

CONSENT CALENDAR

July 27, 2021

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council  
 From: Councilmember Ben Bartlett (author), Mayor Jesse Arreguin & Councilmember Rashi Kesarwani (co-sponsors)  
 Subject: Proclamation: Partition Remembrance Day

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Berkeley City Council adopts the Partition Remembrance Day Proclamation.

BACKGROUND:

On July 27, 2021, the Berkeley City Council will be honoring the Berkeley-based 'The 1947 Partition Archive,' along with Partition survivors and their families from the Bay Area.

The 1947 Partition of the Indian subcontinent into the independent nations of India and Pakistan was accompanied by the largest human migration in history and enormous scale of mass violence. As many as 3 million people, or more, lost their lives and at least 14 million were displaced from their homes.

Over the last decade, the 'people's history' of Partition has been documented through crowdsourced oral histories by The 1947 Partition Archive. The 1947 Partition Archive has preserved over 9,500 memories from this time including witnesses from all ethnic, religious, and other communities and across all socio-economic levels affected by the Partition of British India in 1947. Today, Partition is no longer a forgotten memory, and its witnesses' plight is being heard globally through the sharing of thousands of witness accounts.

Today, we remember and honor this history to create a more empathetic and just world, to ensure history is not forgotten, and to recognize the intergenerational trauma families have experienced due to mass communal violence and political polarization in the wake of the end of British colonialism. These important lessons can help us understand other catastrophic events in history, as well as the impacts of political divides and extreme polarization in our own communities, so that we may prevent such violence in the future. With an increase in communal or ideological intolerance and zealotry felt globally, ongoing threats of climate change and political instability, it has never been a more important time to honor this work and those who have borne witness to this part of our human history.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

NONE

CONTACT PERSON:

Councilmember Ben Bartlett	510-981-7130
James Chang	510-981-7131

## **1947 PARTITION REMEMBRANCE DAY**

Let us make this day, a day of remembrance of the 1947 Partition of India:

WHEREAS, We remember that what should have been a moment of crowning triumph after years of anti-colonial struggle in South Asia was indelibly marred by unimaginable violence and bloodshed with up to two million people losing their lives in the most horrific of manners; and

WHEREAS, We remember that the 1947 Partition of the Indian subcontinent into the independent nations of Hindu-majority India and Muslim-majority Pakistan was accompanied by one of the largest mass migrations in human history and communal as well as political violence on a scale that had seldom been seen before; and

WHEREAS, We remember the 1947 Partition as a world-historical event and a life-shaping experience for 14 million people who were displaced, many directly into poverty as they left their homes in the middle of the night never to return to them again, and victims of unprecedented sectarian and communal violence; and

WHEREAS, We remember that the divided landscape bore silent witness to trains laden with dead, decapitated bodies, limbs strewn along the sides of roads, and wanton rape and pillaging; and

WHEREAS, We remember that there was nothing that could have prepared the approximately 14 million refugees for this nightmare and a sudden, complete breakdown of governance; and

WHEREAS, We recognize that the Berkeley-based 1947 Partition Archive is devoting its work to serving these refugee witnesses and others, some of whom are Berkeley residents along with their families; and

WHEREAS, We remember the millions who died or were displaced for who they were, how they may have worshiped, what they believed, and who they loved. Victims included Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, Christians, Parsis, Jews, Dalits, Buddhists and others; and

WHEREAS, We remember, to preserve this shared history of anguish, to keep it vivid and real, so that hatred, persecution, and prejudice can be combated and contained; and

WHEREAS, We remember the Partition survivors and their families who live in Berkeley, the Bay Area and the United States, so that we can educate others on the history of Partition and create a more empathetic and historically informed world; and

WHEREAS, We remember those who survived immeasurable, atrocious acts, and today are living witnesses for younger generations who may not know their history; and

WHEREAS, We remember this is the 74th Anniversary of Partition, and by memorializing the past we help give ourselves the resolve we need to prepare for tomorrow's challenges including displacement and migration brought on by ongoing threats of climate change and political instability.

**THEREFORE BE IT HEREBY PROCLAIMED**, that we the people of Berkeley will always remember the suffering victims, their families, and always treasure the survivors who are still with us in Berkeley. We join in the worldwide chorus of hope and activism to say never again and to proclaim:

**June 3, 2021 AS PARTITION REMEMBRANCE DAY IN BERKELEY**

