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Zead-al-Malum was born in 1954 in the District of Tangail, Bangladesh. He successfully completed his institutional education in 1978 and was awarded bachelor's degree, master's and post-graduate degree from the University of Dhaka. In 1979 he was duly enrolled as an advocate. Since 1981, Mr. Al-Malum is practicing very regularly and successfully, building a remarkable reputation at the Supreme Court of Bangladesh, working as an advocate in the field of constitutional and criminal law etc. As a law researcher, he has contributed to the development of personal law/family law. He has drafted many laws in this field, thus contributing in a valuable manner towards ensuring children's rights; the rights of the aboriginal people; labor and garment workers' rights, and the rights of agricultural workers. As a researcher, he has drafted a uniform Family Code, deliberately structured in conformity with UHRD, CRCH and CEDOW. He joined and contributed to many workshops, seminars and symposia in the country and abroad. Further, he has been the General Secretary of Bangladesh's Democratic Lawyers Association (DLAB). Presently, he is the Vice President of the national affiliate of IADL, an international lawyers' organ with consultative status at the UNO/UNHRC. He is also the Treasurer of SAARC-Lawyers, Bangladesh Chapter. Mr. Al-Malum has participated in many international lawyers' conferences and congresses. Lastly, in 2009 he participated in IADL's International Congress XXVII held in Hanoi, Vietnam. On the basis of his proposal, the Vietnam Congress adopted a resolution in support of Bangladesh's initiative towards the trial of perpetrators of 1971 war crimes, i.e. committed during Bangladesh's liberation war. The trials are being held under the country's International Crimes Tribunal Act, 1973. He has conducted the people's inquiry commission as one of the secretariat's member. He is a bonafide freedom fighter and human rights' activist. He has extensively worked on national awareness capacity building, and on knowledge, transfer and legal empowerment in the core area of international crimes in Bangladesh. In March of 2010, he was appointed prosecutor of the ICT-BD, a domestic tribunal with the power to adjudicate international crimes. Since then he has helped build the Tribunal's effective investigation agency and prosecution agency. As head of the prosecution team he conducts key ICT-cases.

DR. TUREEN AFROZ

Tureen Afroz is an Associate Professor at the School of Law, BRAC University, Bangladesh. She has studied Ph.D. at the Monash University, Australia; LL.M. at the University of Western Sydney, Australia; and LL.B. (Hons.) at the University of London, UK. She has also studied M. A. in economics at the Delhi School of Economics, India and B. A. (Hons.) Economics at the Lady Shri Ram College for Women of the University of Delhi, India. She has been admitted as an Advocate of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh and a Barrister and Solicitor of the NSW Supreme Court of Australia. Tureen has published her academic research works in various national and international refereed journals. Her areas of research interest include international humanitarian law, law and development, law and society, law and economics, international business law, securities market law, investment law, energy regulatory law and consumers' protection law. She is the Chief Editor of the *Journal of Law and Development*. Tureen's publication include the book, *Genocide, War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity in Bangladesh: Trial under International Crimes (Tribunals) Act, 1973* (published in Dhaka by the Forum for Secular Bangladesh and Trial of War Criminals of 1971 in 2010). Tureen is also the Member-Secretary of the *Platform for Supporting International Crimes Tribunal, Dhaka*.

SHAHRIAR KABIR : A HUMANIST

By Prof. Ajoy Roy

Shahriar Kabir, a reputed freelance journalist in Bangladesh, a documentary filmmaker, a writer, a humanist, and above all- an uncompromising human rights activist, was born in Dhaka, Bangladesh on 20th November 1950. Mr. Kabir after completing his schooling in 1966 with Higher Secondary Certificate in 1968 and formal education in 1971 he began his career as a journalist since 1972. As a freedom fighter he participated in the liberation war of Bangladesh against the Pakistani occupation force in 1971.

As Shahriar was exposing himself as an humanist and activist against human rights violation through his writings exposing the ugly desire and design of seizing power by fundamentalist forces to turn secular-liberal democratic Bangladesh into a theocratic state based on fundamental Islamic principles he became one of the principal target of the Islamite force in Bangladesh. He is considered as one of the champion of the civil society movement for trial of war criminals. So far he has written 20 books on necessity of the trial of the perpetrators of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

He is a relentless fighter against any form of minority deprivation, discrimination and atrocities. He became more active and courageous in defending and upholding the cause of minorities when the victorious armed cadres of the 4-party alliance were persecuting the minorities following October General election of 2001. He with his vigilance eye extensively toured various parts of the affected areas, collected data of minority repression for future documentation. He was arrested twice first time in November 2001 and 2nd time in December 2002 by the BNP-Jamat led govt. Humanists in Bangladesh built up a movement inside Bangladesh and mobilized international pressure for his release. The Amnesty International termed him 'Prisoner of Conscience' (AI Report on Bangladesh: Attacks on members of the Hindu minority December 2001, AI Index ASA 13/006/2001).

Shahriar Kabir, a noted documentary filmmaker earned fame for his documentary films on genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes committed during the war of liberation of Bangladesh in 1971 and also on rise of Islamic militancy entitled 1) "Cry for Justice", 2) "SOS", 3) "Songs of the Freedom Struggle", 4) "War Crimes 71", 5) "Portrait of Jihad" and 6) "A Friend in Difficult Times".

Shahriar Kabir has edited white papers in three volume (2700 pages) titled '500 days of Communal Persecution in Bangladesh' published in October 2006. So far he wrote 80 books both fiction and non-fiction mainly on socio political problems focusing human rights. He has received several awards from home and abroad including Bangla Academy award, the highest one of Bangladesh for major contribution to the Bengali literature.

At present he is the Executive President of "Forum for Secular Bangladesh & Trial of War Criminals of 1971", Convener of "Platform for Supporting International Crimes Tribunal" and General Secretary of "South Asian People's Union against Fundamentalism & Communalism". He has visited nearly 40 countries and attended more than 100 international conferences/seminars/workshop in different countries mainly on human rights.

DR. PETER CUSTERS

Peter Custers holds an M.A. in international law from Leiden University, the Netherlands (1970). He subsequently followed a three-year course in international relations at the Johns Hopkins University, in Washington D.C.. He obtained his Ph.D. in sociology from the Catholic University, Nijmegen, the Netherlands (1995).

