

Commemorating 50 years of Bangladesh Genocide: Global Virtual Conference organised by Liberation War Museum

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On Friday, 12 March 2021, Liberation War Museum, Bangladesh organised an online global conference titled 'Global Virtual Conference on Commemorating Past Genocides and Learning to Prevent Atrocity Crimes'. It was a 24-hour round global conference where academics, researchers, professionals, experts and institutional representatives worldwide participated by presenting papers and notes on various topics related to the on-going genocides and Bangladesh's struggle in 1971.



The focus of many of the panels were on the issues of genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, transitional justice, victimisation, memorialisation, memory words and role of the museums in digital age etc. The purpose of the conference was to promote a global understanding of genocide including the world-wide recognition of Bangladesh Genocide.

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Altogether 21 countries including Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Indonesia, Timor-Leste, Myanmar, UK, Switzerland, Belgium, Poland, the Netherlands, Kenya, Somaliland, Tanzania, Uganda, Australia, New Zealand, Argentina, USA and Canada were part of this global conference. 19 organisations collaborated with the Liberation War Museum in organising this conference which are- University of Cambridge, University of Melbourne, Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights, University of Ottawa, Australian National University, Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies, Center for the study of Genocide and Justice, the Iraq Project, Asia Justice and Rights (AJAR), ELCOP, Never Again Association, Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee, International Centre for Ethnic Studies Sri Lanka, Texas A & M university, University of Hargeisa, Somaliland, South Asian University, Swisspeace etc.

There were 27 sessions exclusive of the inaugural and the closing ceremony where 77 panellists delivered their speeches. This conference was held based on the GMT hours moving from Asia-Pacific region to Middle East, Africa, Europe and then to South and North America.

Special focus was given to the issue of Bangladesh Genocide that is yet to be recognised by the international community. Such panel discussion came forward in sessions titled- 'Genocide and Victimisation'- Helen Jarvis, Julian Francis and Dr. Tawhid Reza Noor on this very first session elaborated on points such as why it is necessary to recognise the sufferings of 1971 as genocide and not just collateral damage of the liberation war. In 'Remembering Genocide: 50 Years After', 'Trial of the perpetrators of Bangladesh Genocide' discussion was conducted on how the struggle has been to reach the final stage of justice for the victims.'Understanding the barriers through transitional justice lens to ensure justice: Bangladesh and beyond' pointed out the transition periods of other countries and shown the transition period of Bangladesh towards its present position, 'Bangladesh Genocide in Global Perspective' discussed on how and why the fact of Bangladesh genocide has been neglected by the international community from recognition and the panellists praised the commendable approach to justice by the International Crimes Tribunal Bangladesh , 'Bangladesh Genocide and Memorialisation', 'Rohingya Crisis', 'Learning about/from past atrocities to support peaceful futures', 'Restorative Justice for Mass Atrocity Crimes', and the last session before the closing ceremony 'Memory Words and Genocide Museums: The Efficacy of "Never Again". The inaugural ceremony was Chaired by Mofidul Hoque, Trustee of Liberation War Museum and the welcoming speech was delivered by Naureen Rahim, Coordinator at the Center for the Study of Genocide and Justice, Liberation War Museum. In the closing ceremony, Ms. Ami Fagin (Artist and Member of Executive Board at the International Association of Genocide Scholars, IAGS) delivered her closing speech and Mr. Mofidul Hoque (Trustee, Liberation War Museum, Bangladesh) connoting the motto of the conference that is to confront the past genocides and commemorate the 50 years of Liberation of Bangladesh as a nation.

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