

SUMMARY WRITE-UP

A SCREAM FROM GLOBAL CIVIL SOCIETY

INDIA

GENOCIDE

WARNING



Australian Federation  
of Islamic Councils



دار الإفتاء الأسترالية

Australian  
Dar Al-Iftaa

AFIC National  
Sharia Board



This timely event was held on Friday February 4 2022 at 11:00 PM Sydney time. It was run by the FORSEA (Forces of Renewal for Southeast Asia). There were 47 international participants, including intellectuals, musicians, scholars and activists from 20 countries.

The event was made possible by the solidarity of the following organisations:

**GENOCIDE WATCH**

**INTERSTATE CRIME  
INITIATIVE QUEEN MARIE  
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON**

**THE INDIAN AMERICAN  
MUSLIM COUNCIL**

**GENOCIDE DOCUMENTATION  
CENTER OF CAMBODIA**

**HINDUS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS**

**THE NEVER AGAIN  
ASSOCIATION WARSAW**

This summary write-up aims to bring together the messages of the participants in a concise document. To keep it short I have had to make some very difficult decisions about what to include in this document and I highly recommend the reader watches the entire conference.

Although I have only placed a few quotes in dedicated quotations, most of what is mentioned in this write-up has come directly from the conference,

You will find in Appendix A the names of all participants and the time stamp for their contribution during the event.

The event can be accessed at the following link:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QO68Nx\\_IJkU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QO68Nx_IJkU)

## Call to acknowledge the Warning Signs

India is in a dark space of fear and hate. We are seeing many early signs of impending genocide across the country. We know what can happen when warning signs are ignored.

The international community did not heed the warnings regarding the 2002 genocide of Muslims in Gujarat, just as they did not heed the warning signs in Rwanda in 1994.

The Hindutva project is ongoing. There has been brutal lynchings by mobs. People attacked for merely being openly Muslim. In 2021 we saw not only a prevalence of mob attacks but also state violence as the government continues to embolden nationalist forces.

*“The Modi government is systematically dismantling Indian secular democracy and turning the country into a Hindu ethnocracy with almost 250 million Muslims becoming a persecuted minority”*  
– Noam Chomsky –

In 2021 Islamophobia was a constant and growing threat. The Bridge Initiative<sup>1</sup> publishes yearly reports on incidents of Islamophobia globally. This year they published a report solely on India.

A lot of freedoms are under threat, including freedom of speech and academic freedom. There is a growing sentiment in the country against journalists especially those critical of the state. The control of the narrative is a critical juncture for the initiation of genocide, its execution and concealment.

Genocide didn't start with gas chambers. It started with hate speech, propaganda, the dehumanization of a group of people and the incitement of violence against them.

The UN secretary general in a speech delivered on December 8, 2020, stated that Genocide:

*“is never committed without clear, multiple warning signs. The victims are often early targets of hate speech, discrimination, and violence.” “To prevent genocide, it is also essential that we pursue credible and effective accountability. The link between systemic impunity and atrocity crimes is clear.”<sup>2</sup>*

When Kevin Abosch asked how it is possible that millions of people were not prepared for the mass extermination now known as the holocaust, the response was:

*“We knew something bad was afoot, but we didn't know how quickly the rhetoric would turn to wholesale slaughter.”*

<sup>1</sup> The Bridge Initiative is a Georgetown University Initiative, the Islamophobia report can be found here:

<https://bridge.georgetown.edu/research/2021-islamophobia-in-review-india/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2020-12-09/secretary-generals-remarks-the-international-day-of-commemoration-and-dignity-of-the-victims-of-the-crime-of-genocide-delivered>

## Rhetoric

Hate speech can trigger violence. Prime Minister Modi and his people have remained silent to this hate speech. There has been a 1130% increase in hate speech driving Modi government rule and depicting Muslims in despicable ways. We are seeing calls for mass killings, displacement and the like by community figures and this incitement is rarely punished.

On the 3rd of February 2022 there was an assassination attempt on Muslim member of parliament Asaduddin Owaisi. A month before the assassination attempt there was in the same province a meeting of Hindu nationalist groups where a right-wing Hindu nationalist leader openly declared and implored his followers to assassinate Mr Owaisi. This rhetoric is also coming from those who are sanctified by a section of the Hindu religious community.



