

The Rt Hon David Cameron MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

Friday 4 December 2015

Dear Prime Minister,

In September 2015, the United Nations General Assembly established 9 December as the International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of this Crime, as it marks the anniversary of the adoption of the 1948 Genocide Convention. The aim is to raise awareness of the Convention and its role in combating and preventing genocide, as well as to commemorate and honour victims of this crime.

We are a group of UK organisations that work to prevent genocide around the world, including those genocides that already form part of our shared history, and those that are still ongoing. We also highlight conflict situations where atrocity crimes have not yet been labelled genocide by a critical mass of the international community.

For 9 December we are organising events to raise awareness of genocide and to commemorate and honour its victims. We would welcome your participation in and endorsement of these efforts, for instance with a written statement to this effect. However, given the relatively short time we have had to prepare for this year's day, our plans will not have maximum impact. We are therefore keen to partner early to ensure that the day's importance is recognised in future years. We would be grateful for a discussion with your office about how to take this important initiative forward.

Moving beyond the day itself, we urge that genocide commemoration and prevention becomes a crucial part of your government's foreign policy. Aside from the fact that, intrinsically, genocide diminishes us all, ongoing atrocity crimes affect the UK's security and prosperity by causing international instability, itself contributing to refugee outflows and the threat of terrorism. Preventing genocide is central to our national interest.

We believe that the UK strategy to prevent conflict and promote stabilisation, the Building Stability Overseas Strategy, should explicitly mention the prevention of genocide as a goal, as part of the 'responsibility to protect' (R2P) agenda endorsed by the UK over ten years ago.

Furthermore, earlier this year your government pledged to create a new Holocaust Museum and a new UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation, following the report of your Holocaust Commission. We would like the government to widen its commitments to include genocides from all around the world, including ongoing ones. We would also like to ensure that the new Holocaust Museum will be widely representative of all genocides.

Aside from 9 December, the next day on which the UK plans to address the issue of genocide is Holocaust Memorial Day, on 27 January 2016. We hope that the government uses this important day as a platform to discuss a renewed commitment to the commemoration of genocides around the world, past and current, but also to their prevention, given this year's theme is 'Don't stand by'.

Yours sincerely,

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Cc:
The Rt Hon Philip Hammond MP
Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street
London
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