Haqqani, former ambassador of Pakistan to USA said, “This demand is supported by fair-minded people, like Pakistani dissidents like me, the Pakistan diplomat said adding, collective apologies help heal wounds and enable nations to deal with past wrongdoing.”

In his video message from London, Chris Blackburn, communications director, Swiss Inter Strategy Group, said, “It (Pakistan) hasn’t learnt any lesson from 1971 because it has never been made accountable for its behaviour. A new generation of Afghans, Balochis, and others are the direct victims of global failure to hold Pakistan to account.”

Dr Tommaso Virgili, postdoctoral research fellow at WZB Berlin Social Science Center, said, Bangladesh’s character as a secular state was progressively lost in time. “In 1975, Jamaat e Islami was made legal again. In 1977 the reference to God Almighty was introduced in the Constitution, and secularism deleted (before being restored in 2010); in 1988 Islam became the state religion,” he added.

BUSINESS INSIDER

BANGLADESH

<https://www.businessinsiderbd.com/national/news/19593/demo-held-in-geneva-demanding-trial-of-1971-genocide-perpetrators>

Demo held in Geneva demanding trial of 1971 genocide perpetrators

BI Report || *BusinessInsider*
Published: 21:22, 26 March 2022



European
Bangladesh
Forum
(EBF)

organised a two-day long demonstration in front of the historic 'Broken Chair' at the UN building in Geneva, Switzerland on 25-26 March 2022.

The demonstration was organized in collaboration with the International Human Rights Commission Bangladesh, Geneva and Switzerland Secular Forum.

The demonstration reiterated the demand for trial of the perpetrators responsible for the genocide in Bangladesh and international recognition of the 1971 genocide committed by Pakistan army. The demonstration was live telecast by the London-based British Bangla News.

Dr Mojibur Doftori, a writer and senior researcher from Finland facilitated the demonstration.

Begum Munnujan Sufian, state minister for Labour and Employment, who is on an official visit, said, it was time for recognition of Bangladesh genocide by Pakistani army and its accomplices. It is high time for honouring the victims of genocide and their descendants through recognition.”

Bangla Mirror News, London:



<https://banglamirrornews.com/2022/03/25/hague-conference-demands-international-recognition-of-bangladesh-genocide/>

Home / Bangladesh / Hague conference demands international recognition of Bangladesh genocide

Hague conference demands international recognition of Bangladesh genocide

Ansar Ahmed Ullah:

At an international conference at Leiden University in The Hague, The Netherlands held on 24 March, speakers reiterated the demand for international recognition of the 1971 genocide in Bangladesh committed by Pakistan. They said it is of great importance and an absolute necessity to honour the victims of genocide through recognition. To achieve the goal of peace and justice after committing such crimes, the genocide should have been widely acknowledged at the time. Bangladesh has been looking to other countries to recognise what happened in 1971.



They were speaking at the conference titled ‘Bangladesh: Justice after genocide’ at The Hague faculty of Leiden University. The conference was organised by Europe based Bangladeshi diaspora organisation European Bangladesh Forum (EBF) in collaboration with the Leiden University UNICEF Student Team the Hague & South East and South Asian Club by Community of International Relations and Organisations Students. Participants, students from universities in the Netherlands, joined the conference. The conference was addressed by Mr Husain Haqqani, the visiting former Pakistani Ambassador to the USA, Dr Wolfgang-Peter Zingel, University of Heidelberg, Germany Ms Mahjabeen Khaled, former MP Bangladesh Parliament, Dr Tommaso Virgili, WZB Berlin Social Science Center, Germany and Mr Chris Blackburn, Swiss Inter Strategy Group, UK. Mr Rohan Sharman of Leiden University International Studies gave the welcome address, and Bikash Chowdhury Barua, President of EBF, chaired the sessions. Ms Manju von Rospatt of Leiden University College and Ms Mai Li Julienne of Nijmegen University conducted the two Q & A sessions. Ms Mahjabeen Khaled and Mr Chris Blackburn took part in the conference through zoom.