Photo: cnn.com



Photo: moderndiplomacy.eu

Dehumanization rhetoric has historically been a precursor to genocide. It is also a risk indicator when assessing a person for risk of extremism. The Nazis referred to the Jews as rats, the Tutsi of Rwanda were referred to as cockroaches. Now in India the BJP home affairs minister is labelling Muslim immigrants as termites eating away Indian resources.

Hindu nationalism is not only being fed by religious hardline fervor but also by accusations of Muslims being thieves who unjustly accumulated wealth. The attack on Muslim identity is multifaceted and not just political. Bollywood and private news stations are complicit in painting Indian Muslims as the premier threat from within.

In a recent conference (held in December, 2021<sup>3</sup>), participants called for other Hindus to arm themselves and kill Muslims in the country and establish a purely Hindu nation. This is a warning we cannot ignore.

## The Process of Repression

Prime Minister Modi's election history saw a slew of laws against civil societies and journalists. In 2018 nearly 20 000 NGOs found their licenses cancelled. There is a growing intolerance towards criticism of the state and their cohorts. Counter-terror laws have become weapons to silence dissent. Even Hindus receive backlash for speaking out against the Hindutva.

We are seeing legal deprivations and exclusion tied to citizenship. The Citizenship Amendment Act (passed in December 2019) provides asylum to refugees of all religions except Muslims. The introduction of the NRC (National Register of Citizens) was essentially a plan to categorise Indian Muslims as migrants for their future deportation. In 2019 Assam citizens had to demonstrate their citizenship and prove their connection to Assam prior to 1971. This was the biggest exercise in forced statelessness as people were dispossessed. 1.9 million people in Assam have been excluded from the NRC, and the current government and their cohorts want many more excluded. Some argue this is an early sign of genocide.

Voting is making the extremists more sensitive to diversity. Because Muslims represent a significant 14-15% of the Indian population, this has been seen as an effort to deprive them of their voting rights, among many other things.

Many of these measures are being weaponized against Muslims first and

foremost but are also reaching more and more minority groups.

### Some recent examples of marginalization and oppression of Muslims in India include:

- Banning of public Islamic schools. Ministers defended this by saying they don't want to create Imams.
- Recent Hijab bans and denial of education for women who wear hijab.
- The vilification and restriction of Muslims through campaigns such as accusations of love jihad and economic jihad and blaming Muslims for the spread of Covid.
- Incidents of Hindu mob attacks against Muslims including many enjoying impunity that begets further crime against Muslim minorities.

There have been two reported incidents of Muslim women put up for live auction for sale online by extremists to cause them ridicule and psychological harm. The app used has been taken down and a some arrests have been made.

The escalation to genocide is not unheard of in India. The massacre of Muslims has been ongoing for decades. Only the scale has increased since the Gujarat massacre in 2002 where 3000 Muslims were slaughtered, and some brutally raped. Many massacres took place before the nationalist party took power. Impunity is embedded into the system. Police are under-investigated and officials are never tried.

# The Muslims of India: A Case Study for Economic Discrimination<sup>4</sup>

India's laws which regulate the economy and society are very selectively enforced, they gave space for regulation by custom and social forces rather than letter of law. This social structure for economic accumulation has also become a social structure for economic discrimination.

Economic discrimination can quite possibly contribute to genocide, it certainly contributes to politicide thereby excluding from power and eliminating people who pose an imagined threat to the hegemony of the elites of India. Two examples are below:

## Small town discrimination

- In India, self-employment is the most common form of livelihood as represented in every survey since independence. 92% of India's livelihoods are unregulated and informal.
- Muslims are confined to certain sectors, fruits and vegetables, metals, auto repair, transport, retailing, rather than wholesaling and manufacturing.
- Muslim firms tend to be smaller than most other firms. They have low rates of return, profit, and life expectations.
- Muslims pay higher interest in comparison to Hindus when borrowing money, contracts may be refused, key raw materials are bought at higher prices than other Indians and products are sold at lower price. Their growth is slow, and they fail to diversify in the same way that other small family businesses might.
- These differences flare up sometimes into communal violence.

