

## Jubilee Campaign Recognizes International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of this Crime

Today, 9 December 2021 marks both the [International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of this Crime](#), and the 73rd anniversary of the 1948 Genocide Convention. The crime of genocide is defined as one or more of the following acts committed "with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group": killing; causing grave physical or mental harm; inflicting conditions designed to bring an end to the group in whole or in part; preventing birth; and forcibly transferring children.

Despite promises made by the international community to ensure that genocide is "never again" perpetrated as it had been during the Holocaust in the 1940s, numerous nations throughout the world are committing acts of genocide and crimes against humanity against their own civilians, and both state actors and non-state actors must be held responsible for these atrocities. In commemoration of International Genocide Remembrance Day, we would like to share with you some ongoing genocides which are continuing to this day and which highlight that the global community has reneged on its promises of "never again".

### *China - Uyghur Genocide*

Since 2017, the Chinese Communist Party has been engaging in genocide against the predominantly Muslim Uyghur ethnic group in the region the government calls the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR), but what the indigenous Uyghurs refer to as East Turkestan. Numerous human rights organizations and researchers - the [Australian Strategic Policy Institute](#), [Uyghur Human Rights Project](#), [Dr. Adrian Zenz](#), even [Buzzfeed](#) - have shed light on the truly endless list of egregious genocidal acts perpetrated against Uyghurs in China, including: arbitrary detention, prolonged imprisonment, enforced disappearance, physical torture, forced indoctrination, sexual violence, extrajudicial killings, sterilization, forced abortion, infanticide, and more.



In **January 2021**, the United States was the first nation to make the determination that the Chinese government's persecution against Uyghurs fully amounts to the crime of genocide, and numerous nations swiftly followed - **Canada, The Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Lithuania**. Another handful of countries - **New Zealand, Belgium, the Czech Republic** - have not made official genocide determinations but have condemned the government's "severe human rights abuses" and "crimes against humanity". In addition to genocide and crimes against humanity determinations, in March 2021 the United States Treasury, alongside the European Union, Canada, and the United Kingdom imposed **joint sanctions** against Chinese officials involved in human rights violations in Xinjiang. The US Customs and Border Protection has issued notices **prohibiting imports** of cotton, tomatoes, textiles, and all other products supplied to the US from Xinjiang due to mounting evidence of Uyghur forced labor. Most recently in December 2021, the United States - followed by Australia, Canada, Britain, and likely more nations in the future - announced a **diplomatic boycott** of the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics, **stating that** "US diplomatic or official representation would treat these games as business as usual in the face of the PRC's egregious human rights abuses and atrocities in Xinjiang, and we simply cannot do that".

While Jubilee Campaign and numerous other human rights organizations have welcomed the multitude of actions taken to recognize the genocide of Uyghurs in China and to hold CCP perpetrators accountable, much more must be done. Numerous ideas have been raised - i.e., **cease exporting** technological equipment to China which is used for surveillance against Uyghurs and other minorities; build a coalition of nations to place joint diplomatic pressure on China to end genocide; etc.

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## ***Myanmar - Risk for Renewal of Rohingya Genocide***

For the predominantly Muslim Rohingya minority both within and outside of Myanmar, the **February 2021** military coup has devastating implications. The Tatmadaw, which has taken over leadership of the country and all of its infrastructure, is the same military that in 2017 embarked on a genocidal campaign against the Rohingya minority group. Among the genocidal acts that military forces carried out against Rohingya are massacre via shelling and shooting, mass rape of and sexual violence against women and girls, the looting and burning of entire Rohingya villages, mass detention, torture, and more. In September 2020, two Tatmadaw soldiers **reflected** on the atrocities they committed in 2017 upon orders to "kill all you see, whether children or adults"; the soldiers estimated that they had wiped out 20 villages worth of Rohingya civilians before disposing of the bodies in unmarked mass graves. Now, as the military taking over the country is the same military that killed members of their community, Rohingya living inside Myanmar are fearful that they may be the next target; meanwhile, those living abroad have had their hopes for a safe return to their home country dashed.

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In August 2021, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and the Simon-Skjoldt

Center for the Prevention of Genocide [published a report](#) assessing the risk of mass atrocities against Myanmar's Rohingya. Highlighting that the Tatmadaw's current violent activities generally against Burmese civilians has already met the threshold to be considered crimes against humanity and war crimes, the report outlines a few possible scenarios: (1) the Tatmadaw, which increasingly "seems unconcerned with international legitimacy", will continue its genocidal campaign against the Rohingya; (2) the Tatmadaw may incite civilians to wage violence against the Rohingya by blaming them for "junta-caused economic devastation and COVID-19 crisis".

In early December 2021, Jubilee Campaign submitted a [joint statement](#) alongside Free Burma Rangers to the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief highlighting recommended actions the international community should take with regards to the situation in Myanmar, including: Immediate cross-border humanitarian assistance directly to areas of need through ethnic governments and NGOs; Protection for people under attack from the Burma military and police, both in the cities and in the ethnic areas. We also urge the Tatmadaw to: Immediately cease committing acts of violence against civilians and the specified targeting of religious minorities and ethnic minorities, including Rohingya.

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## *Genocidal Activities in Ethiopia's Tigray*

One year ago in November 2020, Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed authorized a [military offensive](#) into the region of Tigray against the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), a nationalist paramilitary group and now political party. PM Ahmed had iterated on multiple occasions his goal to unify the whole of Ethiopia by simultaneously bolstering government authority and diminishing regional authority. What ensued, however, was an all-out [onslaught of violence](#) and extrajudicial killings of Tigrayan ethnic minority civilians, predominantly Christian. In the final weeks of November, Ethiopian troops - joined now by Eritrean military forces - encroached upon the holy city of Axum where they shot indiscriminately, killing hundreds of civilians, massively detained thousands of Tigrayan men, waged sexual violence against women, and prevented burials of the dead. [Churches and houses of worship](#) have not only been the location of massacres in Tigray, but soldiers have also looted and desecrated these holy places. For example, the Catholic Eparchy of Addigrat in Tigray reported that many of its churches, private buildings, priests' residences, clinics and pharmacies, and even the St. Mary's Agricultural University were nearly completely emptied of benches, pews, medicines, computers, and personal belongings.



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[In May 2021](#), His Holiness Abune Matthias, Patriarch of Ethiopia's Orthodox Church, explained that the crimes against humanity taking place in Tigray either constitutes genocide or precedes it. Even TPLF leader and former Tigrayan president Debretsion Gebremichael has [accused](#) Ethiopian and Eritrean troops of waging "a devastating and genocidal war" in Tigray. One member of the Tigrayan diaspora community in the US laments that "Tigray has experienced massacres, chemical warfare, vandalized hospitals, looted universities, destroyed churches and mosques, humanitarian aid blockages, man-made famine, weaponized rape" and yet, "the world's leaders refuse to label what is

happening in Tigray a 'genocide'".

In December 2021, Jubilee Campaign submitted a [statement](#) to the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief regarding the plight of the Tigrayan people amidst what appears to be genocidal violence. In addition to the recommendations we make in the submission - i.e., prosecution of perpetrators of violence and war crimes against civilians; reparations to survivors and families of victims; assurance of the proper burial of civilian victims - we also echo the recommendation made by [international law expert Firew Tiba](#) for a UN-mandated commission of inquiry into the atrocities to investigate whether they amount to genocide and should be taken up by the International Criminal Court.

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