Speaking on the day, Dr Wolfgang-Peter Zingel, an expert on Bangladesh, said, ‘Initiatives like this conference are needed to keep up the memory. So, he questioned what else could be done, saying that a first step would be that historians and other researchers from Bangladesh and Pakistan and civil society representatives meet personally on neutral ground and examine historical evidence. In her speech, former MP Ms Mahjabeen Khaled shared her personal story saying that the topic is very personal to my family and the War of Liberation defines me and what I am today. She further stated, ‘1971 Liberation War has narrated thousands of individual stories’, and Ms Mahjabeen Khaled said ‘We will hope that in the 21st century the global community will stand alongside Bangladesh, not just to remember, but also to recognise the Bangladesh Genocide of 1971.’ Paying rich tributes to Bangabandhu, founder of Bangladesh, the former Ambassador of Pakistan, said, ‘had he lived, I am certain he would have supported the idea of a formal apology from Pakistan for the tragedy inflicted on the people of Bangladesh during their war of liberation. This demand is supported by fair-minded people, like Pakistani dissidents like me. The Pakistan diplomat said that collective

apologies help heal wounds and enable nations to deal with past wrongdoing. Bangabandhu's life and struggle make him a hero for the people of Bangladesh and other countries.

In his video message from the UK, Mr Chris Blackburn said, 'the issue of recognition for the 1971 genocide is critical. We need to keep reminding people of this genocide. Pakistan is labouring under guilt and lies, Mr Chris said, adding, it hasn't learnt any lesson from 1971 because it has never been made accountable for its behaviour. A new generation of Afghans, Balochis, and others are the direct victims of global failure to hold Pakistan to account.

Speaking at the conference, Dr Tommaso Virgili said in 1971, Bangladesh was born as a secular state, but this character was progressively lost in time.



Home/World/International recognition of Bangladesh genocide 1971 demanded

World

International recognition of Bangladesh genocide 1971 demanded

<http://our-voice-online.com/blog/demand-for-international-recognition-of-bangladesh-genocide-1971/>

Geneva, March 26 (Our Voice) – Bangladeshi diaspora organisation, European Bangladesh Forum (EBF) organized a two day long demonstration on 25-26 March in front of the historic broken chair, close to the UN building in Geneva, Switzerland demanding international recognition of the genocide perpetrated by the Pakistani armed forces in the nine months of the liberation war in 1971. The program was organized in collaboration with the International Human Rights Commission Bangladesh Switzerland.

Dr. Mojibur Doftori, a writer and senior researcher from Finland facilitated the demonstration. The demonstration was addressed among others by Rahman Khalilur Mamun, Director of International

Human Rights Commission Bangladesh, Switzerland, Nazrul Islam, President of Switzerland Awami League, Shyamal Khan, General Secretary, Switzerland Awami League, prominent exiled blogger from Bangladesh Omi Rahman Pial, President of Baloch Voice Munir Baloch, EBF Representative Abdul Hai, Palash Barua, General Secretary of International Forum for Secular Bangladesh (IFSB), Switzerland, Mashiur Rahman Sumon, Vice President, Switzerland Awami League, Arun Barua, President of Bangladesh Minority Council Switzerland, Local Awami League leaders Sasim Gauri Charan, Nipu Barua, Sajia Rahman, Sumon Chakma, Mohammad Mojammel Jewel, Akbar Ali, Ayan Junayed, Masum Khan Dulal, IFSB Switzerland Advisor Hasan Imam Khan, Dilip Dhar, Switzerland Awami League Adviser Abdur Rob, Ashraful Alam Liton, Ashariful Alam Azad, Mia Abul Kalam, Organizing Secretary of the All European Freedom Fighters Association.

Bangladeshi expatriates, politicians, academics, researchers and human rights activists took part in the protest. The programme of protests and human chain were broadcast live on various television channels in Bangladesh and the London-based British Bangla News channel.

