BANGLADESH 1971: ADDRESSING CLAIMS OF WAR CRIMES, GENOCIDE AND CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY

18 October, 2009
10 AM - 5:30 PM
Wilkins Theater at Kean University

Organized by: Human Rights Institute and Bangladesh Study Group at Kean University
For more information log onto:
http://www.kean.edu/~bgsg
# Program Outline

## Part I: Welcome

<table>
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<th>Time</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>10:00 AM - 10:30 AM</td>
<td>Greetings in pre-function lobby. Sign in/registration for conference.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:30 AM - 11:30 AM</td>
<td>Pre-conference presentation by Liberation War Museum of Bangladesh. Display Gallery by Liberation War Museum.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:30 AM - 12:00 PM</td>
<td><strong>Welcome Address by:</strong></td>
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<td>- Dr. Dawood Farahi, President, Kean University.</td>
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<td>- Dr. Kristie Reilly, VP of Research &amp; Graduate Studies &amp; Dean, Nathan Weiss Graduate College.</td>
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<td>- Honorable Excellency Akramul Qader, the Ambassador of Bangladesh to the UN.</td>
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<td>- Dr. Henry Kaplowitz, Director, Human Rights Institute, Kean University.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:00 PM - 12:30 PM</td>
<td>Documentary Movie Presentation.</td>
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<td>12:30 PM - 1:30 PM</td>
<td>Lunch: Bangladeshi and Western food available for purchase.</td>
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## Part II: History of Bangladesh 1971

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<thead>
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<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Panel I 1:30 PM - 2:30 PM</td>
<td>Eyewitness stories/survivors’ account.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Panel II 2:30 PM - 3:30 PM</td>
<td><strong>Bangladesh ‘71:</strong></td>
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<td>- Sufferings</td>
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<td>- Targets</td>
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<td>- Atrocities</td>
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## Part III: Round Table: Constructive Responses

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<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>4:00 PM - 5:30 PM</td>
<td>Task I: Characterizing the accounts of 1971 in terms of prosecutable crimes,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Task II: Memorializing the events of 1971.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5:30 PM - 6:00 PM</td>
<td>Closing.</td>
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In August 1947, the partition of British India gave birth to two new countries India and Pakistan. Pakistan became a county with two geographically distant states (about 1400 miles apart) West and East Pakistan (Modern day Bangladesh). From the beginning West Pakistan exploited the East socio-economically and politically.

In 1970, when the Awami League, the largest East Pakistani political party won a landslide victory in the national elections (167 of a total of 313 seats) it was denied to form a National Government with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as Prime Minister of Pakistan. Talks failed, tensions heightened and on the night of 25th March, the central government launched “Operation Searchlight” on the people of the East.

This was the beginning of one of the worst massacre of the 20th century that went on for next nine months until 16th December of 1971. During this time the army took control of the major cities and performed indiscriminate killing of between 300,000 – 3,000,000 people, raped approximately 200,000 women and inhumanely tortured unknown number of people. The atrocities caused a flux of between eight and ten million refugees who sought safety in India. Archer Blood, the last American Consul General to Dhaka, East Pakistan, reported the atrocities to United States Government (April 6, 1971) through his famous “Blood Telegram”. Only a few journalists were able to report about the event as foreign journalists were systematically deported from East Pakistan.

From December 13-16th the government of Pakistan with the help of the local collaborators performed the most extreme case of targeted killing of intellectuals, and dumping their bodies in various mass graves all over East Pakistan.

On 16th December the Pakistani army surrendered to the allied forces of the Indian Army and the Bangladeshi Freedom Fighters and Bangladesh was liberated.
About Bangladesh Study Group (BSG):

Bangladesh Study Group is an initiative taken by the American-Bangladeshi staff and students at Kean University to provide a scholarly platform to examine the claims of atrocities, measure and compare the massacre done by Pakistan Army to the Bengalis during the liberation war of Bangladesh in 1971.

This group has neither any political affiliation nor any political agenda. None of the core members of this group have any political affiliation to Bangladeshi political parties.

BSG Objective:

The primary objective of this organization is to help Kean University gather a strong collection of research resources on the atrocities committed by the Pakistan Army in 1971 and house them at Kean University. There are a number of important uses for such a collection. For one, a course on Bangladesh Genocide can be developed and introduced to world community under the Masters of Arts and Holocaust and Genocide Studies Program at Kean. Information on the Bangladeshi Genocide can be incorporated into other courses in history, political science, and other courses on Asia, women studies, and literature.

Another goal of this organization is to earn a library space for Bangladeshi Genocide along with Jewish Holocaust and other genocides at Kean University Library and the Holocaust Research Center.

Objective of the Conference:

The goal of the conference is to scrutinize the atrocities of 1971 from the observational standpoint of a citizen who identifies with the whole of humankind, free from parochial interests, partisan terms, and cultural biases, rather clarifying common, shared interests. Supplementary goals emphasize the common human interest in the international protection of human rights together with the interdependent basis that human rights are enjoyed by individuals as a function of what others can enjoy. The genuine worldwide consensus on the acceptable treatment and perspectives of human beings in the contemporary world is the international bill of human rights.

