



## Declaration in Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Bangladesh Genocide

### Pakistan's crimes during the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War included Genocide, Crimes Against Humanity and War Crimes

- Prior to the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War, East Pakistan, today's Bangladesh, was dominated by West Pakistan, following the British colonial partition of 1947.
- During this second neo-colonial rule, discriminatory policies against the people of East Pakistan, both Hindus and Muslims, were established by the West Pakistan military junta. They included imposition of Urdu as the only official language of Pakistan from 1948 - 1956, violent persecution of the civilian Bengali population, and repression of dissidents and social movements that defended Bengali identity and culture.
- Testimonies by the survivors of Pakistani military rule provide thousands of accounts of widespread persecution from 1947 through 1971 committed by Pakistan against the Bengali people as an ethnic, national, and religious group.
- These crimes were planned and led by Pakistani General Yahya Khan. He imposed martial law in 1969, dissolved Pakistan's parliament, and abrogated Pakistan's constitution.
- Following the East Pakistan Awami League's victory in the 1970 all Pakistan parliamentary elections, the West Pakistani military junta under General Yahya Khan organized to prevent the Awami League from forming a Pakistani government.
- Awami League leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman made an historic speech on 7 March 1971 declaring Bangladesh Independence at midnight on 26 March 1971.
- Instead of handing over power to the elected civilian political leaders of Bangladesh, the Pakistani Military Forces and local collaborators launched 'Operation Searchlight' against the Bengali population on the night of 25 March 1971 and pursued a brutal annihilation campaign throughout Bangladesh until 16 December 1971.
- The United States supported Pakistan in the Bangladesh Liberation War. President Nixon and Secretary of State Kissinger directed the United States to secretly encourage shipment of arms from Iran, Turkey, and Jordan to Pakistan, reimbursing those countries despite US diplomatic and Congressional objections.
- Throughout the nine months of their anti-independence occupation of East Pakistan, the Pakistani Military Forces persecuted, tortured, and murdered representatives of Bengali culture and identity, including poets, musicians, professors, journalists, physicians, scientists, writers, and film makers.
- During their occupation of East Pakistan from 25 March 1971 to 16 December 1971, attacks by Pakistani Military Forces and their allies forced approximately ten million Bengalis to flee to neighboring India. This forced exodus constituted the crime against humanity of deportation and forcible transfer of a substantial part of East Pakistan's population.
- Pakistani policies were intentionally planned and organized in "clearance operations" to change the demographic composition of East Pakistan, through the brutal forced displacement and mass murder of a substantial part of East Pakistan's Bengali national and ethnic population.
- The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) held in its 1972 Report that attacks by Pakistani Military Forces included "indiscriminate killing of civilians, including women and children; the attempt to exterminate or drive out of the country a large part of the Hindu population of approximately 10 million people; the arrest, torture and killing without trial of suspects; the raping of women; the destruction of villages and towns; and the looting of property. The scale of these crimes was massive...."
- The International Commission of Jurists report concluded "[i]n addition to criminal offences under domestic law, there is a strong *prima facie* case that criminal offences were committed in international law, namely war crimes and crimes against humanity under the law relating to armed conflict, breaches of Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions of 1949, and acts of genocide under the Genocide Convention."
- These crimes by the Pakistani Military Forces constituted the crimes against humanity of murder, extermination, deportation or forcible transfer of population, imprisonment or other severe deprivation of physical liberty, torture, rape, sexual violence, persecution, enforced disappearance of persons, and other inhumane acts.



- Strong evidence supports the conclusion that the crimes committed against the Bengalis of East Pakistan during 1971 were widespread and systematic and carried out by the Pakistani Army, other militia forces (Razakars, Al Badr, Al Shams etc.), and pan-Islamic political forces (including Jamat e Islam, Nezam e Islam and the Muslim League).
- The crimes of the Pakistani Military Forces in Bangladesh in 1971 constituted war crimes under the laws of war, including: wilful killing; torture; inhuman treatment; wilfully causing great suffering; destruction and appropriation of property; compelling service in hostile forces; denying a fair trial; unlawful deportation and transfer; attacking civilians; attacking civilian objects; attacking personnel or objects in humanitarian assistance; excessive incidental death, injury, or damage; killing or wounding a person *hors de combat*; attacking protected objects; mutilation; treacherously killing or wounding; destroying or seizing property; depriving nationals of the hostile power of rights; compelling participation in military operations; pillaging; outrages upon personal dignity; rape; sexual violence; starvation as a method of warfare; murder; cruel treatment; and sentencing or execution without due process.
- Conclusive research by internationally recognized genocide experts indicates that the nature, scale and organization of the Pakistani Military operations demonstrates planning and intentional design by the Pakistani junta leadership and military command to destroy a substantial part of the Bengali ethnic and national group and a substantial part of the Bengali Hindu religious group.
- These crimes included all the processes of genocide: Classification into West Pakistanis vs. East Pakistanis (Bengalis); Symbolization on ID cards and in government records, existing different dress, language, and culture; Discrimination against Bengalis in Pakistan government and military leadership; Dehumanization in ethnic slurs against Bengalis, disparagement of Bengali Islam as "false Islam corrupted by Hinduism" and racism due to skin color; Organization in the West Pakistani dominated military; Polarization by language (Urdu vs. Bengali) and geography; Preparation in planning by Yahya Khan and the Pakistani Military Forces of "Operation Searchlight"; Persecution by murders, rapes, torture, destruction of property, and deportation; Extermination by mass murder of from 300,000 to 3 million Bengalis; and Denial by Pakistan, the US, the UK, and the UN during the genocide and to the present.
- This intentional Pakistani state planning of systematic, coordinated, simultaneous massacres by Pakistani Military Forces indicates the level of state intent required to prove the crime of **Genocide**.

#### **Therefore, Genocide Watch:**

- **Recognizes the crimes committed by the Military Forces of Pakistan against the Bengali population in Bangladesh in 1971 as genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.**
- Calls upon the U.N. General Assembly to adopt a resolution recognising the 1971 Genocide in Bangladesh.
- Urges the member states of the United Nations, especially the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, to recognize the crimes committed by Pakistani Military Forces in Bangladesh in 1971 as genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes.
- Urges member states of the United Nations to take necessary measures to recognize these crimes in appropriate fora, and to charge surviving leaders of this genocide in national courts with universal jurisdiction.
- Requests proper reparations for these crimes from the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

Adopted as an official declaration of Genocide Watch in this 50th anniversary commemoration year of the Bangladesh Genocide.

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