In 1971, the Pakistani military and its local allies carried out one of the world's worst genocide in the twentieth century. In nine months, Pakistani army killed nearly three million people, sexually abused more than two hundred thousand women and forced one million people to flee their homeland and seek refuge in India. The death toll at the hands of the Pakistani military is the highest in the history of the world in such a short period of time. The Pakistan Army genocide of 1971 is well documented and reflected in the international media and also in the diplomatic correspondence of the time.

State Minister for Labor and Employment of Bangladesh, Begum Munnujan Sufian inaugurated the demonstration. Addressing the demonstration the state minister, who is on an official visit, said, it was time for recognition of Bangladesh genocide by Pakistani army and its accomplices. It is high time for honoring the victims of genocide and their descendants through recognition. It is important to recognize the genocide and to bring perpetrators to justice. Unfortunately, the genocide against Bengalis has become a forgotten chapter in the history today and we all know that 'justice delayed, justice denied.'

She said, 'we have to learn from history. We need to understand the mistakes of the past and work together to build a better world for the new generation in Bangladesh and Europe. Today we face social injustice all over the world and as politicians and people we cannot remain silent.

British Bangla News, UK: <http://britishbanglanews.com/?p=2722>

Experts demand international recognition of E Pakistan genocide

Read more at:

https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/world-news/experts-demand-international-recognition-of-e-pakistan-genocide/articleshow/90458023.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

An international conference at Leiden University in the Hague has called for international recognition of 1971 genocide in Bangladesh committed by Pakistan. Thousands were killed in East Pakistan on the night of March 25, 1971, in a campaign (Operation Searchlight) by Pak Army.

The speakers at the meet said it is of great importance and an absolute necessity to honour the victims of genocide and their descendants through recognition. To achieve the goal of peace and justice after committing such crimes, it should have been widely acknowledged at the time. Bangladesh is still waiting for an apology and has been looking to other countries to recognise what happened in 1971.

They were speaking at the conference titled 'Bangladesh: Justice after genocide' at the Hague faculty of Leiden University on Friday. The conference which is a follow-up of the last event on 'International Recognition of Bangladesh Genocide in 1971' was organized by the Europe based Bangladeshi diaspora organization European Bangladesh Forum (EBF) in collaboration with the Leiden University UNICEF Student Team the Hague & SESA (Southeast and South Asian) Club by CIROS (Community of International ..

The conference was addressed by Hussain Haqqani former Pakistani ambassador to the USA and currently Director, South and Central Asia, Hudson Institute, Washington, Dr. Wolfgang-Peter Zingel, South Asia Institute (SAI), University of Heidelberg, Germany Ms. Mahjabeen Khaled, former Member of the Bangladesh Parliament, Dr. Tommaso Virgili, Postdoctoral Research Fellow at WZB Berlin Social Science Center, Berlin, Germany and Chris Blackburn, Communications Director, Swiss Inter Strategy Group; 'Fr ..

Last Updated: 25th March, 2022 18:13 IST

Global Conference In The Hague Demands Recognition Of Bangladeshi Genocide Of 1971

During the genocide, 3 mn people were killed; 2 mn women faced brutal atrocities and about 10 mn people were forced to cross borders and come to India

Written By

[Abhishek Raval](#)



In a bid to acknowledge the suffering and honour the victims of the genocide underwent during the Bangladesh Liberation war, the Speakers at a conference in Hague demanded the international recognition of the Bangladeshi genocide. The killings that transpired during the war in 1971, saw 3 million people killed, 2 million

women facing brutal atrocities and around 10 mn people being forced to cross borders and relocate to India.

Demand for recognising 1971 Bangladesh Genocide

The demand was made during the international conference held on March 24 titled, 'Bangladesh: Justice after genocide' at Leiden University in The Hague and organized by Europe-based Bangladeshi diaspora organization European Bangladesh Forum (EBF) in collaboration with the Leiden University UNICEF Student Team the Hague & SESA (Southeast and South Asian) Club by CIROS (Community of International Relations and Organisations Students). The conference featured a couple of Q&A discussions, wherein over 72 students from various universities of the Netherlands participated.

