

**Minutes on Annual General Meeting APPG for the Prevention of Genocide and Crimes
Against Humanity**

December 9th, 2021

***(on the United Nations International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of
the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of this Crime)***

Venue: Online

Attendants: Fleur Anderson MP (Chair), Lord Sheikh (Co-Chair), Brendan O'Hara MP, Florence Eshalomi MP, Charlotte Nichols MP, Sam Rushworth (APPG Director), Olivia Marks-Woldman (HMDT), James Smith (Aegis Trust), Dan Peacock (parliament), David Brown (Aegis Trust), Ewelina Ochab (Coalition for Genocide Response, IBAHRI), Adrian Gallagher (ECR2P, Leeds University), Zoe Norridge, Gillian Mackay (ECR2P, Leeds University), Andy Fearn (Protection Approaches), Detmer Kremer (Protection Approaches), Homira May Reazi (Hazara Committee UK), Caroline Bennett (International Association of Genocide Scholars).

Elections:

Chair, Co-chair: Nominations for chair and co-chair are for Fleur Anderson MP as chair and Lord Sheikh as co-chair.

Both nominations affirmed by all parliamentary members present.

Vice-chairs: Feryal Clark MP, Lord Bourne, Lord Alderdice, Rushanara Ali MP, Brendan O'Hara MP and Florence Eshalomi MP.

Nominations affirmed by all members of parliament present.

APPG updates (Sam Rushworth, Director APPG):

- Funding has been secured to enable new Co-Director to be appointed, starting end December: Dr. Caroline Bennett (genocide scholar; Advisory Board Member, International Association of Genocide Scholars)
- Secretariat will be a partnership between the Aegis Trust and the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, including support for a steering committee from the European Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (ECR2P) at Leeds University, Protection Approaches, Kings College London, De Montford University, and several other important organisations.

Olivia Marks-Woldman (Chief Executive, Holocaust Memorial Day Trust):

- Holocaust Memorial Day Trust was set up by the government to promote Holocaust Memorial Day (established in the year 2000). International Day of Remembrance, at the cusp of where remembrance and education meet.
- Holocaust Memorial Day in the UK also commemorates more recent genocides, including Cambodia, Rwanda, and Darfur. It is a day to create awareness about potential discrimination and persecution of groups because of their identity; race, religion. Therefore, the work of the trust is very relevant to what is happening today.
- It is fitting, therefore, for us to join forces with the Aegis trust, and an honour to support this crucial All-party Parliamentary Group for the Prevention of Genocide.

Presentations: Challenges and Work in Genocide Prevention Today

Fleur Anderson MP (Chair):

- Last few weeks has seen several debates in the house about conflicts across the world, as well as potential conflicts – including Bosnia-Herzegovina. Applications for debates to mark Holocaust Memorial Day in January.
- Alongside debates, there is legislation in which we can be influential – the Trade Bill, for example, shows how we can talk about genocide and put genocide prevention measures into ongoing legislation.

Dr. Homira Reazi

Chairperson, Hazara Committee, UK; leading human rights Activist in the Hazara diaspora

- Hazara community has suffered a long history of persecution in Afghanistan since the 1890s. These patterns of persecution intensified during the 1990s under the Taliban regime (including acts of genocide, eviction, and starvation) and again since the Taliban take-over of Afghanistan on the 15th of August 2021 – more than 400 Shias and Hazaras have been killed.
- During the international presence in Afghanistan, Hazara communities made important progress in the fields of politics, sports, and the arts. Most of these changes were spearheaded by women. However, these changes have suffered a setback since August 15th.
- Hazaras are now at risk of genocide for religious reasons, as the Taliban considers them infidels who do not belong in Afghanistan, for historical reasons and because the Hazaras were the biggest supporters of international presence in Afghanistan
- We hope to get the support of APPG to raise awareness about this persecution, to make sure these issues are monitored independently.

Dr. Ewelina Ochab

Expert in genocide prevention; Co-founder of the Coalition For Genocide Response, IBAHRI programme lawyer

- From 31st of August many people have been left stranded in Afghanistan, including embassy workers, lawyers, journalists, and members of the Hazara community, amongst others. After the retreat of US troops, safe routes to leave Afghanistan have been reduced to zero.
- We have been working to find safe passage for women (female judges, lawyers, journalists and activists) outside of Afghanistan. With the help of the Greek president, we managed to land two flights, in which over 400 people were taken to Greece and given two-months visas.
- We are working with the UK government to find a secure destination for 46 families of the initial 400, but both the ARAP (Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy) and the ACRS (Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme) have limitations in terms of numbers and eligibility.
- We are now working on introducing amendments to the Borders and Security Bill, which is currently in the House Of Commons and will be going to the House Of Lords. Amongst the amendments is the issue of emergency visas for persecuted minorities.

Nayaaz Hashim

Member Genocide80Twenty, Hampton School

- During genocide prevention week eight different schools across the UK worked together to bring awareness about genocide amongst young people. In this work we have made three key findings:
 1. There is a lack of awareness about genocide amongst young people in the country. 96% of pupils surveyed said they would be interested in learning about genocide at school, therefore, this lack of knowledge is not a result of apathy, but of the lack of high-quality resources on the topic.
 2. Most pupils think the UK should intervene when mass atrocities, crimes against humanity and genocide occur. Therefore, we do not understand the lack of a consistent genocide prevention strategy from the UK government.
 3. Genocide survivors, who are willing to speak about their experiences to members of our generation, can play a crucial role in bringing awareness and thus contributing to genocide prevention.
- We make a call to action to work with survivors, charities, to create an alliance and network that can make genocide prevention a realistic prospect.

Discussion:

What can we do, working with parliamentarians, to raise awareness/work more effectively on genocide prevention going forward?

Lord Sheikh – acknowledged the persecution of Hazara raised by Dr. Reazi. Treatment is unacceptable.

Dr. Sam Rushworth (Aegis Trust) – Aegis Trust focuses on upstream prevention, including education and policy making.

Brendan O'Hara MP – On the Yazidi genocide – APPG for the Yazidi has been re-established. Important first step is around Frankfurt criminal court decision, when convicted Daesh terrorist of genocide. Application for backbench debate seeking to establish UK government's thinking in light of that decision. Until now, UK government's position is that it's for the courts to decide if it is genocide; courts in Frankfurt have decided this. Debate hopes to raise this issue for the UK government cannot ignore Frankfurt's decision.

Fleur Anderson MP response – important in setting bar on how we define genocide, and what does the government need to be able to say atrocities are genocide.

Dr. James Smith (Aegis Trust) – Thank you to the chairs, vice chair and partners. We look forward to working together in the upcoming year. Aegis has created a three-part podcast on Bosnia, on the potential conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and links with history, including interviewing the Director of the Srebrenica Memorial. These will be available on podcast platforms like Spotify, and provide a good context on contemporary events and what's unfolding in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Professor Adrian Gallagher (ECR2P) – re: the situation in Afghanistan – what is the UK doing/ what avenues being explored? It is unlikely that the Taliban will be ousted, internally or externally, and from a pragmatic standpoint, we need to do our best to protect human lives. E.g. approx. 10 billion US dollars that belong to Afghanistan are held externally (in the US) that money could potentially be used as an aid approach, on the condition that it must address basic needs (like mass starvation) and that they do not perpetrate mass atrocities (take a pragmatic ethic).

Lord Sheikh – important not to alienate the Taliban. Need to engage with them. To solve a problem, must engage with all parties.