## Muslims and the livestock economy

- India's livestock economy is 25% of livestock GDP. It is the largest milk producer in the world and 2nd largest leather producer in the world. Livestock employees make up 9% of the workforce. The industry produces 20% of the world's cattle.
- The industry is disproportionately populated by Muslims and Dalits. Muslims can own land and manage the rental market and draft animals, manage the transport and trade of livestock, slaughterhouses, tanning, and leatherwork.
- After 2005, 20 of India's 28 states banned the slaughter of cows.
- In 2017 the BJP banned the trade in cattle for slaughter but were later forced to drop the ban because of protests.
- Under the BJP there is now an enormous mobilization of cow protection vigilantes assaulting people disproportionately, especially Muslims suspected of carrying beef or meat of any sort and lynching people transporting meat. 87% of the victims have been Muslim. Vigilantes have stolen over 200 000 heads of cattle between 2014 and 2017.
- This has resulted in a huge decline in leather works and up to 3 million livelihoods being destroyed by 2017 in the cattle economy. Half of India's foreign exchange in cattle has disappeared.

<sup>4</sup> This is a summary of the segment presented by Professor Barbara Harriss-White



## The BJP

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) or 'Indian People's Party' is one of two major political parties in India along with the Indian National Congress. It has been the ruling political party of the Republic of India since 2014. The BJP is a rightwing party, and its policy has historically reflected Hindu nationalist positions. It has close ideological and organisational links to the much older Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). As of 2020, it is the country's largest political party in terms of representation in the national parliament and state legislatures.<sup>5</sup>

The silence of the BJP regarding hate crimes and incitement to violence and genocide against Muslims has been labelled as complicity by activists and academics, with some highlighting the likelihood that the BJP is outsourcing the hate and incitement to violence to other organisations.

The RSS is an Indian right-wing Hindu nationalist paramilitary organisation. 75% of ministers in the ruling BJP including Prime Minister Modi are members of the RSS. Since its early days the RSS has been linked to white supremacist organisations in Europe and North America. In his manifesto Anders Brevik<sup>6</sup> hailed India's Hindu nationalist movement as a key ally in a global struggle to bring down democratic regimes across the world. The BJP and RSS were both mentioned.

## International Complicity

The pathology of islamophobia is growing throughout the west.

*“The burden of guilt lies with the rich countries of the west. The global south which did not create the crisis will be its most tragic victims. Indeed they already are. There is hope, opportunities, but not for long” – Noam Chomsky.*

For the perpetration of genocide, we see that fascist forces cooperate globally and reinforce each other and share resources. The majoritarian approach of the Hindutva is supported by international players.

Due to economic priorities as well as global and Indian Islamophobia, there is no incentive to call out India. International trade with India is worth \$150 billion to the US, £23 billion to the UK, \$123 billion to China, \$63 billion to the EU, and more than \$20 billion to Russia and Israel. This is all like a “thumbs up” to India to continue in their growing violence in policy and in creating this xenophobic atmosphere.

India's most significant trade with Israel is military grade equipment. The combination of the technology of Israel and the manpower of India has the potential to create the world's most powerful axis of AI.

The 1st major communal onslaught in the 21st Century in India took place in Gujarat, Muslims were massacred, raped, and homes, property and businesses destroyed under the then chief minister Modi's watch. Hindutva hegemony was

<sup>5</sup> This description was taken from Wikipedia on Friday the 11th of February 2022.

<sup>6</sup> Anders Brevik is a Norwegian far-right domestic terrorist who committed the 2011 Norway attacks on 22 July 2011 killing 77 people

declared with neoliberal economic reforms by establishing countless Hindu businesses and enterprises in the name of economic development, both in India and overseas.

The BJP became the ruling party by selling Modi's success story in Gujarat. Although some states did not buy this story, the Indian corporate media became mercenaries of the BJP without an iota of basic human decency. Soon many multinational companies worldwide entered joint business with Indian companies who are ardent supporters of the BJP.

Ideology alone is not sufficient for a genocidal process. It needs hard power, state power, and international backing. The Modi government has been emboldened by these powers through economic, political, diplomatic, and military means.

## Call to Action

In light of the warnings presented, A number of the speakers mentioned India's history of being inclusive and multi-civilizational as a reminder of a better path to take.

