

Genocide Awareness and Holocaust Commemoration 2013

Robin Marsh
January 24, 2013



'There are many statistics with large numbers mentioned, millions of people, who have died in these tragedies. This does not hide the fact that each of those were real people with a family, a husband or a wife, a parent or a child. We do not know how many geniuses were lost because they could not fulfil their potential.' said Rev Dr Marcus Braybrooke in his remarks during the Genocide Awareness and Holocaust Commemoration event in the House of Lords last night. Several themes emerged during the evening: the guilt of the survivor, the therapeutic benefit for victims of speaking out and working to prevent others from suffering in future, the lack of righteous will to recognise similar patterns of genocidal developments and challenge them and the expressions of frustration from those who can identify a lack of support for those who are suffering ongoing genocides today.



Lord Michael Bates was introduced as the champion of the Olympic truce during the introduction because of his 3000 mile walk, from Mount Olympia to London, to raise the profile of the Olympic Truce during the London Olympics. This event was originally to be hosted by Lord Tarsem King of West Bromwich who sadly passed away on January 9th. We are grateful for Lord Michael Bates agreeing to host this programme in Lord King's place at very short notice. There will be a Tribute to Lord King on February 4th from 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm in the House of Commons, Committee Room 14 see here for more information.

Robin Marsh explained that the Universal Peace Federation (UPF) holds this event annually to promote awareness of the stages to genocide to assist the identification of future problems before they occur. The Holocaust was the culmination of a series of social, cultural and political developments that took place over a period of time. He shared that UPF's Middle East Peace Initiative had regularly visited the Yad Vashem Holocaust museum outside Jerusalem. Identifying the progression to genocide early could prevent a huge tragedy in future. Ruth Barnett later explained more about Dr Gregory Stanton's Eight Stages to Genocide.

Charlotte Simon, spoke of the ongoing tragedy in her native eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) where more than 10 million people have died in the greed to exploit its mineral wealth. Congolese people loved life and welcomed people to their nation but their trust has been abused. This abuse is happening today as invading militia supported by neighbouring nations terrorise communities in eastern DRC who are subject to systematic mass rapes and murders. (It is said on average 1152 rapes are reported each day in eastern DRC.) She implored all present to make this issue more prominent in the minds of the international community so more would be done. This was an issue that

was spoken about by many in the audience.



Keith Best, CEO of Freedom From Torture, described torture as a dehumanising activity. It leaves psychological scars that are hard to remove. He also shared that the victim needs special care that is rarely available. Freedom from Torture is one of those places where that help is specifically developed. He also urged the audience to complain about the film 'Zero Dark Thirty' that is legitimising torture along with 'Homeland' and '24'. He added it is not always the bad guys, the terrorists, that are tortured.

Philomene Uwamaliya, a survivor of such atrocities and a member of the Survivors Speaking Out network, while considering the health care provision for survivors of atrocities and torture in the UK shared that 'time does not heal all wounds'. She said she had to channel her anger into constructive use by both speaking out and by helping other victims. She emphasised that the knowledge of the specific needs of victims learned by Freedom from Torture had been crucial for her recovery.



Edwin Shuker, Vice President of the Sephardic Congress and President of Justice for Jews of Arab Countries, spoke of the plight of migrants and displaced people as a consequence of Holocaust, genocide and conflict situations worldwide. Edwin had just been elected to the European Jewish Council. He had attended a Holocaust Day commemoration in the European Parliament which was said to be an annual programme from now on. The day was described as a Holocaust Memorial day but it was created as a means to commemorate all other genocides as well. To show the scale of human cost he explained that in Auschwitz 10,000 people were being gassed to death a day.

He emphasised that we need a humanity check in order to prevent the systematic persecution, ostracism, legitimisation of cruel treatment to the community and finally the denial of wrong doing that does not allow closure for victims and their close relatives and friends. He shared that he cannot meet a Policemen without feeling his heartbeat rising uncontrollably because of the suffering his family endured in Iraq.

Zara Mohammed shared about the genocide endured by the Kurds. In her town men and women had been separated by the security forces. The men and boys were taken away and never seen again. 20,000 youth Kurdish disappeared and have never been found.



Rev. Dr. Marcus Braybrooke, President of the World Congress of Faiths, commented on the role of people of good conscience when other communities are targeted for persecution. Even the SS Guards attended Christian Sunday Services and returned to their families each evening. The train drivers must have known what was happening.

Ruth Barnett, a Holocaust and Genocide educator and Kindertransport child, explained the significance of the Armenian Genocide as the first of the 20th century where there has not been closure for over 100 years. Without an official acknowledgement there cannot be discovery of the killing grounds, the mass graves and release for the ones who are left behind or in the Armenian genocide, their descendants. She also spoke of the treatment of the 'Roma Community' who suffered the loss of between one and one and a half million people in the Holocaust alongside the European Jewish community during World War II. She asked all there to challenge anyone who made stereotypical statements about 'Gypsies' to show evidence of bad behaviour that is common throughout the community. Pointing to Gregory Stanton's 'Path to Genocide' she explained that the Nazi's had stigmatised the Jewish community and the Roma community before legitimising violence against members of those communities. We have only partially learned this lesson she concluded.



Kate Downey (photo above) explained the consequences of extracting the minerals from eastern DRC to use in our Mobile Phones and Laptops was that the conflict was fuelled by the greed to obtain and sell them to high tech companies. This underlies the violence, mass rapes and ethnic cleansing. In developed nations we just use the technology in ignorance of what is behind it. She is working with others to raise awareness of the connection between the technology we take for granted and the suffering the misuse of these 'conflict minerals' has caused.