For more information please visit: www.kean.edu/~bgsg
Foreward

Dr. Dawood Farahi, President, Kean University:

As a public university, our obligation to the community and humanity at large is to instill in the hearts and minds of all students and all those we can reach a deep appreciation for equal rights and liberty through the advanced study of history, society and the modern world.

Considering our demographics, it is our mandate here at Kean University to foster a campus environment that thrives on multicultural, ethnic, racial, religious and economic diversity and seize it as a foundation for curricular, student and community programming.

More than a meaningful exercise, we see this as our public responsibility: to address the issues of a larger community through inquiry and discussion, and to learn the lessons of Holocaust, Slavery and other genocides which lead us to value human life and seek mutual respect and tolerance. The crimes against humanity that took place in Bangladesh in 1971 certainly fall into this category.

I can think of no better forum than the one we have organized here today to continue to educate our community and the world at large on the atrocities of 1971 in Bangladesh, and on the importance of ensuring that all of us commit to doing all that is in our power to ensure such actions never are permitted to take place again.

The Human Rights Institute at Kean is our vehicle for promoting peace through understanding. I know all of us gathered here today will leave with a better understanding of how and why the war crimes and genocide took place in Bangladesh. And by doing so, together, we will take another step in the right direction...toward peace.
H.E. Mr. Akramul Qader, Ambassador of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh:

I am happy to learn that such an important conference is taking place at Kean University, New Jersey. I applaud the Bangladeshi student, staff and faculty who developed the Bangladesh Study Group at Kean University and worked round the clock with the Human Rights Institute at Kean University to out this international conference together. I also extend my appreciation to Dr. Dawood Farahi, President of Kean University; Dr. Kristie Reilly, VP of Research & Graduate Studies & Dean, Nathan Weiss Graduate College; Dr. Henry Kaplowitz, Director of Human Rights Institute; Dr. Keith Nunes, Scholar in Residence, Master of Holocaust and Genocide Studies; and Dr. Sue Ellen Gronewold, Chair of the History Department for their wonderful support to this cause.

The history of the 1971 genocide is still very vivid in the minds and hearts of every Bangladeshi. This is why they voted overwhelmingly on December 29, 2008 for Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina led coalition to bring an end to the culture of impunity. Therefore, this conference is of great significance for Bangladesh. I wish every success of the conference and wish all the best to the people who worked to organize this event.
Faruque Chowdhury, Director, Department of Human Resources, Kean University:

Being actively involved in the Liberation War in 1971, the atrocities I have witnessed are not easy to revisit. Thus I personally understand how difficult and sensitive a topic this is to discuss, but it is also one that is very important to share with our children and our community. Therefore the importance of this seminar is great as it will be very informative regarding the history and future of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh.

I would like to extend my sincere appreciation and gratitude to Dr. Dawood Farahi, President of Kean University for his unconditional support to this very important cause. I would also like to thank all those who have worked hard to organize and financially support this event.

I am proud to be a Bangladeshi-American and I am proud to be one of the organizers of this seminar. My hope and desire is to establish a chapter within the Human Rights Institute here at Kean University, in regards to the Bangladesh 1971 War against Humanity.

Dr. Henry Kaplowitz, Director, Human Rights Institute, Kean University:

In order to create a future where the rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are fully realized, it is necessary for us to protest current human rights violations and to look back at the past and document for posterity atrocities that were perpetrated on innocent victims.

The slaughter that transpired in Bangladesh during the War of Liberation in 1971 stands out as a striking example of man’s inhumanity to man. Conferences such as this one are necessary to honor the memory of the helpless victims and to record testimony so that eventually justice and concilia-
Arif Rahman, Asst. Director, Office of Registrar, Kean University:

The concept of Bangladesh Study Group evolved in 2007. Since 2007, this group of faculty, student and staff has been working with the Human Rights Institute at Kean University. Today’s conference is the result of the constant work of the people involved in this group. We thank Dr. Kaplowitz, Dr. Keith Nunes and Dr. Sue-Ellen Gronewold for their wonderful support and taking their time to guide us through. We are also humble to many other people outside of Kean University who helped us with their heart full of passion for this cause.

Our ongoing project is to help organize enough resources for the scholars at Kean University so that they can create platform for a formal academic study on Bangladesh atrocities through a curriculum. The academic departments of History as well as Master of Arts and Holocaust and Genocide Studies are already examining the resources and proposed outline for a Course.

The group has some future projects as well. One of the future goals is to create a repository of oral history of the people who lived through 1971. To perform that task, we are developing a questionnaire which is also under review.

We would like to thank everyone who joined us in this conference and to those who could not join but gave us encouragement and their best wishes. We thank every donor. Without their support, this international conference would have been almost impossible.
Panelists

Honorable Excellency Akramul Qader: His Excellency is the newly appointed Ambassador of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh to the United States.

Anis Ahmed: Mr. Ahmed is an International Broadcaster and web Editor with Voice of America, Washington, D.C. He interviewed many freedom fighters, victims of the war crime and the family members of the victims at this capacity. He was a young activist in favor of Liberation War in 1971. He is the author of the paper “Genocide and War Crimes of 1971: Bangladesh”.

