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Written statement* submitted by Stichting Global Human Rights Defence, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



Genocide Recognition in Bangladesh: A Call for Global Acknowledgment and Practical Measures by the Human Rights Council

Stichting Global Human Rights Defence, as a non-governmental organization in special consultative status, brings to the attention of the United Nations Human Rights Council a matter of grave concern demanding urgent global attention: The atrocities committed during the 1971 Bangladesh genocide. This statement underscores the importance of recognizing this historical tragedy to address its impact and demands the esteemed Human Rights Council to take necessary actions in line with its mandate.

Genocide of 1971: Unearthing the Truth

In 1971, Bangladesh faced a brutal war that claimed millions of lives and left indelible scars on the survivors. The gravity of this historical injustice necessitates acknowledgment on the global stage. The recognition of the 1971 genocide is not merely a symbolic act; it is a crucial step towards healing, justice, and preventing the recurrence of such atrocities.

The urgency of recognizing this tragedy lies in its magnitude and relevance, surpassing the scale of many recognized genocides. The severity and temporal proximity require immediate action. Contrary to historical events, many victims are still alive, longing for justice. Formal recognition ensures timely justice, providing relief and closure.

Atrocities during the Genocide: A Call for Justice

The genocide in Bangladesh in 1971 was marked by a series of horrific atrocities perpetrated by the Pakistani army and local and international collaborators, compelling a global call for acknowledgment and accountability. The impactful data reveals the extent of the atrocities during this dark period. Approximately 3 million victims were brutally affected over a severe period of 8 months, 2 weeks, and 6 days. This significant number underscores the massive scale of the genocide and the urgency to pay homage to the victims.

Women were particularly targeted, with around 300,000 of them being raped and assaulted by Pakistani forces. This alarming figure highlights not only the brutality of the genocide but also the need to hold those who perpetrated these atrocious crimes against humanity accountable.

Population displacement is another crucial aspect to consider. Over 10 million Bangladeshis fled the country due to the fear of war and persecution. This mass emigration underscores the immediate impact of the genocide and the long-term consequences reverberating in the diaspora and affected communities.

Moreover, the decline of the Hindu population in Bangladesh is an alarming trend. In 1971, the percentage of Hindus was approximately 20%, in contrast to the current 8.9% Bangladeshi population. This substantial decrease highlights the persistent persecution faced by Hindus over the decades.

The staggering numbers from the Hindu American Foundation add a broader dimension to the scenario, indicating that between 1964 and 2013, 11.3 million Hindus fled Bangladesh due to religious persecution. Furthermore, about 230,000 Hindus continue to leave the country annually. This constant diaspora emphasizes the urgency of addressing issues of religious intolerance and ensuring the protection of vulnerable communities.

United Nations Human Rights Council Action: A Call for Recognition and Practical Measures

The United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC) not only holds the capacity to address the genocide in Bangladesh, but further is responsible to do so. Based on the Convention on the Prevention of the Crimes of Genocide (resolution 260 A) of December 1948, the United Nations, we demand the recognition and reparation of the Bangladesh genocide. We further call for the establishment of a comprehensive International Commission of Inquiry tasked with investigating the genocide. Moreover, aiming to bring accountability, the HRC should institute monitoring and reporting mechanisms to track progress in acknowledging and addressing the consequences of the 1971 genocide, providing regular updates and reports that underscore the commitment to justice.

The provision of specific recommendations for the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), ensuring that the genocide of 1971 is comprehensively addressed within the broader context of human rights in Bangladesh is also an essential measure. The HRC should recommend that the UPR process scrutinizes the steps taken by Bangladesh in recognizing and rectifying the consequences of the 1971 genocide. This includes assessing the legal framework in place, efforts towards acknowledgment, and measures to ensure accountability for the perpetrators.

By strategically incorporating these aspects into the UPR recommendations, the HRC ensures a focused and comprehensive approach to addressing the historical genocide in Bangladesh, promoting justice, recognition, and accountability within the broader framework of human rights.

Conclusion: A Collective Responsibility for Recognition and Action

In conclusion, Stichting Global Human Rights Defence urges the United Nations Human Rights Council to recognize the genocide of 1971 in Bangladesh as a historical injustice that demands global acknowledgment and practical measures. The Council's commitment to addressing human rights violations, exemplified in its response to various challenges, provides a precedent for taking decisive action on historical atrocities.

Our Organization believes that through collective acknowledgment, investigation, and practical measures, the Human Rights Council can contribute to a world where historical injustices are recognized, and addressed, and serve as lessons for future generations. Stichting Global Human Rights Defence stands ready to support and collaborate with the Human Rights Council in achieving justice, reconciliation, and a world where human rights are universally honored and upheld by all, for the benefit of all.