In the first part of the 1970s, after Bangladesh gained its political independence, Custers gathered first-hand experience in grassroots' peasant organizing, while stationed in Bangladesh as leading Dutch journalist, writing for both Dutch and international newspapers. He was incarcerated under the military dictatorship that came to power in late 1975, and faced a kangaroo trial in September 1976, emanating in his deportation 'for life'.

Over the last twenty years, Custers has led or helped initiate a variety of international campaigns on Southern causes, while lobbying actively towards the European Parliament and other Brussels-based European institutions. He notably helped organize two major international conferences which in 1993 and 1996 respectively were held in the European Parliament around a highly controversial World Bank-led 'flood protection'-scheme, i.e. the '*Flood Action Plan, Bangladesh*' (FAP).

In 2007/2008, Custers was an affiliated fellow, researching on religious tolerance and the history of Bangladesh, at the International Institute for Asian Studies, Leiden, the Netherlands. In 2010, he was granted an award as Human Rights' Defender and Friend of Bangladesh, by the country's current government. Presently, he is working as Special European Correspondent of the Bengali language daily *Prothom Alo*, and as International Columnist of the English language newspaper *The Daily Star*, Bangladesh.

Besides being a committed lobbyist and journalist, Custers is also a theoretical economist. His book '*Capital Accumulation and Women's Labor in Asian Economies*' (1997) is shortly being republished (Monthly Review Press, New York, 2012). His original theoretical study '*Questioning Globalized Militarism*' (Tulika, New Delhi/Merlin Press, London, 2007) covers both the production and exportation of arms and nuclear production in its broadest sense (i.e. civilian plus military). The study was prefaced and hailed for its innovative significance by the world-renowned Egyptian economist Samir Amin.

The War Crimes' Issue, Bangladesh

Dr. Peter Custers

Bangladesh's issue of the trial of war criminals refers to the adjudication of persons who were involved in the mass murders executed by or on behalf of the Pakistani army during Bangladesh's liberation war of 1971. The issue has been pending for long in Bangladeshi politics. It in fact needs being addressed in any human rights' report on contemporary Bangladesh. During the 9 month's liberation war now 34 years back, hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of people were indiscriminately killed. The scale of human rights violations was such, that various observers spoke of a 'genocide' of the Bengali people. These violations were a part of the last-ditch attempt by the Pakistani army to re-subjugate the people of East Bengal. However, the killings, tortures and other forms of cruelty were not only executed by regular soldiers of the Pakistani army, but also by a section of Muslim politicians who opted to collaborate with the forces of occupation. Whereas the overwhelming majority of the population of East Bengal during the 1970 parliamentary elections had clearly indicated they stood for national self-determination and for secular politics, - a small but significant section of politicians favoured the 'integrity' of the Pakistani state with Islam as state-religion, and such at all costs.

In order to understand clearly how the history of 1971 is interlinked with contemporary politics and the violations of human rights in Bangladesh today, we need to take a brief look at the civilian and para-military structures which were devised in support of the Pakistani occupation. After the first wave of mass slaughter, which had started on March the 25th, Tikka Khan, the chief of the Pakistani army in East Bengal, on April the 4th met some 12 politicians, including the Jamati leader Golam Azam. The meeting paved the way for the building of so-called '*Shanti*' ('Peace') Committees, members of which not only helped the Pakistani army by identifying civilian sympathisers with the nationalist cause, but also engaged in killing civilians themselves. Subsequently, in June, after proclamation of a specific ordinance, a special para-military force was established, termed '*Razzakar Bahini*'. These razakkars, mainly recruited from among university students, and from among students and teachers of the religious schools, the *madrassahs*, plunged into action without much training. Rather than engaging in combat with freedom fighters, they were primarily employed to terrorize the population. But perhaps the most notorious instruments created in 1971 were the various death squads, i.e. groups such as the *Badar Bahini* which operated semi-clandestinely, and which picked up, tortured and summarily executed intellectuals suspected of being nationalist-minded.

Now, whereas there were several communal and fundamentalist-oriented parties that agreed to help the Pakistani army in building the above mentioned civilian and para-military structures, the political party that played the most crucial role in terrorising and murdering civilians was the *Jamat-Islam*. Leading politicians of the *Jamat-Islam* joined the Shanti Committees, and leaders of the *Jamat Islam*, and of its student wing, then called the Islami Chattro Sangha, also commanded the mass para-military force, the *Razzakars*, and the death squads such as the *Badar Bahini*. According to several investigations implemented to document the given history, - the *Jamat Islam* helped Rao Forman, a Pakistani army officer, in drafting his policy of killing nationalist intellectuals. Further, the collaborationist role of the *Jamat Islam* was shaped quite openly. Party-leaders spoke out publicly in favour the Pakistani army's operations of mass slaughter, they openly defended the formation of the *Razzakar Bahini*, and publicly championed the formation of the *Badar Bahini* in the later part of 1971.

Thus, the party's role during the liberation war in part has been reconstructed from news-reports published in Dhaka dailies in 1971. Leaders of the *Jamat Islam* were also sworn in as Ministers of the collaborationist cabinet. They included Abbas Ali Khan, who was to become a key leader of the *Jamat Islam* after its revival in independent Bangladesh.

Some words must be devoted to the death squad of the *Badar Bahini* in particular, since this is of special significance in assessing the relevance of the issue of war criminals today. As indicated, shortly before liberation, i.e. in the weeks preceding the surrender of the Pakistani army in December of 1971, members of the *Badar Bahini*, in the capital as well as in different towns of East Bengal, abducted hundreds, if not thousands of intellectuals from their homes. The abductors were masked and wore camouflage dresses. The victims were blindfolded, they were executed, often after brutal tortures, and their bodies were thrown into mass graves. These murders, thus, in no way can be said to have been killings that were the unfortunate side-events of the military confrontations between the Pakistani army and the liberation fighters: they undoubtedly need to be designated as *war crimes*. Although efforts to document these crimes have been problematic to say the least, - according to the well-known book which has comprehensively recorded the names and roles of 1971 collaborators (see resources below), the *Badar Bahini* was essentially an extension of the *Jamat Islam*'s eastwile students' wing, and its principal commanders belonged to the same organisation. They included Matiur Rahman Nizami, who was the *Islami Chattro Sangha*'s vice-general secretary, and Ali Ahsan Mujahid, who reportedly was both a member of the *Sangha*'s central committee, and a city leader of the *Jamat Islam*.