The former member of the Bangladesh Parliament M Mahjabeen Khaled shared her personal story and said, "That topic is very personal to me and my family and the war of liberation defines me and what I am today."

"1971 liberation war has narrated thousands of personal stories and I hope that in the 21st century the global community will stand alongside Bangladesh, not just to remember, but also to recognise the Bangladesh Genocide of 1971."

A Pakistan diplomat and former Pakistani ambassador to the US Hussain Haqqani, while paying tributes to Sheikh Mujibur Rehman, founder of Bangladesh, said: *"Had he lived, I am certain he would have supported the idea of a formal apology from Pakistan for the tragedy inflicted on the people of Bangladesh during their war of liberation. This demand is supported by fair-minded people, like Pakistani dissidents like me,"*

Remembering Rehman's sacrifice, Haqqani said that collective apologies help heal wounds and enable nations to deal with past wrongdoings. EBF is also planning to hold demonstrations on March 25 in front of the United Nations building in Geneva to demand the trial of the perpetrators of violence during the genocide and also the international recognition of the genocide committed by the Pakistani Army. Rights group says the horrors of 1971 are considered one of the worst mass atrocities in history.

Meanwhile, the Bangladesh Conscious Citizens Committee (BCCC), commemorating Genocide Remembrance Day on March 24, organised a protest in front of the National Museum in Shahbag. Leaders and participants demanded international recognition of this genocide or Operation Searchlight- a planned military pacification carried out by the Pakistani Army. They also demanded an apology by the Pakistan Government and a trial of Pakistani War Criminals immediately.

Last Updated: 22nd March, 2022 18:40 IST

Netherlands: Bangladeshi Diaspora To Hold Conference On 1971 Genocide At Leiden University

<https://www.republicworld.com/world-news/europe/netherlands-bangladeshi-diaspora-to-hold-conference-on-1971-genocide-at-leiden-university-articleshow.html>

Netherlands: European Bangladesh Forum will hold a conference to discuss the issue of "Bangladesh: Justice after Genocide" at Leiden University

Written By

[Amrit Burman](#)



Image: ANI

The European Bangladesh Forum on Tuesday announced that it will organize an international conference at a university in The Hague on Thursday. The Forum is a platform constituted with an aim to help Bangladeshi nationals residing in Europe. According to media reports, the aforementioned conference will be held in a bid to discuss the issue of the 1971 genocide in Bangladesh at Leiden University, Wijnhaven Campus. Notably, the conference will be organised in collaboration with the Leiden University UNICEF Student Team and The Hague & SESA (South East and South Asian) Club by CIROS (Community of International Relations and Organizations Students).

The conference will have in attendance various experts, academics, diplomats, university teachers, and researchers from the UK, the USA, Germany, the Netherlands, and university student leaders who will also address the gathering. The speakers include Husain Haqqani, Former Ambassador of Pakistan to the United States and Director, South and Central Asia, Hudson Institute, Washington, USA and Dr. Wolfgang-Peter Zingel, South Asia Institute (SAI), University of Heidelberg, Germany. In the conference, a 10-minute documentary film titled "War Crimes 1971" will also be screened to recall the mass genocide that transpired in 1971 in Bangladesh at the hands of the Pakistani military forces.

1971 Bangladesh Genocide

On March 26, 1971, Pakistani armies launched an aggressive military invasion named "Operation Searchlight" to suppress Bengali calls for self-determination. The Pakistan military deliberately attacked hundreds of thousands of Bangladeshi civilians. Human rights group claims the atrocities inflicted by Pakistani forces in 1971 are considered one of the worst mass atrocities in history, making it the largest genocide since the Holocaust. During the nine-month-long Bangladesh Liberation War, members of the Pakistan Armed Forces, along with pro-Pakistani Islamist militias from Jamaat-e-Islami, killed around 300,000 and 3,000,000 people and raped more than 3 lakh Bengali women. Over 10 million people were forced to leave Bangladesh and go to India to seek shelter.

