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Resolution to Declare the Crimes Committed during the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War as Genocide, Crimes Against Humanity and War Crimes

· **Whereas**, prior to the 1971 Liberation War, East Pakistan, today's Bangladesh, was under the rule of West Pakistan in the aftermath of the British colonial partition of 1947;

· **Whereas**, during that period of time under a second colonial rule, discriminatory policies against Bengalis, both Hindus and Muslims, were established such as prohibitions to speak Bangla, imposition of Urdu as an official language, and violent persecution and repression of dissidents and social movements defending the representations of Bengali identity and culture;

· **Whereas**, following the historic 7th March Speech, and the Declaration of Independence in the midnight of 26 March in 1971 by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, instead of handing over the power to the civilian political leaders, 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;

· **Whereas**, throughout the 9 months of the conflict West Pakistani Military persecuted, tortured and executed representatives of Bengali cultural expressions and identity, such as poets, musicians, professors, journalists, physicians, scientists, writers, and filmmakers;

· **Whereas**, since 25 March 1971 attacks by Pakistan occupation forces and their allies on Bengali communities all over East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) forced huge number of Bengalis (approximately 10 million) to flee to neighboring India;

· **Whereas**, testimonies by the survivors of horrific experiences during 1971 provide accounts of long-term discrimination, and widespread violence, atrocities and persecution committed by the State of Pakistan (with support from local allies) against the Bengali people as an ethnic, national and a religious group, by means of sexual violence (in the forms of rape, gang rape, and forced nudity), mass killings, enforced disappearances, systematic abduction and intellectual killing, destruction of property, and persecution;

· **Whereas**, the International Commission of Jurists held in its 1972 Report that the violence 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, but it is impossible to quantify them";

- **Whereas**, the abovementioned 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 1949, and acts of genocide under the Genocide Convention 1949”;
- **Whereas**, research documents by reputable genocide experts indicate that the nature, scale and organization of the operations suggests a level of preplanning and design on the part of the Pakistani leaderships and military elites to eliminate Bengali ethnicity and national identity and Hindu community;
- **Whereas**, the abovementioned crimes analyzed in the overall historical context of violence against the Bengali population, the public use of hate speech and derogatory language followed by physical violence by governmental authorities, the plans and policies to change the demographic composition of the East Pakistan, and the extreme levels of brutality and general violence applied during the planned and organized “clearance operations” indicate the level of intent required to constitute the crime of genocide;
- **Whereas**, evidence supports the crimes committed against the Bengalis during 1971 were widespread and systematic, and carried out by the Pakistan Army, other militia forces (Razakars, Al Badr, Al Shams etc.), pan-Islamic political forces (including Jamat e Islam, Nezam e Islam and Muslim League) and groups of their sympathizers;
- **Whereas**, this Resolution has an Annex to it with supporting legal and academic documentation on the crimes occurred during the 1971 conflict;

Therefore, the **International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS)** recognizes the crimes committed against the Bengali population in 1971 in Bangladesh as genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes; urges the international community, especially the Pakistani government, to recognise 1971 genocide and take necessary measures to address the issue in appropriate fora; requests proper reparations to the Bengali nation, and calls upon the United Nations to adopt a special resolution recognising the 1971 Genocide.