The story regarding the war crimes, regarding the *Jamat's Islam's* responsibility for the mass murders committed during the 1971 liberation war, has lost none of its actuality today, nearly 34 years since the end of Bangladesh' liberation war. The process of the party's 'rehabilitation' and re-integration into Bangladeshi politics has surely started long way back. It in a sense started during the period of the first government of independent Bangladesh, when thousands of war criminals were released from jail, apparently under international pressure. It was accelerated during the prolonged period of military dictatorship, when the party was allowed to resume legal activities. But it reached a new point, when leaders of the *Jamat Islam* who have never repented for the role they played in 1971, were incorporated into the coalition government of Khaleda Zia, which assumed office after the elections of October, 2001. Two above mentioned leaders of the *Badar Bahini* were included. Matiur Rahman Nizami became Minister of Industry, and Ali Ahsan Mujahid became Social Welfare Minister in Khaleda Zia's cabinet. A third reported war criminal who obtained a key post is Salauddin Kader Chowdhury, who became Khaleda Zia's political secretary. Clearly, then, the issue of the 1971 war crimes needs to be taken on board, when assessing the history of, and the background to, the politics of violence and intimidation in Bangladesh today.

(Statement prepared at the request of the European Commission's Bangladesh Desk Officer, 2005, on behalf of *BOOM*, the Dutch Coalition of Developmental and Human Rights' Organizations concerned with Bangladesh, November 7, 2005)

Resources:

Shariar Kabear (editor), *Ekattorer Ghatok Jamate Islamir Ateet O Borteman* (The Past and Present of the Executioners of Seventy-One, the *Jamat Islam* - Mukti Juddho Chetona Bikash Kendra, Dhaka, February 1989); Mukti Juddho Chetona Bikash Kendra (Centre for the Development of the Consciousness Regarding the Liberation War)(1987), *Ekattorer Ghatak O Dalalra. Ke Kothae* (The Executioners and Collaborators of Nineteen Seventy One. Who is Where - Dhaka).



EUROPEAN UNION
DELEGATION TO BANGLADESH

Dhaka, 9 October 2011

European Union Heads of Missions letter to mark the European Day against the Death Penalty and the World Day against the Death Penalty - 10 October, 2011

On 10 October, the European Union observes the World Day and the European Day Against the Death Penalty.

The European Union reaffirms its absolute opposition to the use of the death penalty. The European Union is convinced that its abolition is an integral part of respect for human rights and protection of human dignity.

The death penalty concerns everyone's right to life. The state, with its particular responsibility as the ultimate guarantor of all persons' human rights, should not deprive anyone of his or her life.

The European Union encourages all measures taken with a view to abolishing the death penalty. The European Union further recalls Resolution 65/206, which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly at its 71st plenary session in December 2010, and which *inter alia* calls upon all states in the world to establish a moratorium on executions with a view to abolishing the death penalty.

We hope that all members of the UN including Bangladesh will take the actions which the Resolution calls for, and thereby contribute more to the development of fundamental rights and human dignity in the world.



Bangladesh: Stop Harassment of Defense at War Tribunal ^[1]

Lawyers and Witnesses at ICT Report Threats

November 2, 2011

Recommend

Tweet 53

^[2]

(New York) – The Bangladeshi government should investigate threats to defense lawyers and witnesses in cases at the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) and take steps to prevent them, Human Rights Watch said today. The ICT was set up to provide justice for victims of atrocities in the 1971 war of independence.

Lawyers representing the accused before the ICT have reported being harassed by state officials and threatened with arrests. Several witnesses and an investigator working for the defense have also reported harassment by police and threats for cooperating with the defense.

“Harassment of defense counsel and witnesses further tarnishes a flawed process,” said [Brad Adams](#) ^[3], Asia director at Human Rights Watch. “If the Bangladeshi government wants these trials to be taken seriously it must ensure that the rights of the accused are fully respected. That means making sure that lawyers and witnesses don’t face threats or coercion.”

Human Rights Watch has learned of threats made against a leading lawyer on the defense team of Delwar Hossain Sayedee, whose trial on charges of crimes against humanity was scheduled to begin at the end of September 2011 but has been delayed until November 20. The barrister, who wishes to remain anonymous, was warned by reliable and senior sources to stay away from his office. He was told that false charges were being prepared against him in order to arrest him and thus prevent him from participating in Sayedee’s defense.

Another senior lawyer and a prominent member of the Jamaat-e-Islamiya party, Abdur Razzaq, faces an arrest warrant on charges relating to riots in Dhaka which took place in September. Razzaq, who was in Europe at the time of the riots, has been granted bail. He is expected to play a leading role in defending several of the accused. Human Rights Watch has learned from credible sources that ICT prosecutors are also seeking to formulate war crimes charges against Razzaq and that the current arrest warrant is intended to make it difficult for him to participate fully in preparing the defense.

Human Rights Watch has also learned that a key defense witness has been arrested. A journalist who was conducting research for the defense has been threatened with arrest and has since gone into hiding in fear for his life.

A further nine defense witnesses are facing criminal charges based on complaints against them filed with the police by a prosecution witness. Some prosecution witnesses have told defense counsel that they were coerced into providing statements to the prosecution and were warned against cooperating with the defense.

Human Rights Watch urged the government to investigate these cases to ensure they were not motivated to deny the accused a full and fair chance to answer the case against them.

“The conduct of these trials will tell Bangladeshis and the world a great deal about the justice system in Bangladesh,” said Adams. “The government needs to take swift action to make sure threats and harassment end.”

Human Rights Watch has long called for the ICT to establish an effective victim and witness program which would ensure protection for both prosecution and defense witnesses. Changes to the ICT rules in June, which authorized the tribunal to ensure the physical well-being of victims and witnesses, were a welcome improvement, but did not go far enough, Human Rights Watch said.

Human Rights Watch repeated its call for the establishment of a Defense Office, similar to those established in international criminal tribunals. A Defense Office would help ensure that the core principle of “equality of arms” for both sides is recognized, and thus would go a long way to establishing fairness in ICT proceedings.