The actions against women were strongly supported by the Islamic religious leaders of Pakistan, who then declared that Bengali women were *gonimeter maal*, meaning Bengali women were "public property". The conflict further escalated and around ten million people fled their homeland to seek refuge in neighbouring India. Of 70 million people living in the country, 30 million civilians were internally displaced, and the war also triggered ethnic violence between Bengalis and Urdu-speaking Biharis.

MALAYSIA SUN

Malaysia Sun, Pure Asia

Mon, 28 Mar 2022

<https://www.malaysiasun.com/news/272420991/international-conference-in-hague-demands-recognition-of-1971-bangladesh-genocide>

International conference in Hague demands recognition of 1971 Bangladesh Genocide

ANI

25 Mar 2022, 20:55 GMT+10



The Hague [Netherlands], March 25 (ANI): Highlighting the great importance and an absolute necessity to honour the victims of genocide and their descendants, speakers at an international conference have demanded international recognition of the Bangladesh genocide that took place during March-December 1971.

The demand came during an international conference held on Thursday titled, 'Bangladesh: Justice after genocide' held at Leiden University in the Hague and organized by Europe based Bangladeshi diaspora organization European Bangladesh Forum (EBF) in collaboration with the Leiden University UNICEF Student Team the HagueSESA (Southeast and South Asian) Club by CIROS (Community of International Relations and Organisations Students).

A total of around 72 participants, mostly university students from different universities in the Netherlands joined the conference and took part in the discussion during the two QA sessions.

Former member of the Bangladesh Parliament M Mahjabeen Khaled shared her personal story saying, "that topic is very personal to me and my family" and "The war of liberation defines me and what I am today." She further stated, "1971 liberation war has narrated thousands of personal stories and I hope that in the 21st century the global community will stand alongside Bangladesh, not just to remember, but also to recognise the Bangladesh Genocide of 1971." Paying rich tributes to Sheikh Mujibur Rehman, founder of Bangladesh, former ambassador of Pakistan to the US Hussain Haqqani said, "had he lived, I am certain he would have supported the idea of a formal apology from Pakistan for the tragedy inflicted on the people of Bangladesh during their war of liberation. This demand is supported by fair-minded people, like Pakistani dissidents like me," the Pakistan diplomat said adding, "collective apologies help heal wounds and enable nations to deal with past wrongdoing. Bangabandhu's (Sheikh Mujibur Rehman's) life and struggle make him a hero for the people of Bangladesh and other nations but in a fairer world, he would not have had to face the repression and injustice that he fought at great cost to himself and his family," Haqqani further said.

EBF also plans to organize a two-day long demonstration in front of the historic 'Broken Chair' at the UN building in Geneva, Switzerland starting today. The demonstration is being organized in collaboration with the International Human Rights Commission Bangladesh, Geneva. The demonstration will reiterate the demand for trial of the perpetrators responsible for the genocide in Bangladesh

and international recognition of the 1971 genocide committed by the Pakistan army.

During the 1971 Genocide in Bangladesh, the Pakistan military deliberately harmed hundreds of thousands of Bangladeshi citizens. Rights group says the horrors of 1971 are considered one of the worst mass atrocities in history.

The damage they inflicted can be described in the following numbers. As many as three million people were believed to have been killed, up to 200,000 women were violated and over 10 million people were forced to cross the border to India to seek shelter. (ANI)

Fri, 01 Apr 2022

MALAYSIA SUN

Malaysia Sun, Pure Asia

The Hague: Bangladeshi diaspora to hold conference on 1971 genocide

<https://www.malaysiasun.com/news/272410063/the-hague-bangladeshi-diaspora-to-hold-conference-on-1971-genocide>



The Hague [Netherlands], March 22 (ANI): The European Bangladesh Forum, a platform of Bangladeshi diaspora in Europe, will organize an international conference at a university in The Hague on Thursday.

The conference will be convened on the issue titled 'Bangladesh: Justice after Genocide' at Leiden University, Wijnhaven Campus.

The conference is being organized in collaboration with the Leiden University UNICEF Student Team the HagueSESA (South East and South Asian) Club by CIROS (Community of International Relations and Organisations Students).

