

**ICSF press statement**

9 December 2015

## First International Day of Remembrance and Dignity for Genocide Victims

On this the very first '*International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of this Crime*', the global network of justice activists and experts International Crimes Strategy Forum (ICSF) pays tribute to all victims of genocide all over the world, and in particular to the victims of Bangladesh genocide in 1971.

ICSF takes this occasion to remember as well as to remind the global community that during the 9 months of occupation of the invading Pakistani armed forces that led to the all out Liberation War of Bangladesh in 1971, Pakistan military and its auxiliary paramilitary forces were involved in elimination of 3-million Bengalees, and rape of more than 200,000 women as part of a military blueprint that devised sexual violence as a weapon of war against the Bengalee civilians. The marauding army's genocide forced 10 million civilians to take refuge in neighbouring India, and around 30 millions to be internally displaced.

The victims of 1971 war had to wait over 40 years for any form of redress and only in 2010 Bangladesh initiated a domestic process to investigate and prosecute the perpetrators for international crimes, starting with the trial of the local perpetrators, while the international community continually failed to deal constructively with what is known as one of the gravest human rights tragedies of the last century.

The pathological failures of international community in the case of Bangladesh genocide also include - its failure to support and provide technical assistance to the justice process, even when sought by the Government of Bangladesh, as well as its inclination to be swayed by distorted narratives deliberately advanced by the vested lobbyists and PR agents working on behalf of the accused individuals. It is exactly the context such as this that allowed the members of the Pakistani armed forces and other Pakistani citizens involved in international crimes to escape justice so far. They must be brought to justice, and it is imperative that the international community stands by the victims, and strengthens and supports the people of Bangladesh in their quest towards ending impunity and establishing rule of law.

In solidarity with the United Nations for proclaiming this special day of observance, ICSF expresses hope that the significance of the day will not be lost on the international community, as the day also coincides with the anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in 1948. We echo what Adama Dieng, the United Nations Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, said while welcoming the adoption of UN General Assembly Resolution that proclaimed this day: "*Remembering the events of the past and paying tribute to those who perished should strengthen our resolve to prevent such events from ever happening again*".

#GenocideVictimsDay #PreventGenocide

/Signed

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