“We have made many detailed proposals for reforms that would ensure these trials are fair, and seen as fair,” said Adams. “Fundamental to a fair trial is respect for the rights of the accused.”

Source URL: <http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/11/02/bangladesh-stop-harassment-defense-war-tribunal>

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Bangladesh: Unique Opportunity for Justice for 1971 Atrocities ^[1]

Further Steps Needed to Ensure Fair Trials

May 18, 2011

Recomendar

Tweet

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[2]

(New York) - The Bangladeshi government's effort to bring to trial those responsible for atrocities during the struggle for independence in 1971 is an important and long overdue step to achieve justice for victims, Human Rights Watch said today. In a [letter](#) ^[3] to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Human Rights Watch said that it strongly supports a successful legal and judicial process that is fair and impartial.

Seven people have been arrested so far under the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act, though specific charges have yet to be filed against them. Five are members of the Jamaat-e-Islamiya Party, which is broadly considered to have been against the establishment of an independent Bangladesh, and two from the main opposition Bangladesh National Party. All who have applied for bail have been denied except an 82-year-old, wheelchair-bound man, who was released into his son's custody after he surrendered his passport to guarantee that he would not flee the country.

"The Bangladeshi government has an unprecedented opportunity to hold those responsible for the 1971 atrocities to account in credible trials and, in doing so, to show it is firmly committed to the rule of law," said Brad Adams, Asia director at Human Rights Watch. "This is a complicated process with many challenges, including gathering evidence 40 years later and ensuring that the law and rules of procedure meet international standards so the trials are beyond reproach."

The 1971 war followed the victory of the East-Pakistan-based Awami League in national elections. The Pakistani government, led by the military ruler General Yahya Khan, refused to accept the results. On March 26, it began Operation Searchlight, sending troops into East Pakistan to arrest Awami League leaders and put down protests. The Pakistani army and affiliated vigilante groups embarked on a massive wave of violence, including widespread rape. Estimates of the number of people killed range from 300,000 to 3 million. As many as 10 million people were reportedly displaced and fled to neighboring India. The Indian army intervened and joined resistance forces to defeat the Pakistani army after nine months of violence. The independent state of Bangladesh emerged in December.

In response to this carnage, the new government in 1972 established special tribunals to try collaborators. In 1973 the parliament passed the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act. But trials never happened for political reasons. Bringing those responsible for the 1971 crimes to trial continues to have considerable popular support and was one of the main planks of the successful Awami League election campaign in 2008. In a concession to Pakistan, the law excludes the prosecution of Pakistani military officials and soldiers.

On a recent visit to Bangladesh, Human Rights Watch met with Law Minister Shafique Ahmed and the prosecutor of the International Crimes Tribunal, Zead al-Malun. Both said they were committed to ensuring that the tribunal meets international standards. The Law Minister welcomed suggestions from Human Rights Watch and others to improve the process. The prosecutor explained that his office has begun to collect documentary evidence and to interview potential witnesses.

"The atrocities and number of victims in Bangladesh have largely been overlooked by the rest of the world for four decades," Adams said. "It is good news that officials are open to suggestions for improvement and that investigations have started in earnest. If the government and tribunal iron out some of the problems with meeting international standards, this effort will deserve the full support of the international community."

Human Rights Watch pointed out that the government has already made some important amendments to the 1973 law. These include changing the composition of the tribunal to civilian judges instead of military judges and mandating the independence for the tribunal's judicial functions. The adoption of Rules of Procedure in 2010 allowed the tribunal to begin its work in earnest.

However, Human Rights Watch said, additional amendments to the Act and Rules are needed to ensure that trials are carried out in accordance with Bangladesh's international human rights obligations, international criminal law, and Bangladesh's constitution. While the 1973 Act was largely based on international standards at the time, international criminal law and practice have since evolved significantly. Trials before a number of international courts, including the International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, the Special Court for Sierra Leone, and the International Criminal Court, to which Bangladesh is a state party, have yielded important jurisprudence and valuable experience in handling complex cases that should be taken into account to ensure that trials before the tribunal conform with international standards.

In its letter, Human Rights Watch said these problems can be addressed by:

Amending the definition of crimes to articulate more clearly the relevant definitions of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide as they existed under domestic or international law at the time of the offense;

Amending the act to allow challenges to the constitution of the tribunal and the appointment of its members;

Amending the act and rules to ensure that the due process rights of the accused are consistent with Bangladesh's international legal obligations;

Repealing Article 47(A) of the Bangladesh Constitution to allow the accused full protection of their constitutional rights, including the right to enforce their fundamental rights under Article 44, which protects fundamental rights;

Creating an effective and well-thought-out victim and witness protection plan well ahead of the trials, to address protection and support needs before, during, and after proceedings;

Establishing a defense office to ensure that the principle of "equality of arms" between the prosecution and defense is recognized; and

Equipping prosecutors and judges with the relevant technical expertise to handle cases under the tribunal's jurisdiction in accordance with international practice.

Human Rights Watch also urged the Bangladeshi government not to use the death penalty in tribunal cases or others.

Human Rights Watch opposes the death penalty in all circumstances as an inherently cruel and unusual form of punishment and a violation of fundamental human rights and therefore recommends this penalty be removed.

"The attempt by the Bangladeshi government to create a domestic tribunal for such grave crimes could set a valuable international precedent," said Adams. "But without changes to the law and rules of procedure, the process may not meet international fair trial standards. This could result in a lack of credibility for the process in Bangladesh and internationally, which would only benefit those responsible for the horrific crimes of this period. Fortunately, the government and tribunal can fix these problems easily if they have the will."

Source URL: <http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/05/19/bangladesh-unique-opportunity-justice-1971-atrocities>

The International Crimes Tribunal Bangladesh: International Standards and Fundamental Freedoms

The International Crimes Tribunal in Dhaka, Bangladesh was originally established under the International Crimes (Tribunal) Act in 1973. It was originally conceived with the intent of prosecuting the Pakistani military and auxiliary forces, those deemed responsible for the gravest crimes committed during the struggle for liberation, in a military court. Immediately following the cessation of hostilities 195 Pakistani prisoners of war were to be put on trial. However, they were subsequently amnestied and repatriated back to Pakistan under the Shimla Pact 1972 on the understanding that they would face trial in Pakistan; they did not. The 1974 Tripartite Agreement between Bangladesh, India and Pakistan subsequently put an end to any prosecution on any side of the conflict. It was agreed by the three nations that in the interest of regional peace and stability no one would be put on trial for the crimes committed during the liberation war.