*“If hundreds of millions of good Indians stay silent and let the hate mongers fuel mass violence against Muslims and other minorities, we could sleepwalk our way to evil.” – Irwin Cotler*

## We must be vigilant to the dangers that could lead to more hurt and oppression

- The danger of silence in the face of evil.
- The danger of indifference and inaction.
- The danger of incitement to hate and genocide.
- The danger of the betrayal of the elites
- The danger of impunity. Silence in the face of evil is complicity with evil itself.

## In the academic sphere

The purpose of the incitement of the community to commit genocide needs to be researched and understood. We need to find ways to bring the people back from the brink of committing genocide. We see many signs of forthcoming genocide in India from the language used to the tools at the disposal of the BJP led government and the society towards Indian Muslims. So how can we prevent ordinary Hindus from taking part? Reach as many people as possible and show them where they are headed.

## Deconstruct the Narrative

We also need to deconstruct the narratives and do the intellectual work to challenge the narratives that are put out on the flimsiest of evidence. We can take note from the flawed May 2018 report by Amnesty international in relation to the Rohingya.<sup>7</sup>

## Extensive Documentation

Create a register and extensively document hate crimes and hate speech.

<sup>7</sup> In his presentation, Daniel Taylor condemns Amnesty's report on the Rohingya of May 22, 2018 (<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/05/myanmar-new-evidence-reveals-rohingya-armed-group-massacred-scores-in-rakhine-state/>) as being based on the flimsiest evidence and regards it as "participating in genocide". These comments can be found at 4.46.30 of the current Youtube clip.

