

BENGALI HINDU GENOCIDE 50TH ANNIVERSARY **RECOGNITION RESOLUTION DRAFT**

Resolution No. XXXXX - Commemorating March 25, 2021 as the 50th anniversary of the Bengali Hindu Genocide and calling on the Government of Bangladesh to protect the human rights of all its citizens, particularly religious minorities.

RESOLUTION

Commemorating March 25, 2021 as the 50th anniversary of the Bengali Hindu Genocide and calling on the Government of Bangladesh to protect the human rights of all its citizens, particularly religious minorities.

Whereas the nation of Bangladesh achieved independence in 1971 and established a secular democratic state, which is home to Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Christians, indigenous people and atheists;

Whereas, the evening of March 25, 1971 marks the beginning of the Bengali Hindu Genocide when the West Pakistan army launched 'Operation Searchlight' in conjunction with local militias and carried out crimes against humanity against the ethnic Bengali population, particularly targeting Hindus in East Pakistan, where on that day alone approximately 100,000 people were killed;

Whereas, though numbers vary, reports indicate that the violence resulted in approximately 2,000,000 to 3,000,000 deaths, more than 10,000,000 people displaced, and approximately 200,000 to 400,000 women raped, many occurring in organized rape camps established by the West Pakistan army;

Whereas Edward Kennedy, the former Democratic Senator from Massachusetts, denounced the massacres of civilians on the Senate floor and wrote the following in a report for a Senate Judiciary Subcommittee Hearing, "Field reports to the U.S. Government, countless eye-witness journalistic accounts, reports of International agencies such as World Bank and additional information available to the subcommittee document the reign of terror which grips East Bengal (East Pakistan). Hardest hit have been members of the Hindu community who have been robbed of their lands and shops, systematically slaughtered, and in some places, painted with yellow patches marked 'H'. All of this has been officially sanctioned, ordered and implemented under martial law from Islamabad";

Whereas, Archer Kent Blood, U.S. Consulate General of East Pakistan, present day Bangladesh, in cable 1138 Dacca dated April 6, 1971, wrote to the U.S. State Department that "numerous officers of AMCONGEN, USAID Dacca, and USIS Dacca consider it their duty to register strong dissent with fundamental aspects of this [U.S.] policy" and that "we have chosen not to intervene, even morally, on the grounds that the Awami conflict, in which unfortunately the overworked term genocide is applicable, is purely internal matter of a sovereign state. Private

Americans have expressed disgust. We, as professional public servants express our dissent with current policy and fervently hope that our true and lasting interests here can be defined and our policies redirected in order to salvage our nation's position as a moral leader of the free world.”;

Whereas a report by the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) following the war confirmed that the Pakistani army and local paramilitary militias were responsible for an “attempt to exterminate or drive out of the country a large part of the Hindu population of approximately 10 million people.”;

Whereas Bengali nationalists also carried out attacks on the ethnic Bihari population, who were viewed as supporters of Pakistan during the war;

Whereas according to the 1961 East Pakistan census the Bengali Hindu population of East Pakistan comprised 18.5% of the total population, and that according to the 1974 Bangladesh census the Bengali Hindu population comprised 13.5% of the population, and that according to the 2011 Bangladesh census the Hindu population of Bangladesh comprised 8.5% of the total population;

Whereas, Tribunals were established in 2010 by the Bangladeshi government, with broad support from Hindu Americans and the Bangladeshi people, to investigate war crimes committed during the 1971 War of Independence by local militias and terrorist organizations that collaborated with the Pakistani army;

Whereas the Bengali Hindu Genocide is one of the forgotten genocides of the 20th century and its denial or lack of recognition by Pakistan and the world community is like an open wound for tens of millions of people who were directly effected by the war crimes committed by the West Pakistan army;

Whereas on January 8, 2021, the government of Bangladesh formally asked the government of Pakistan to apologize for the 1971 genocide;

Whereas there has been a dangerous trend of religious extremism in Bangladesh tied to Islamic State (IS) activity, with several arrests of Islamists linked to the terrorist group made over recent years;

Whereas repeated attacks on religious minorities, increased religious intolerance, and growing destabilization caused by radical groups undermine United States economic and strategic interests in Bangladesh;

Whereas religious extremists in Bangladesh have also attacked Buddhists, Christians, and Ahmadi Muslims;

Whereas there are approximately 50,000 Bengali Hindus residing in the United States, including Bengali Hindu Genocide survivors, their family members, and their descendants;

Whereas the broader Hindu American community is deeply concerned with the plight of the remaining Bengali Hindu population in Bangladesh which continues to face targeted violence, land theft, destruction of property and religious sites; and

Whereas the United States government should affirm America's record on the Bengali Hindu Genocide, call on the Pakistan government to apologize to Bangladesh and resolve outstanding issues between the two countries peacefully, and more actively engage with the Government of Bangladesh over our shared interests in safeguarding human rights, religious freedom, free enterprise, and secular democracy in Bangladesh, while working to eliminate religious extremism and militancy.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Town/City/County/State of _____, does hereby proclaim March 25, 2021 as the 50th anniversary of the 1971 Bengali Hindu Genocide and recognizes the economic, academic, cultural, philanthropic, and spiritual contributions of Bengali Hindu Genocide survivors to America and of members of the Bengali Hindu diaspora to our community; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Town/City/County/State of _____ calls on the Government of Bangladesh to adhere to internationally recognized norms for elections, rule of law, and secular democracy, to shut down radical organizations operating in the country who pose an ongoing threat to the country's stability and secular democracy, and to protect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all its citizens, particularly vulnerable minorities.

On this ____ day of March 2021;

SIGNED

TITLE

GOVERNMENT SEAL

Copies of this Resolution are to be sent to:

1. Hindu American Foundation, 910 17th St., NW, Washington, DC, 20006
2. [LIST LOCAL TEMPLES OR COMMUNITY CENTERS WITH ADDRESS]