For nearly 40 years the Tribunal remained dormant until the prosecution of war crimes became the main focus of the Awami League election manifesto.¹ It is fair to say that the Awami League secured a landslide victory in the 2009 election and that this was in part due to the promise to hold those accountable for war crimes from the liberation war.

In 2009, the elected Awami League government adopted a resolution to initiate the process of prosecuting war crimes at the first session of the Ninth Parliament in 2009 to establish a civilian court, which in turn led to an amendment to the International Crimes (Tribunal) Act (IC(T)A). The International Crimes Tribunal was subsequently established in March 2010 and the judges, prosecutors and investigators were appointed by the Government of Bangladesh.

¹ Election Manifesto of Bangladesh Awami League-2008, Ninth Parliamentary Election 2008, "A Charter for Change".

To date, seven detainees have been held under provisions of the Act; all of whom are senior members of the political opposition. Five are senior members of Jamaat-e-Islami and two are senior members of the Bangladesh National Party. It is important to note that the legislative framework of the Tribunal previously did not provide for pre-charge detention. Accordingly, an amendment to the law was rushed through to legitimise, retrospectively, the pre-charge custody of suspects held in custody. This practice is indicative of the current Government's approach to filling in gaps in the legislation once an accused attempts to challenge the legality of a certain procedure or exercise his rights of due process.

Although the rhetoric of the Government of Bangladesh, largely through its Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, Shafique Ahmed, has consistently stated that the Tribunal will meet the highest international standards of fairness and transparency, it is arguable that to date this has not been the case. Further statements may be seen as to the compliance with fundamental rights and freedoms from the Prime Minister, members of the Tribunal and other government officials. It is clear that undertakings have been made to ensure that Bangladesh complies with its obligations under international law, but such representations are hollow and illusory if no practical effect is given.

The extent of the political bias of the Tribunal is evidenced by the fact that a number of the Tribunal members participated in the Peoples' Inquiry Commission (or People's Court) that prejudged these cases in the early 1990s. Indeed the current Chairman of the Tribunal is listed as a member of the Secretariat of the Commission. In these "mock trials", real people were named as suspects and following their conviction by the Commission, their effigies were burnt to signify that a sentence of death was passed. Worryingly, some of those convicted before the People's Court are now accused before the Tribunal and its Chairman giving the impression that their fate is pre-ordained. Interestingly, the report of the Commission is listed as an exhibit and forms part of the evidence in the first trial. An application for the recusal of the Chairman was brought by the Defence in October 2011 and heard before two of the remaining members of the bench in

November 2011. The two judges indicated that the decision as to whether the Chairman should step down should be left the “good conscience of the Chairman” who subsequently refused to remove himself as Chairman of the bench. On a further push by the Defence team for the Chairman to provide adequate reasoning for his decision to remain on the bench, it was ordered by the Tribunal that there was no right to challenge the composition or election of members of the bench under the Act. The Tribunal ruled, without ordering further sanction, that the request by the defence to seek reasons for the Chairman’s refusal to step down amounted to contempt of court.

The three British lawyers recruited to advise the defence wrote directly to the Chairman requesting that, in the interests of justice, he steps down. This communication was leaked to the media and the Tribunal as a result attempted to initiate disciplinary proceedings against the three British lawyers with their professional regulatory body in the United Kingdom.

The legislative framework of the Tribunal has also attracted wide spread criticism from the international community, including Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, the International Bar Association and the International Center for Transitional Justice. Following two previous visits to Dhaka in January and May 2011, the United States Ambassador-at-large for War Crimes Issues has also voiced his concerns with the process before the Tribunal, issuing a set of recommendations that he viewed were necessary in order to ensure that “trials of the International Crimes Tribunal are conducted in a manner that is just, equitable, consistent with international law and that has the maximum benefit for the people of Bangladesh”.² Ambassador Rapp’s most recent trip came in late November 2011 where he expressed his disappointment at the Tribunal for not implementing the proposed recommendations made by his office for holding the proceedings in a transparent and fair manner. More shockingly, after meeting with Ambassador Rapp, the Deputy Registrar of the Tribunal gave a press statement to the awaiting public media announcing that the US, through Ambassador Rapp, had expressed satisfaction and

² USDS, letter addressed to Hon. Dr. Dipu Moni, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Hon. Barrister, Shafique Ahmed, Minister of Law, Justice, and Parliamentary Affairs, dated 21 March 2011.

praise for the Tribunal. It was then left to Ambassador Rapp to request the fabricated media report to be removed. It is notable in this regard that the Ambassador-at-Large for War Crimes Issues is appointed by Senate and therefore the representations of his office must be considered, either directly or indirectly, to represent the position of the US Administration. Additionally, any misrepresentation of the Ambassador's official position must be regarded as a serious diplomatic issue. A number of statements were issued by members of the Government of Bangladesh, including the Prime Minister herself, that misrepresent the official position advocated by the Ambassador in his official press briefing.

The inherent difficulties of the Tribunal mainly stem from the fact that Bangladesh authorities have yet to determine the character of the Tribunal. At present the Tribunal regularly flits between being characterized as an international tribunal and a domestic court. If the authorities intend to fully employ the given title of the Tribunal as an *International* Tribunal, then a number of changes need to be implemented. Firstly, the Tribunal must recognize the complexity of the international crimes over which it has jurisdiction. In so doing, it needs to provide clearly defined elements of each crime and modes of liability, in line with the general customary international law as it stood in 1971.

On October 3, 2011 Delewar Hossain Sayedee became the first person ever to be formally charged for crimes under the 1973 Act. There are in total twenty counts brought against Sayedee; three of which are alleged acts of genocide and the remaining seventeen counts are alleged crimes against humanity ranging between murder, persecution, torture, rape and abduction. Despite a number of challenges made by the Defence with regards the lack of definitions or elements of crimes within the Act itself, the Tribunal proceeded to frame charges against Sayedee. There are indeed further problems with the indictment including, *inter alia*, the failure to separate counts with regards to a single event. For example, one count contains allegations of abduction, confinement and rape as a single charge. In other counts, there is often no specific prescribed offence under crimes against humanity so that a general allegation of crime against humanity is put forward. Indeed lack of

specificity is a running theme within the indictment. Out of twenty counts, nine have no specific date provided. Indeed four of the counts do not even attempt to provide a limited range of dates, only stating that the alleged offence occurred “during the time of Liberation War in 1971”.