Zia Uddin Ahmed, MD: Mr. Ahmed is an associate professor of Drexel University Medical School, he is a son of a martyr of 1971 and human rights activists. He produced documentary films on Bangladesh War of Independence in 1971 that has been shown in various states in the United States of America and Bangladesh. He also published article of experience as freedom fighter. He organized various seminars and meetings on Bangladesh war crime.

Faruque Chowdhury: The Director of Human Resources at Kean University. He was a freedom fighter in 1971 and witness of the atrocities. He is one of the leading organizers and advisor of the Bangladesh Genocide Study Group and the Bangladesh Conference Committee at Kean University.

Shelly Feldman, PhD: Ms. Feldman is the president of American Institute of Bangladesh Studies (AIBS). She is a Professor of Development Sociology, and Director of Feminist, Gender and Sexuality Studies at Cornell University. She is involved in Bangladesh studies and presented numerous papers on Bangladesh. She presented “Claiming a Past, Making a Future: In Honor of the Liberation War Museum, Dhaka, Bangladesh” at the “Institute for Comparative Modernities, Conference on Informalization and Representation in South Asia” at Cornell University in May 2008.

M. A Hasan, PhD: One of the leading human rights defender and the president of “War Crimes Facts Finding Committee” in Bangladesh, he has done extensive research on the bodies found in mass graves all over
the country and interviewed numerous victims of war crimes and published his research on their psychological such as “Women and War” that detailed the torture on women in Bangladesh war of 1971.

**Mofidul Hoque:** A Trustee and Member-Secretary of the Bangladesh Liberation War Museum, he will represent this leading organization of Bangladesh which has, over all these years, maintained the history of Bangladesh war, organized drive to collect oral histories of the atrocities of Bangladesh War of 1971 from all over the country. LWM holds international conferences on world genocide every year.

**Suhail Islam, PhD:** An Associate professor in the English Department at Nazareth College of New York. He has authored “The Wretched of the Nations: The West’s Role in Human Rights Violation in the Bangladesh War of Independence” forthcoming in “Genocide, War Crimes, And The West: The Culture Of Impunity” (zed books).

**Shariar Kabir:** A Bangladeshi journalist, filmmaker, human rights activist, and author of more than 70 books focusing on human rights, communalism, fundamentalism, history, and the Bangladesh war of independence, he has interviewed various victims and family members of the victims of the War of 1971. He is the president of Forum for Secular Bangladesh, Dhaka Bangladesh.

**David Matas:** A lawyer and human rights activist, he presented various papers on the legal issue of prosecuting war criminal on Bangladesh. His most recent presentation was “Prosecuting foreign perpetrators and perpetrators abroad” in the Second International Conference on Genocide, Truth and Justice, Liberation War Museum, 31 July 2009, Dhaka Bangladesh.

**Winston Nagan:** Mr. Winston Nagan is the Samuel T. Dell Research Scholar Professor of Law at University of Florida Levin College of Law. He is the founding Director of Institute of Human Rights and Peace Development. International Human Rights, He is a scholar in the areas of International Law, International Courts, and Human Rights of Indigenous People. During 1986 to 1992, he was a member of Board of Directors, Amnesty International USA.
**Ved P. Nanda:** A professor of International Law at University of Denver. He is significantly involved in the global international law community. He is the Past President of the World Jurist Association and now its Honorary President; former honorary Vice President of the American Society of International Law and now its counselor, and a member of the advisory council of the United States Institute of Human Rights. He was formerly the United States Delegate to the World Federation of the United Nations Associations, Geneva, and Vice-Chair of its Executive Council, and also served on the Board of Directors of the United Nations Association-USA.

**ABM Nasir, PhD:** Associate Professor in the School of Business at North Carolina Central University, he is also a columnist in various Bangladesh newspapers. He currently is working on digitizing the Bangladesh war documents with Duke University.

**Roza Pati:** Ms. Pati teaches International Law, Human Rights Law and Human Trafficking Law at St. Thomas University School of Law. Formerly a Member of Parliament and a Cabinet Member serving as the Secretary of State for Youth and Women of Albania, Dr. Pati has a rich experience in public service, academia and administration. She has lectured on issues of international law, human rights law, international criminal law, human trafficking law as well as democracy in numerous conferences, panels and symposia worldwide.
Donors

A note of thanks:
The Human Rights Institute and Bangladesh Study Group (BSG) at Kean appreciates the individuals and companies who are helping to fund this conference and BSG’s future goals. We gratefully recognize their support and help.

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*Asst. Director, Office of Registrar Kean University*

Keith Nunes, Ph.D.
*Coordinator, Holocaust & Genocide Studies, Kean University*

Henry Kaplowitz, Ph.D.
*Director, Human Rights Institute, Kean University*

Sue Ellen Gronewold Ph.D.
*Professor, Department of History, Kean University*

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*Program Asst., Office of Registrar; Kean University*

ABM Nasir
*Associate Professor, School of Business, North Carolina Central University*

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