



#STANDUP4HUMANRIGHTS

United Nations International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of this Crime and Human Rights Day

Upholding Dignity and Human Rights in Times of Global Crises

On 9 December 2021, *ATOP MeaningfulWorld* team successfully commemorated the *United Nations International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of this Crime and Human Rights Day* with a virtual Zoom webinar. The team was joined by HRH Dr. Anjula Singh Bais, Chair of Amnesty International, Guru Dileepji of World Yoga Foundation, Dr. Ani Kalayjian, President of ATOP Meaningfulworld, Andrew Dolinar, Vice President of ATOP Meaningfulworld, and Eric Manigian of the Buddhist Action Coalition.

This year's event was centered around the theme of "Upholding Dignity and Human Rights in Times of Global Crises" and featured three informative keynote presentations on the importance of combating the hatred and extremism that lead to genocide. The International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of this Crime was established to pay respects to victims of genocide globally as well as celebrate the signing of the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the first human rights treaty adopted by the United Nations General Assembly. The Convention signified the international community's commitment to ensure the crime of genocide never occurred again and provided the first international legal definition of "genocide," adopted globally. It also establishes a duty for State Parties to prevent and punish the crime of genocide.

United Nations Human Rights Day, which is celebrated on 10 December 2021 commemorates the day the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. This year's theme was "Reducing inequalities, advancing human

rights” and the webinar’s three keynote presentations all celebrate the theme and spirit of these days.



Guruji Dileepji, invocation

First, following an invocation by Guru Dileepji, Dr. Ani shared a poem on vicarious trauma based on her experiences around the world. Beginning with her reflecting on her work with trauma victims in DRC, Sierra Leone, Pakistan, Armenia, and Rwanda and ending with her appreciation of places like Armenia and Haiti, Dr. Ani’s poem asks us whether we need the evil to appreciate the good.

Following this, HRH Dr. Anjula Singh Bais presented on the use of psychology to understand and eliminate genocide. Dr. Singh Bais emphasized the need for education and lived experience to meet equitably and looked to answer the question “What turns neighbors into genocidalists? Why do some standby while others risk their lives to help?” Discussing her work in Sri Lanka, Dr. Singh Bias shared a quote: “If I look at the mass I will never act, if I look at the one I will” to discuss the way in which people look away from major crimes like genocide. Ultimately, she explained the ways in which individual psychological and social and structural elements converge to create an opportunity for genocidal action, and implored those attending to lead lives of significance, and not just success, by helping those around them and leading with empathy. Dr. Bais is an international psychology trauma specialist. She is the chair of the International Board of Amnesty International, the first psychologist, the first Indian, and the first person from Malaysia to hold this position. From Davos to Dhaka, Dr. Bais engages populations on the ground around the climate crisis, mental health, human rights, leadership, and strategic

thinking through a feminist lens. She is a Global Risks Perception Subject Matter Expert for the World Economic Forum, sits on the COVID Social Sector Mobilization Platform.

Andrew Dolinar, Vice President of ATOP MeaningfulWorld, Andrew Dolinar studied at Columbia University's Institute for the Study of Human Rights and has worked on crisis response and conflict monitoring at Human Rights Watch in New York, and sentencing reform at Penal Reform International in Tbilisi, Georgia. He has since then worked on trauma, as it relates to human rights abuses, reconciliation, and human development at ATOP MeaningfulWorld and Rutgers University.



Mr. Dolinar presented on the organization's recent and historic work on human rights and genocide prevention. Focusing on the impact of human rights abuses on trauma, he discussed the three areas in which ATOP works, 1) Healing and Education, 2) Research and Publications and 3) Policy Revisions and Advocacy at the United Nations. He spoke of the organization's humanitarian missions, which have been carried out in 48 countries and 26 states in the US. These missions are often in response to humanmade and natural disasters and focus on trauma healing through peace and forgiveness gardens, educational workshops and use of the 7-step integrative healing model. Andrew spoke about lessons-learned from ATOP's 2021 post-war

recovery mission to Armenia, including the beneficial use of the 7-step model, support for local orphanages and continued training efforts for the country's first suicide prevention lifeline. Andrew finally discussed the organization's ongoing work, such as supporting the ATOP Meaningfulworld Haiti branch and a project to establish peace and forgiveness gardens across the US.

Dr Ani presented on action items related to addressing human rights violations in the 21st century including, teaching emotional intelligence in response to challenges in mental health, transforming domestic violence, fostering ecological consciousness, hosting weekly support groups and monthly workshops, delivering aid virtually, promoting Sustainable Development Goals, and upholding dignity. She shared remarks by [Maria Westergren](#) from the office of genocide prevention on the dangers of hate speech and the growing need to address hate speech, stating that hate speech is a precursor to crimes such as genocide. Ultimately, hate speech risks undoing decades of peacebuilding by the United Nations.

Lastly, the group was lead through a guided meditation by Eric Manigian. Eric started his study of Buddhism 30 years ago in Japan. Since returning to America he became the student of the unorthodox Zen Master Bernie Glassman and Eve Marko at Zen Peacemakers where he completed a 2 year Bearing Witness Training Program, received the Buddhist Precepts and was given the Buddhist name Shōkei. Eric shared the following. As we get ready to flow back into the world after hearing such important words from the amazing speakers, it is important for us to let it all settle. So let us take just a moment to let all the wisdom and the trauma and acts of loving kindness that we've heard from our speakers and take a big inhale, and with the outbreath, let in drop from the static buzz of our intellectual minds still processing all of it, and with this deep exhale, let's drop into our heart space. The intellectual mind is important, but it can be a little cold and hard up there. Let's push this energy down into this warm relational space of caring that we know with our entire bodies. This space alone is sometimes too soft and too warm, so with the next deep inhale let's collect both cool and warm energies and with a deep exhale let's drop one more time into our bellies. Push it down with a deep exhale one more time. Here we can process both cool intellectual understanding and warm emotional intelligence and meld them into an energy ball of clarity and resolve. Let's breathe deeply for a while here, grounding into the earth, drawing up the power that she always has for us. Eyes not fully closed, not wide open, part-way closed allows concentration while lessening distraction and part-way

open keeps us from falling off into thoughts and dreams. In this space we are settling like mud puddles. Slowly calming our waters so the dirt can settle to the bottom so we can see clearly through it. Calm but alert. Observant but not agitated, as if you could notice the smallest movements of things. Let's just hang out in this space for a minute, filling out entire lungs on the inhale and pushing out down 1" below the belly button with a deep powerful exhale. Feeling connected to the earth, feeling connected to our bodies, feeling connected to each other, feeling connected to our ancestors. It is from this space that we can flow back into the world with most grace and kindness and undeterred resolve.

ATOP Meaningfulworld works tirelessly to promote and nurture peace through:

1. Monthly psychoeducational workshops on self-care, peace building, anger management, conflict resolution, forgiveness, mindful leadership, as well as weekly free support groups Thursdays at noon. Kindly email info@meaningfulworld.com
2. Fellowships, internships, and mentorship for youth in high schools and universities
3. Morning and evening rituals for our mind-body-eco-spirit health, joy, and peace
4. Ecological Consciousness through planting trees and establishing Peace & Forgiveness Gardens
5. 40 films on our YouTube Channel for empowerment, mental health awareness, social justice, suicide prevention, and stress management:
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_a4eBBxmAzKuLxx0KSow_w
6. Yoga, Soul-surfing, Meditation and Mindfulness zoom sessions
7. Meaningfulworld research and Resources for COVID-19 Pandemic:
<https://meaningfulworld.com/our-work/research-and-publications/meaningfulworld-resources-for-covid-19-pandemic>