The case against Sayedee is exemplary of the problems of the Tribunal. For example, following the charges being read out by the Tribunal, Sayedee was requested by the Tribunal to enter an immediate plea without seeking legal advice before so doing. This is despite the charges involving serious complex crimes of an international character and the fact it took two and half hours for the charges to be read out and entered against him. Although Sayedee attempted to seek instruction from counsel the Tribunal explicitly ordered him not to. This is further aggravated when one considers that the investigation against Sayedee was conducted under a shroud of secrecy with little or no prior disclosure and he interrogated in the absence of a lawyer. Following his interrogation, despite exercising his right to remain silent, the investigators informed the waiting media that he had confessed to genocide and crimes against humanity.

The trial of Sayedee was scheduled to commence on 30 October 2011 and will be the first trial heard before the Tribunal. Despite the year-long investigation into the case against Sayedee, the Defence were expected to complete the arduous task of conducting its own investigation and prepare for its entire case in support of Sayedee within a time frame of three weeks. This is notwithstanding the fact that the Prosecution had yet to open their case nor the fact that the alleged activities were committed over forty years ago. Further, the defence is required to disclose its entire case, including witness and exhibit list, before the prosecution has even called any evidence.

More worryingly, the Prosecution made its opening statement on 20 November 2011 despite crucial matters remaining unresolved. One of these issues includes the lack of protection for potential Defence witnesses and indeed members of the Defence legal and investigation team. Numerous reports have been received regarding the

serious harassment and intimidation of Defence witnesses willing to testify in support of Sayedee by both local police authorities and intelligence officers. In one particular instance, lead counsel for the Defence team was charged with allegedly participating in street demonstrations in Dhaka on 19 September 2011, despite him being on an official visit at the International Criminal Court at The Hague, Netherlands at the time.

Further still, the Tribunal must recognize the niche area that is international criminal law and allow for foreign counsel. This has been strongly advocated for by Ambassador Rapp in his recommendations to the Bangladesh authorities. Ambassador Rapp describes the “field of international crimes [as] highly specialised, and the participation of foreign counsel, particularly those who have litigated cases in the international and hybrid courts and tribunals, is very important to ensure that uniform or generally agreed standards are observed in practice”.³ Although the Tribunal’s Rules of Procedure does potentially allow for foreign counsel, in practice it is an empty shell of a rule. The rule allows for foreign counsel but only with consent from the Bar Council. The Bar Council has recently declared that it lacks the authority to determine whether or not foreign counsel can appear in proceedings in Bangladesh. Moreover, the current Attorney General, the Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs and the State Minister for Law, all strong advocates of the Tribunal and fierce opponents of foreign counsel, are also members of the Bar Council. This obstructed predicament is one of many examples of the Tribunal only appearing to offer fair trials.

Alternatively, if the Bangladesh authorities wish for the Tribunal to remain purely domestic in every sense then it must offer the same rights available to other Bangladeshi citizens caught up in the domestic criminal justice system. Currently, the First Constitutional Amendment, which introduced Article 47(3) and 47A, explicitly denies those detained under the 1973 Act from accessing their ordinary constitutional rights. These withdrawn constitutional rights include: the right to protection of the law, protection from ex post facto (retroactive) laws, the right to a

³ Ibid.

speedy and public trial and the ability to enforce guaranteed fundamental rights. These are all guaranteed rights afforded to suspects under both international law and Bangladesh domestic law. Recently, during the summer the Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, upon the adoption of the Fifteenth Constitutional Amendment, that extends the scope of the withdrawal of rights, proudly proclaimed that the Tribunal received constitutional protection from any form of challenge.

The Act also provides that the Bangladesh Evidence Act and the Criminal Procedure Act, both of which apply in all criminal proceedings in Bangladesh domestic courts, do not apply to proceedings under the IC(T)A. As a result the Tribunal is not bound by any technical rules of evidence and formal rules of procedure and has the authority to amend its own rules. This is of great concern when one considers two factors: firstly, the events in question occurred over 40 years ago and secondly, it allows for the Awami League Government to present their version of events of the historical conflict without challenge thereby legitimizing its own version of the story.

In both characterizations, Bangladesh must adhere to its international obligations as state party to the International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights and afford the detainees the minimum rights guaranteed under the Covenant. These must not only be theoretical rights but actually implemented in all stages of the proceedings, from pre-trial to appeal, and available in practice without discrimination. For example, although the Act provides for the right to an impartial and independent tribunal, in reality this is obstructed by the rule that prevents any challenge, on the basis of genuine bias or conflict of interest concerning the appointment of members of the Tribunal, including the appointment of its Chairman. As a result, for example, a challenge to the Chairman's involvement in the People's Court, an obvious bias challenge, is denied from even being heard. Ambassador Rapp, in his recent visit to Dhaka, made the point that such a challenge should be heard by a higher court.

It is of equal importance that the right to freely express one's views in Bangladesh and criticize certain practices if they are deemed to be in breach of certain norms and standards. Such criticisms, in a developed democratic system, should not attract

the fear of charges of contempt or sedition. A mature system embraces public debate over issues of importance. There has been a growing tendency to label any criticism of the Tribunal and its practices as seditious. Lawyers, journalists and members of the opposition political parties have been repeatedly threatened with criminal charges for requesting that the Government complies with its international obligations and implements Ambassador Rapp's recommendations. This is indeed a deeply worrying development.

Bringing an end to impunity is a worthy cause to pursue and one that the US, through its specially appointed Ambassador-at-Large for War Crimes Issues, must spearhead. However it is clear from the abovementioned cause that the purpose of the Tribunal is not to fairly and transparently end impunity. Rather it is continuously faced with criticism of merely being a political tool used at whim to target political opponents of the Awami League Government.

The targeting of political opponents is relentless in Bangladesh and remains to be the main source of political instability in Bangladesh. The international community, with the US at the helm, must address this matter in order to protect international standards in the South Asia region. Bangladesh is a flourishing state and a State Party to a number of international human right conventions, including the Rome Statute for the International Criminal Court. It therefore has obligations in this regard to adhere to and moreover, with the right attention and work, could be held as an example of an exemplary judicial system to regional neighbors including Cambodia, Burma and Sri Lanka.