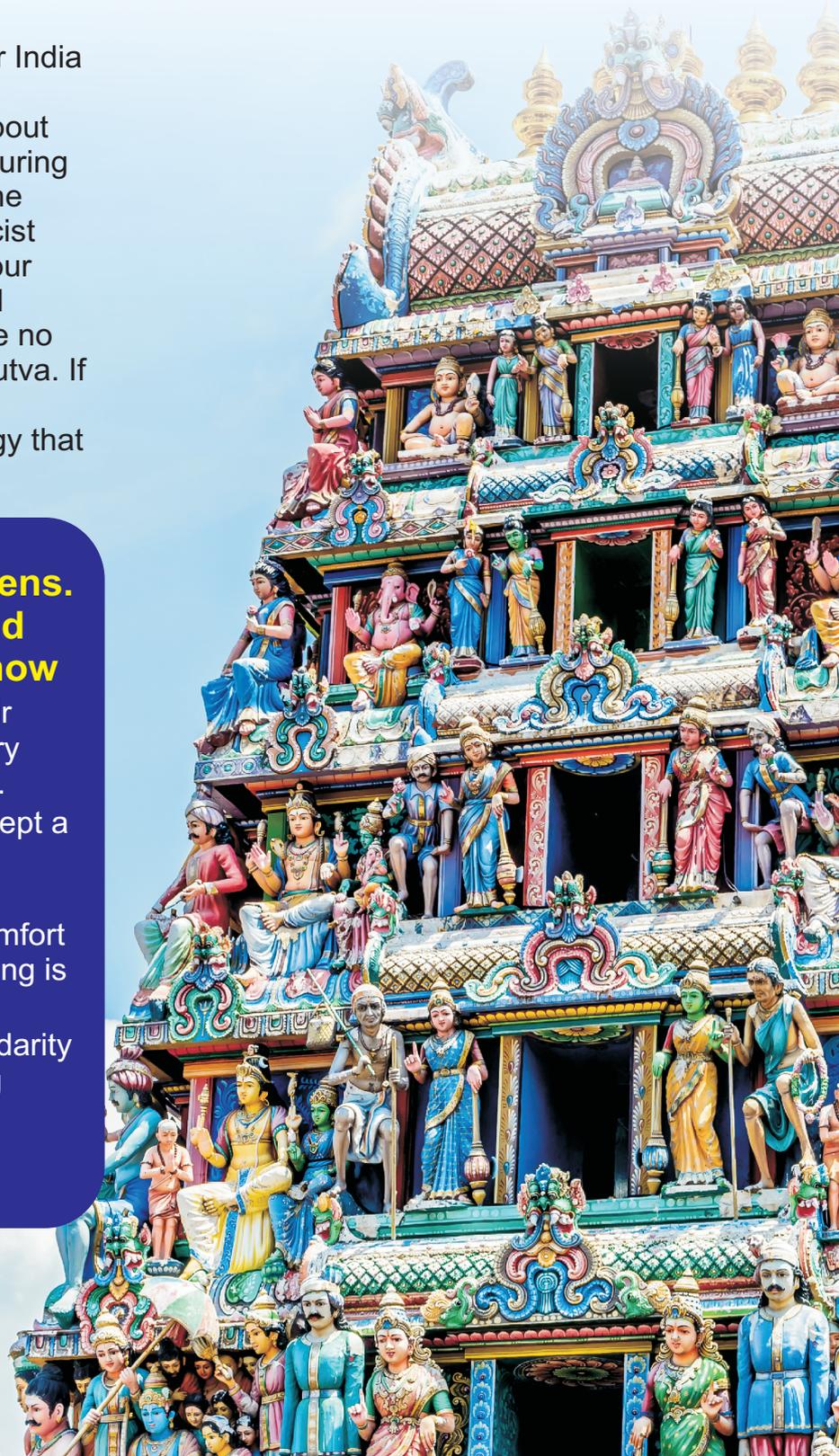
## A Hindu perspective

Hindu theologian: “the rise of populist nationalism and especially those who coat themselves with religious colours needs a critique from the same religious traditions”. We haven’t seen robust movement of Hindus from the US or India speaking up as Hindus against this ideology of hate. The Hindutva is about 100 years old and was developed during the colonial period of British rule. The ideology draws inspiration from fascist movements and the worst parts of our traditions. Silence from temples and community and religious leaders are no justification for the ideology of Hindutva. If we look at the very first texts of the Hindutva, we see that it’s an ideology that culminates in genocide.<sup>8</sup>

### We need to be global citizens. Something students and academics can do right now

- Challenge those who excuse their support for terrible crimes at every moment. Inform and be informed.
- Think for yourself rather than accept a narrative that is being fed to you.
- Call to action even to the polite moderates to step out of their comfort zones. Just standing and observing is a form of complicity.
- We need to build a culture of solidarity between people who are seeking a common goal.

<sup>8</sup> Taken from the presentation of Nikhil Mandalaparth, from “Hindus for Human Rights”.



## Law and Policy

### The Legal definition of ethnic

**cleansing:** Ethnic cleansing does not exist as an independent crime under international law, so most crimes are written off as something else. We need to define involuntary and violent mass deportations as ethnic cleansing. We are in the first stages of ethnic cleansing.

**The Genocide Convention:** India voluntarily ratified article 20 of the genocide convention in 1959. Genocide is understood to be: causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of a nationally ethnic, racial, or religious group committed with an intent to destroy in whole or in part. India has an obligation under article 5 of the genocide convention to enact appropriate legislation providing appropriate penalties for persons guilty of genocide. Current Indian laws are not sufficient to deal with this problem. Constantly giving calls for genocide or genocide mongering is currently seen as okay in India.

**AFSPA:** The Armed Forces Special Powers Act needs to be repealed. This Act gives effectively gives impunity to the Indian armed forces.

We outside India need to find ways to make the places we live in accountable too.

In solidarity with the people of India we have to expose the international complicity of multinational companies including Facebook<sup>9</sup> and others who support the Modi government and its genocidal practices.

I will conclude the summary by mentioning two quotes mentioned during the conference:

### Martin Luther King Jr:

*“cowardice asks the question is it safe? Expedience asks the question is it politic? Vanity asks the question is it popular? But conscience asks the question is it right? And there comes a time when we must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular but one must take it because it is right”*

### Malcolm X:

*“you’re not to be so blind with patriotism that you can’t face reality. Wrong is wrong, no matter who does it or says it.”*

Event summarized by:  
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<sup>9</sup> See for example: <https://time.com/5883993/india-facebook-hate-speech-bjp/>

