

DECLARATION OF THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON GENOCIDE,
TRUTH AND JUSTICE
DHAKA, BANGLADESH, JULY 31, 2009

The Second International Conference on Genocide, Truth and Justice , organised by Liberation War Museum was held in Dhaka, Bangladesh on July 30 and 31, 2009. The Conference was held at a time when the demand for the trials of the perpetrators of genocide and war crimes in 1971 has become alive again in the public domain, especially amongst the younger generation highlighting that the brutalities and the trauma of the 1971 Genocide is recognised in the various international fora, so that the lessons of the Bangladesh Genocide may help to prevent other genocides. The holding of the Conference was also significant in the context that the young generation in Bangladesh has given the demands for the Trials their unequivocal endorsement through the national election of December, 2008. The government on the other hand, has given the priority which the Trials deserve, to have taken it up in the first session of the new Parliament where it was unanimously accepted by all the parties. The 1973 International Crimes (Tribunal) Act was also amended by the Parliament to make it suitable for holding the trial in the changed circumstances of today. It is hoped that the Tribunal will be formed soon, the prosecutors appointed and the investigative agencies constituted.

This Conference expresses its approval for the processes which have been initiated for the Trials. The Conference also recommends that the nation take lessons from the experience and expertise that are available from the other Tribunals and institutions, especially when formulating the rules and procedures of the proposed Tribunal.

This Conference also highlights the need to take supportive and complementary actions and programmes such as the memorialization, collection and processing of the testimonies, addressing the issues of the victims' suffering, recognition of the victims rights and most importantly, ensure the broad involvement of the community with the trial process.

The Conference also recognizes that at this important juncture, Bangladesh needs to learn from the experiences which other countries have gained about concepts such as dealing with transitional and social justice and the ways and means to address the complexities in the post-conflict society. Important amongst them are issues of trauma, suffering of women, remedies and reparation of victims, witness protection, extradition, avoiding delay in justice etc which would need to be studied further.

This Conference reiterates that it will make efforts to promote research on genocides, particularly on the Bangladesh Genocide and undertakes to promote the setting up of centres of Genocide Studies both at home and abroad. It will encourage other institutions to take up programmes so the issue of the Trial stays alive in the public forum.

The Conference also highlights the need to establish various networks and build alliances both nationally and internationally with other organizations having the same objectives.

This Conference calls upon the media and the civil society within the country and abroad to launch a campaign for the universal recognition, especially in the UN, of the Bangladesh Genocide.