It needs to be recognized at this juncture that there is a general obligation under international law to bring an end to impunity and therefore it is unquestionable that Bangladesh has an obligation to bring justice to victims on all sides of the conflict. However, there is equally an obligation that any process the Government implements is done with full respect for international norms and fundamental freedoms and without discrimination. If the Government of Bangladesh is either unwilling or

unable to meet its international obligations then it is the responsibility of the international community to intervene.

Toby M. Cadman

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'T. Cadman', with a small green mark above the 'd'.

London, 12 December 2011



People's Republic of Bangladesh
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Segunbagicha, Dhaka

UK to deepen overall cooperation with Bangladesh

Dhaka, 15 Jan 2012

Dhaka, 15 Jan. 2012: The visiting British Secretary of State Andrew Mitchell praised Bangladesh for her leadership in global Climate Change deliberations and assured of expanding development cooperation from the next year, during her meeting with Foreign Minister Dr. Dipu Moni. He said that that would make the DFID programme in Bangladesh, one of the largest British assistance programmes globally.

Acknowledging UK as one of the key bilateral development and trade partners, the Foreign Minister lauded the British leadership in global Climate Change negotiations and elaborated Bangladesh's role at COP 17 in Durban, particularly at the preceding Second Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF). She said, in order to strengthen democracy and rule of law as also to ensure human rights in Bangladesh, the present Government has taken numerous steps, including operationalisation of the National Human Rights Commission and the Right to Information Commission. She apprised Andrew Mitchell that the trials under the War Crimes Tribunal is being conducted maintaining transparency, objectivity and international standard, and that due process of law is being followed.

Andrew Mitchell also expressed satisfaction at the manner in which the engagement between UK and Bangladesh has been expanding bilaterally as also within the Commonwealth. He said that he is visiting to secure a first-hand understanding of the Climate Change dimensions, the complexities as also the possible solutions. It is in that direction, he said, he plans to visit some of the localities in the cyclone-hit southern districts in Bangladesh.

He described the development cooperation with Bangladesh evolving as a balanced one, with concentration on support to private sector led manufacturing, basic services, climate change, governance, education, especially girls education.



People's Republic of Bangladesh
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Segunbagicha, Dhaka

Hon'ble Foreign Minister Dr. Dipu Moni, MP continued her interaction with politicians and media in UK on a range of bilateral issues

London, 16 Dec 2011

In the morning, she chaired the commemorative event at the Bangladesh High Commission to UK on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of our Victory Day. In her speech, while recalling the contribution made and support extended by the British people and the Government as well as the Diaspora in UK, she said that in recent times, certain quarters were up against launching smear campaign over the 1971 War and the genocide carried out by the occupation forces and their local collaborators. She stated, at a time the work on the War Crimes Tribunal had been advancing, organized efforts were being made to confuse people, at home and abroad, even contesting the genocide figure of three million. She urged all to project the truth at every possible opportunity and said that UNHCR attested that the Bangladesh genocide had been the most gruesome genocide in the history.

Later, she joined a special BBC World Talk Show 'Rendezvous with Zeinab Badawai', which was joined by famous British scientist Richard Dawkins and the celebrated actress Michelle Yeoh. At the show, she articulated strength and evolution of Bangladesh society, incremental role of women and role of Sufism-tempered Islam in Bangladesh.

She also spoke to the Guardian on the challenges faced by Bangladesh in the wake of Climate Change; the staggering costs resulting from impact over agriculture, livestock, fisheries, public health. On the outcome of the COP 17 at Durban, she reiterated the concerns of the climate-vulnerable countries like Bangladesh over timely conclusion of a binding text. She elaborated that in spite of numerous limitations, Bangladesh had taken various steps at the national level pertaining to adaptation and mitigation of climate change impacts. She underscored that the developed world and the major emitting countries need to demonstrate their seriousness at Rio+20 next year.

Earlier, on the 15th, during the day, at the invitation of the King's College in London, she addressed the students and the faculty on 'Why Bangladesh matters to the world?', together with Hasanul Haq Inu, MP and Baroness Pola Uddin. She engaged in an interaction with them on different aspects of contemporary Bangladesh politics and society.

Throughout the day, the Foreign Minister also met a range of British politicians and discussed issues of mutual interest. In the evening, she met the US civil rights leader Rev. Jesse Jackson, Jacqueline Jackson and Rt. Hon. Kieth Vaz, Chair of the Select Committee of Home Affairs of the House of Commons, at a dinner.



People's Republic of Bangladesh
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Segunbagicha, Dhaka

US Ambassador-at-Large for War Crimes Issues Stephen J Rapp calls on Foreign Minister Dr Dipu Moni, MP

Dhaka, 02 May 2011

US Ambassador-at-Large for War Crimes Issues Stephen J Rapp called on Foreign Minister Dr Dipu Moni, MP today. During the meeting they discussed various issues of bilateral interest including the war crimes tribunal which topped the agenda.

Terming the meetings with the Judges, Prosecutors and Investigators of the International Crimes Tribunal Bangladesh very fruitful Ambassador Rapp expressed satisfaction at the progress of the trial process. He also expressed his optimism that the trial will be a fair one and will meet the international standard. During the discussions, he emphasized, among others, on the importance of the protection of the victims and the witnesses. Acknowledging the fact that each country's experiences are unique and varied, he also suggested benefiting from the international experiences of trials of war crimes and crimes against humanity. Ambassador Rapp indicated of the possible assistance in terms of expertise and financial resources from the US side which can help the trial process run efficiently. He mentioned that US is deeply interested in the process of war crimes trial in Bangladesh.

Dr Dipu Moni reiterated the Government's firm commitment to a fair and impartial trial of the war crimes of international standard. She stressed that the issue has been taken on popular demand and the country is eagerly waiting to see the painful chapter is closed and the long lasting culture of immunity and impunity is ended through delivery of justice to the victims of the war crimes. The Foreign Minister mentioned that the Government would appreciate receiving support from the international community including the US to ensure the highest standard of trial process.