International Recognition of the Kurdish Genocide - Concerning the Faili Kurds

Zara Karim
January 25, 2013



We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Universal Peace Federation - UK, House of Lords, the British Government and all those individuals and organisation for their long stand of support and help they have given us. Organising such events is very much needed to bring about Genocide Awareness and Holocaust Commemoration, no doubt it means a great deal to us the Kurds.

On the demise of Saddam's tyrannical regime back in 2003, we the Kurds and the Failis among them, together with other Iraqis pinned a great deal of hope on what was then a potential turning point. The families of disappeared Iraqis woke up to the shocking discovery of the countless scattered mass graves, and almost a decade has past where we once again are awoken to the harsh lack of justice that is the inability to prove the genocide internationally and receive our God given rights as humans and as Iraqis. Sadly history seems to show a trend in the overlooking of our rights as citizens of this planet let alone the country of Iraq.

Faili Kurds in Iraq: A Brief History

Faili Kurds have long formed an integral part of the Iraqi society. Our history stretches far back to early civilisation in southern Mesopotamia. A Sizable population of Faili Kurds reside in the capital Baghdad, the rest are in cities like, Khanaqin, Mendele, Kut, Emarah, Zorbatiah, Bedrah i.e. area south of Iraqi Kurdistan and in middle, east, and south east of Iraq.

Kurds had a very effective rule in social and political life in modern Iraq. In Baghdad Faili Kurds were renowned for their business ethic and stature with great economical and commercial weight and also have had considerable capitals, companies and factories.

They were among the founders of Chamber of Commerce in Baghdad, which was one of the principle factors that made them a specific target of the Ba'ath Party. All Faili members of the chamber were arrested in a carefully planned campaign (1980) resulting in them being stripped of all of their documents, businesses and hasty deportation to Iran. This represented the spark of a long campaign of intimidation, harassment and deportation perpetrated against the Faili population over the following years.

Harassment and Discrimination

Faili Kurds were and are renowned for their loyal and diligent mentality towards their law-abiding community, and were particularly known for their business prowess. But due to ethnic cleansing policies carried out by successive Iraqi governments, were constantly targeted and discriminated against in all aspects of life.

The following is a list of dates of major deportation campaigns to Iran:

1942 / 1963 / 1969 / 1971 / 1980 / 1981 / 1986 to the present day.

In the eradication campaign that stretched the 1980s, approximately 350, 000 Faili Kurds were deported to neighbouring Iran resulting in the long term and present diaspora of the these people. During process of exile, an estimated 19, 000 Faili Kurdish young people and children were imprisoned without any jurisprudence whatsoever. They were never to be seen or heard from again.

Post Saddam era

A decade has past since the tyranny of Saddam Hussein and many democratic measures have been put in

place to benefit others. We however have yet to reap such benefits. It is evident that we have once again been unjustly discriminated against, both in the redressing of crimes committed against our population and in actual acknowledgement of our blatant persecution and genocide. Faili Kurds once again face despair in the lack of efforts allocated to locating and identifying those who perished and duly compensating their families.

Quickly browsing through our concerns, one notes the following, we are still not properly compensated for all the loss and many issues still go without address:

1- Many Failis in Diaspora are still faced with many obstacles. Application for nationality papers and documents such as Iraqi passports require the production of the original documents confiscated at the time of deportation by the Saddam Hussein regime.

2- For those who manage to cross the borders into Iraq, they are faced with the hard reality of someone else being the 'de facto' owner and occupier of their home, and are refusing to let the original proprietor reclaim what is lawfully theirs. In conjunction decrees are now in power that purposely entangle the retrieval process with red tape and litigation designed to make it extremely difficult if not impossible to take back what is duly and rightfully ours.

3- Confiscated houses and properties; during the deportation process the regime illegally seized all properties and documents 'donating' them to its loyalists. Following this the present government have issued a series of laws stating the conflicts to be solved in civil courts, rather than taking moral responsibility of giving us back what they know the then authorities confiscated from us, failing to compensate us for all the trauma we have gone through these long years. Leaving us struggling and paying expenses only to have unsympathetic and unfair rulings made by judges in the general. This frankly ridiculous process leaves us the victims, having to ludicrously compensating the perpetrators for the crimes committed against us.

4- The same fraudulent method applies to our businesses, bank accounts and assets.

5- Concerning political representation: Faili Kurds are still under represented be it on ministerial level or lower level with no group of people to represents the interests and concerns of our population in government.

Obtaining international recognition of the genocide.

In 2012 after a long campaign, based on the decision of the Supreme Iraqi Criminal Court the Iraqi government declared crimes against Faili Kurds as Genocide with full assignment of its meaning, following the discussion the subject in its House of Parliaments. Constructing the provisions of item (I) of Article (61), item (iii) of Article (73) of the Iraqi Constitution, the President of the Republic issued a Resolution No. (6) for the year 2012 on 8/2/2012.

Whilst this is advancement in the correct direction, it holds very little weight and is of minor consolation if it fails to be internationally recognized, such as other more widely accepted genocides.

Now this important development still needs solid international recognition, backing and help to implement it on various levels, we the Kurds feel that without international support and recognition the mission is still unaccomplished, needless to add that the Kurds have been waiting a very long time for something of this magnitude to come to a resolution. This heinous act proven by mass graves and the sorrow of an entire people is surely something that should at least be recognized if not addressed by the international community in order to bring closure to those that have suffered at the hands of this continuous persecution.

Above all international effort is needed to recognize the plight of the Kurds and to help with the process of reinstating their assets and rights as humans.

Mrs. Zara Karim