## Appendix A: Speakers and or performers

#	Time Stamp	Speaker	
1	0:00:00	Dr Maung Zarni	Burmese scholar and activist, event host.
2	0:06:14	Sharad Protiti	Musician – TagoreCovers.
3	0:11:38	Tapan Kumar Bose	Director at South Asia Forum for Human Rights.
4	0:26:02	Noam Chomsky	Renowned intellectual, linguist and author.
5	0:36:20	Alishan Jafri	Independent journalist, runs Heartland Hate Watch Initiative.
6	0:44:15	Rudabeh Shahid	Assistant professor and political scientist.
7	0:49:42	Harsh Mander	Author, researcher and social activist.
8	0:58:35	Gregory Stanton	Former Research professor in genocide studies.
9	1:07:05	Dr Khin Zaw Win	Director of Tampadipa institute of Myanmar.
10	1:11:48	Rahima Begum	Human rights activist and co-founder of international human rights organisation Restless Beings.
11	1:16:17	Pong-Rasy Pheng	Coordinator of Genocide education at the Documentation centre of Cambodia (DCCAM).
12	1:22:40	Meta Sovicheth	Translator and researcher at the documentation centre of Cambodia (DCCAM).
13	1:27:33	Michimi Muranushi	Professor of International Politics in Tokyo.
14	1:34:31	Hishamuddin Rais	Film director, and political and social activist.
15	1:44:20	Kevin Abosch	conceptual artist and photographer.
16	1:49:47	Sindhuja Sankaran	Academic, researcher, and activist on refugee issues, founder of Rethinking Refugees.
17	1:54:25	Ravi Hemadri	Minority rights activist.
18	2:01:32	Suraj	Researcher specializing in Northeast Asia Affairs.

## Appendix A: Speakers and or performers

#	Time Stamp	Speaker	
19	2:06:43	Angshuman Choudhury	Indian peace researcher, Peace and Conflict Institute, New Delhi.
20	2:13:03	Dina Siddiqi	Scholar and researcher.
21	2:21:45	Dr Ewelina Ochab	columnist and legal scholar for Forbes, founder of Coalition for Genocide response.
22	2:24:55	Aman Wadud	Lawyer with Frontline Defenders.
23	2:29:42	Sharad Protiti	Musician, TagoreCovers.
24	2:35:00	Shafiur Rahman	Documentary Filmmaker.
25	2:41:33	Azeezah Kanji	Legal scholar and writer, legal activist.
26	2:46:22	Irwin Cotler	Former minister of Justice and council of Nelson Mandela, former attorney general of Canada.
27	2:53:26	Dr Katherine Southwick	Contractor specializing in genocide prevention, mass atrocities and crime prevention with the US Holocaust Museum.
28	2:59:50	Mabrur Ahmed	Cofounder of Restless Beings.
29	3:08:23	Nikhil Mandalaparthay	Hindus for Human Rights, the only Hindu organisation supporting this event.
30	3:15:00	Professor Michael Charney	Human rights scholar and activist.
31	3:19:50	Harn Yawngghwe	Burmese activist.
32	3:25:22	Sai Sam Kharn	Burmese academic.
33	3:34:00	Amitabh Pal	Activist.
34	3:40:45	Mulham Abordan	Musician.
35	3:51:49	Professor Barbara Harris White	Scholar of Indian political economy specializing in informal economies

## Appendix A: Speakers and or performers

#	Time Stamp	Speaker	
36	4:03:17	Dr Farid Hafez	Scholar of extremism, political scientist, sociologist, founder of the Islamophobia yearbook
37	4:13:25	David Amram	Musician, composer.
38	4:20:41	Demir Mahmutcehajic	One of the founders of the Islamic Human Rights Commission for the UK.
39	4:30:13	Erin Rosenberg	International Criminal Court.
40	4:38:36	Daniel Taylor	Refugee Rights advocate in Australia, human rights lawyer, first person in the world to file a crimes against humanity case against Aung San Suu Kyi.
41	4:48:28	Rafal Pankowski	Thinker, activist, scholar (Never Again Association).
42	4:52:58	Noeline Harendran	Refugee rights advocate.
43	4:58:30	Dr Jude Lal Fernando	Initiator of the Permanent People's Tribunal of Sri Lanka.
44	5:09:24	Shahida Tulaganova	Former BBC war correspondent and documentary filmmaker.
45	5:17:35	Pritam Singh	Political economist, leading scholar.
46	5:24:38	Dr Gianni	Permanent People's Tribunal.
47	5:31:03	Sharad Protiti	Musician, TagoreCovers.
48	5:38:24	George Matthew	Musician, composer, uses music as a vehicle for social impact (Music for Life International).

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