A number of experts, academics, diplomats, university teachers, researchers from the U.K., USA (Washington), Germany, Netherlands and University student leaders will take part in the conference as speakers.

The speakers include Husain Haqqani, Former Ambassador of Pakistan to the United States Director, South and Central Asia, Hudson Institute, Washington, USA- 'Bangabandhu and the Struggle for Bangladesh' and Dr Wolfgang-Peter Zingel, South Asia Institute (SAI), University of Heidelberg, Germany.

A 10-minute documentary film titled, 'War Crimes 1971' will also be screened on the day.

During the 1971 Genocide in Bangladesh, the Pakistan military deliberately harmed hundreds of thousands of Bangladeshi citizens. Rights group says the horrors of 1971 are considered one of the worst mass atrocities in history.

The damage they inflicted can be described in the following numbers. As many as three million people were believed to have been killed, up to 200,000 women were violated and over 10 million people were forced to cross the border to India to seek shelter. (ANI)

EU DAILY DIGITAL

Bangladeshi diaspora in Europe seeks int'l recognition of 1971 genocide

<https://eudailydigital.com/2022/asia-news/bangladeshi-diaspora-in-europe-seeks-ints-recognition-of-1971-genocide/>

A total of around 72 participants, mostly university students from different universities in the Netherlands joined the conference and took part in the discussion during the two Q&A sessions....reports Asian Lite News

Highlighting the great importance and an absolute necessity to honour the victims of genocide and their descendants, speakers at an international conference have demanded international recognition of the Bangladesh genocide that took place during March-December 1971.

The demand came during an international conference held on Thursday titled, 'Bangladesh: Justice after genocide' held at Leiden University in the Hague and organized by Europe based Bangladeshi diaspora organization European Bangladesh Forum (EBF) in collaboration with the Leiden University UNICEF Student Team the Hague & SESA (Southeast and South Asian) Club by CIROS (Community of International Relations and Organisations Students).

A total of around 72 participants, mostly university students from different universities in the Netherlands joined the conference and took part in the discussion during the two Q&A sessions.

Former member of the Bangladesh Parliament M Mahjabeen Khaled shared her personal story saying, "that topic is very personal to me and my family" and "The war of liberation defines me and what I am today." She further stated, "1971 liberation war has narrated thousands of personal stories and I hope that in the 21st century the global community will stand alongside



Bangladesh, not just to remember, but also to recognise the Bangladesh Genocide of 1971."

Paying rich tributes to Sheikh Mujibur Rehman, founder of Bangladesh, former ambassador

of Pakistan to the US Hussain Haqqani said, "had he lived, I am certain he would have supported the idea of a formal apology from Pakistan for the tragedy inflicted on the people of Bangladesh during their war of liberation. This demand is supported by fair-minded people, like Pakistani dissidents like me," the Pakistan diplomat said adding, "collective apologies help heal wounds and enable nations to deal with past wrongdoing. Bangabandhu's (Sheikh Mujibur Rehman's) life and struggle make him a hero for the people of Bangladesh and other nations but in a fairer world, he would not have had to face the repression and injustice that he fought at great cost to himself and his family," Haqqani further said.

EBF also plans to organize a two-day long demonstration in front of the historic 'Broken Chair' at the UN building in Geneva, Switzerland starting today. The demonstration is being organized in collaboration with the International Human Rights Commission Bangladesh, Geneva. The demonstration will reiterate the demand for trial of the perpetrators responsible for the genocide in Bangladesh and international recognition of the 1971 genocide committed by the Pakistan army.

During the 1971 Genocide in Bangladesh, the Pakistan military deliberately harmed hundreds of thousands of Bangladeshi citizens. Rights group says the horrors of 1971 are considered one of the worst mass atrocities in history. The damage they inflicted can be described in the following numbers. As many as three million people were believed to have been killed, up to 200,000 women were violated and over 10 million people were forced to cross the border to India to seek shelter. (ANI)



Report by: **Julienne Mai Li** | European Bangladesh Forum || Contact: info@ebforum.eu www.ebforum.eu