

Submitted by Councillors **MM23.3.3**  
Karygiannis and Wong-Tam



December 14, 2016

Dear Colleague:

There are over one million three hundred thousand Chinese Canadians living in Canada and over five hundred thousand in the Toronto area.

We are seeking your support of Motion MM23.3 which we have proposed calling for the recognition of the Nanjing Massacre. The Motion reads as follows:

***Recommendation:***

*Councillor Jim Karygiannis, seconded by Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam, recommends that:*

- 1. City Council recognize the Nanjing Massacre as a crime against humanity and to honour the memory of the men, women and children who died.*

***Summary:***

On December 13, 1937, the Imperial Japanese army captured Nanjing, the capital city of the Republic of China during the Second Sino-Japanese War. The Imperial Japanese Army conducted a six-week campaign where an estimated 300,000 people, including young children were tortured, raped, and murdered.

This dark period in history is seldom discussed, yet the legacy of these atrocities live on in the memories of survivors and it continues to have a deeply felt impact in many Asian societies, including Toronto's diverse Asian communities.

In 2008, the Toronto District School Board, the largest school board in North America, passed a unanimous motion encouraging the teaching of the atrocities of the Nanking Massacre and Japanese Military Sexual Slavery in their schools.

The City of Toronto can play a key role in raising public awareness by affirming its recognition of the Nanking Massacre, as a crime against humanity, in honour of the men, women and children who died.

Honouring the individuals that lost their lives and educating the public of these atrocities is necessary to promote understanding and peace. Toronto is home to Canada's largest Chinese and Asian communities, some of whom survived the Japanese occupation of China during WWII and recall the atrocities that took place during this period.

Thank you for your consideration of this Motion.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James Karygiannis".

Jim Karygiannis  
Councillor Ward 39

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kristyn Wong-Tam".

Kristyn Wong-Tam  
Councillor Ward 27

To Whom It May Concern,

The Nanjing Massacre was, without a doubt, one of the most horrific atrocities of the modern era. In a span of 6 short weeks, beginning on December 13, 1937, the Japanese Imperial Army rained death and destruction upon the people of Nanjing (called "Nanking" at the time). According to the judgment of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East, over 200,000 civilians and soldiers alike were slaughtered, tens of thousands of innocent women – some mere girls – were brutally and repeatedly raped, and entire city blocks were burned to the ground. The city, its people, and the world itself could never be the same after this unthinkable series of war crimes.

17<sup>th</sup> Century political philosopher and jurist, Samuel von Pufendorf, whose ideas influenced generations of political theorists and advocates for justice, once wrote, "More inhumanity has been done by man himself than any other of nature's causes." Although regional in scope, the horrors of the Nanjing Massacre extend far beyond the boundaries of this city, far beyond the borders of China, far beyond relations between China and Japan. Indeed, this massacre has important lessons for all of humanity. It reminds us all that humans are all too capable of cruelty, that "man's inhumanity to man" is ever lingering on our historical horizons, that we must never forget that we, too, may one day be victims or aggressors in similar attacks. The members of the Japanese Imperial Army who committed these acts were not exceptional, they were not inhuman, they were not monsters. They were, in fact, all too human. To think that we are immune or protected from such tendencies is not only erroneous, it is dangerous. Forgetting history and denying the capacity humans sadly bear for the monstrous is the surest way to ensure such actions are repeated in the present or future.

The victims and survivors of this massacre are yet to feel the full scope of justice. There are some in Japan who would deny that these acts ever took place, despite a wealth of evidence, including eye-witness testimony from the Westerners who established an International Safety Zone in Nanjing, taking in thousands of refugees and trying – sometimes in vain – to save them from this fate. These Westerners wrote daily accounts of atrocities, sending these to Japanese military leaders, begging in desperation that the slaughter, raping, and burning cease. We have these letters, as well as several of the personal diaries of these brave individuals. Through them, we often get an hour-by-hour report of the events of the Nanjing Massacre. There is no serious historian in the world who takes seriously the claim that the massacre is a fabrication. Yet, the fact that there are those who suggest this at all illustrates why a show of support is so critically important. If we do not work against such tendencies, we risk burying this history; burying history ultimately allows that history to re-animate, zombie-like, spreading the infection of inhumanity and allowing it to flourish once again. We cannot and must not allow this to happen.

It is because of this awareness of history, and a deep need to ensure that it does not repeat itself, that I whole-heartedly support the recognition of the Nanjing Massacre in the City of Toronto. With Toronto's large Asian – and particularly Chinese – population, there are residents in this city who were directly affected by the events of 1937-1938. Some are survivors themselves; others lost parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, family friends. Moreover, while there is great awareness of the Second World War in a European and North American context, many Canadians and Torontonians know virtually nothing about the Second World War in an Asian context, including the Nanjing Massacre, which is considered one of the early events in this global conflict. This lack of awareness contributes to the injustices done, and to the threat of losing this history. An official recognition of this event will contribute immensely to a greater understanding of the Second World War among Torontonians and Canadians. As legislation moves forward for an official day of commemoration of the Nanjing Massacre at the provincial level, with MPP Soo Wong's bill ("Nanjing Massacre Day of Commemoration Act, 2016) passing its second reading with unanimous and passionate consent among all three parties, the City of Toronto should take the lead in supporting such efforts, showing its Asian and Chinese communities that we, as a city, support them and believe in securing justice for them, at long last, and showing our strong commitment to ensuring that such inhumanity stops with us. With this, I offer my full support of the motion being forwarded by City Councillor Jim Karygiannis.

In the spirit of peace, justice, and reconciliation,



Dr. Joseph Y.K. Wong  
C. M., M.D., D. Sc. (Hon.)  
Founder and Chair, ALPHA Education

*Additional Background  
Material is on file with  
the City Clerk*