

Press Release:

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ICSF protests genocide denial in front of Pakistan High Commission in London

Strongly condemning and protesting the Pakistan government's outrageous statement dated 30 November denying involvement of its armed forces in perpetrating genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity during the Liberation War of Bangladesh in 1971, the International Crimes Strategy Forum (ICSF) organised a protest event in front of the Pakistan High Commission in London on 03 December, 2015.

Participants at the event condemned Pakistan's thoughtless position and with the help of posters, festoons and slogans put on display the historic backdrop of: the killing of an estimated 3 million Bengalees, and raping of more than 200,000 women and girls perpetrated by members of the Pakistani army and its local collaborators; the internal displacement of nearly 30 million civilians and the taking of forced shelter of an estimated 10 million in the refugee camps of India escaping from the marauding Pakistani army's atrocities. ICSF believes that Pakistan's statement denying involvement in this genocide and the other core international crimes that it committed against humanity is tantamount to denial of historically established facts and overwhelming evidence and an attempt to question the legitimacy of Bangladesh's long struggle for independence.

Speakers at the protest event condemned the unprincipled position taken by Pakistan and demanded that Pakistan immediately retract its statement and refrain from passing comments that are of highly objectionable nature and impede the justice process in Bangladesh. At the same time the demand to begin investigations against and carry out trials of identified Pakistani war criminals in Pakistan was also forcefully raised, failing which Pakistan was urged to offer cooperation to the Bangladesh Government so that trial proceedings could be initiated in Bangladesh. Speakers further demanded full compensation and reparation for the victims of Pakistan's aggression and atrocities in 1971, realisation of equitable share of assets and properties worth about USD 4.32 billion of undivided Pakistan, and the return of USD 200 million of foreign aid donated by the international community for rehabilitation of victims of the devastating cyclone in 1970 which was siphoned off by Pakistan. At the event, a resolute demand was raised calling upon the Pakistan Government to beg apology for the core international crimes committed during 1971.

As a part of the on going effort protesting and resisting the thoughtless position of the Pakistan Government, ICSF declared its initiative to convene the "Citizens' Global Committee for 1971" with a goal to present before the international community and realise the demands for recognition of and justice against the genocide that was committed, restoring dignity of the victims, and equity. Members of ICSF called upon the international community, including the civil society to join and strengthen this campaign.

Rayhan Rashid, Yasmin Mahmud Polin, Shahriar Bin Ali, Mefta Islam, Sushanta Das Gupta and Kazi Shamsul Hassan Shuvo spoke at the event which was conducted by Pushpita Gupta. President of the UK Awami League Sultan Mahmud, Mozibul Hoque Moni, Juyel Raaj, Saikat Acharjee, Suhana Zaman, Omar Faruk, Rajib Ahmed, Ataur Rahman, Manas Haldar and members of the Awami League, cultural personalities along with representatives of the student and professional community were also present.

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