This is second visit by the US Envoy to Bangladesh to discuss the issue of war crimes tribunal. Last time he visited Bangladesh in January and held meetings with the Foreign Minister, Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister, Judges, Prosecutors and Investigators of the ICT-B and the Defence Counsels.

Foreign Minister's message on the 26 March: the historic Independence and National Day of BangladeshDhaka, 26 Mar 2011

**Message**

Today is the historic Independence and National Day of Bangladesh. Forty years ago, on this day, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the Father of the Nation declared Bangladesh an independent and sovereign country. This declaration marked the culmination of our epic struggle for an independent entity. On this great Day, I extend my warmest felicitations and greetings to all Bangladesh nationals living at home and abroad.

I recall with profound respect our undisputed leader Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, our four national leaders, Sayed Nazrul Islam, Tajuddin Ahamad, M. Mansur Ali, A.H.M Kamaruzzaman who steered our heroic war of liberation. I pay deep tributes to the valiant freedom fighters and the martyrs whose sacrifices have led us to our independence. I also salute those brave women, the biranganas, who were subjected to heinous form of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Since our independence in 1971, Bangladesh has evolved significantly. We have established a tolerant, pluralistic and egalitarian society, an inclusive democracy and gained recognition from the world community. Bangladesh today is one of the 11 emerging economies in the world, after Brazil, Russia, India, and China (BRIC). Bangladesh is a role model for fighting poverty and extremism, empowering women, disaster management and in coping with the challenges posed by global climate change. For more than two decades, Bangladesh remains a frontline contributor to the UN peacekeeping missions across the globe.

After the historic December elections in 2008, which brought the democratic and secular forces to office with sweeping majority of the Parliament, Bangladesh is now witnessing rapid transformation under the dynamic leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Our country is making remarkable strides in various sectors. Its impressive achievement particularly in the social sector continues to receive recognition in the international community. The winning of MDG Award by the Hon'ble Prime Minister during the 65th UNGA

for achieving targeted reduction in infant mortality is a testimony in this regard. The Hon'ble Prime Minister announced Vision 2021 to transform Bangladesh into a Digital Bangladesh and to graduate Bangladesh to a middle-income country by the time we will be celebrating our golden Jubilee of our Independent. Our government has also taken various steps to implement these goals. Needless to say, in this onerous task, Bangladesh would need the support of the international community including the members of our diaspora.

Present government under the leadership of Bangabandhu's daughter Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is committed to establish the values and aspirations of the war of independence. After assuming office on 6 January 2009, we have been trying relentlessly to establish a society based on Rule of Law, strengthen democratic institutions, uphold human rights and ensure good governance. The present Government remains committed to bring the alleged war criminals to justice and I would like to reiterate that the initiative stems from our policy to establish Rule of Law and end the culture of impunity and in no way an act of vendetta. I take this opportunity to reiterate to all including the international community that the trial would be carried out in line with the international standard.

On foreign policy issues, the Government has been consistent in pursuing the policy in line with the motto "friendship to all and malice towards none" as envisioned by the Father of the Nation. Bangladesh now enjoys excellent relations with the outside world due to our principled position. Bilateral relations between Bangladesh and the friendly countries including our neighbours have expanded in depth and dimension, and I hope that it will be improved further in the coming days. Bangladesh is happy to be one of the hosts of the ICC, and this also manifests the credibility and credentials Bangladesh enjoys among the international community. Bangladesh's election to a large number of UN and international bodies bears the testimony of the trust Bangladesh continues to enjoy in the comity of nations.

I wish to highlight here that our diaspora comprises an important element in our foreign policy objectives. The Government is committed to ensure their all-out welfare. Despite serious logistical and economic constraints, the Government, under special directives from Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, recently took swift action, not only to repatriate thousands of Bangladesh nationals but also to ensure the welfare of those who were distressed following political upheavals in some countries. More importantly, we have been able to address the situation promptly with the assistance of the international community without compromising our bilateral relations with the affected countries.

I wish to thank all the officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and our Missions abroad who have devoted themselves to achieving our foreign policy goals. I take this opportunity to congratulate Bangladesh diaspora who are immensely contributing to the buoyancy of the economy of their country of origin as well as to their host countries.

On this great Day, let us renew our commitment to turn Bangladesh into a country free from poverty, free of hunger and extremism. I urge all our citizens including our diaspora to come forward to achieve this goal.

Joy Bangla.
Joy Bangabandhu.



People's Republic of Bangladesh
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Segunbagicha, Dhaka

Foreign Minister assures Bangladesh would try only its own citizens found guilty of war crimes.

Dhaka , 08 Apr 2010

A two member delegation of German Parliament's Committee on Economic Cooperation, comprising Mr. Jurgen Klimake MP and Mr. Niema Movassat MP called on Foreign Minister Dr. Dipu Moni at National Parliament. German Ambassador in Bangladesh was also present there. They discussed the entire gamut of bilateral relations and other issues like development cooperation, investment, water management and climate change, human rights, and the trial of the war criminals.

Dr. Dipu Moni stated that the People of Bangladesh recalled with deep gratitude the support of the then GDR to the provisional government of Bangladesh during our War of Liberation, and that Germany was the first country in Europe to recognize Bangladesh as an independent state.

Dr. Dipu Moni said that the Government's pressing concerns are to strengthen democracy, establish good governance, eliminate corruption, institute rule of law, fight climate change challenges, provide energy security, empower women, and meet crucial infrastructure requirements. She spoke on what the government was doing in these areas and how the Government was working to translate peoples' aspirations to bring about positive changes in all spheres of their life to realize the 'vision 2021'. On trial of war criminals, Foreign Minister assured that Bangladesh would try only its own citizens found guilty of war crimes. She further assured that Bangladesh would not dispense 'Victor's Justice'.

She requested to consider providing more assistance in energy and renewable power generation projects. Foreign Minister also requested Germany to assist Bangladesh in the transfer of technology for environmentally clean coal based production of electricity. She mentioned that river dredging programme, climate change adaptation programme and major infrastructure programme like the Padma multi-purpose bridge need assistance from our development partners. She stated that trade relations between Bangladesh and Germany had sustained steady growth over the years. At present Germany is the second largest destination of Bangladesh's exports accounting for about 16% of our total export, and the largest in the European Union.

Foreign Minister assures Bangladesh would try only its own citizens found guilty of war crimes.