

URGENT ACTION

PRESIDENT MUST STOP IMMINENT EXECUTION

Muhammed Kamaruzzaman, a prominent leader of the opposition party Jamaat-e-Islami, is facing imminent execution after the Supreme Court rejected his review petition on 6 April. Authorities at the Dhaka Central Jail have summoned his family to visit him immediately, indicating that preparations to execute him may be underway.

On 9 May 2013, Bangladesh's International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) found **Muhammed Kamaruzzaman** guilty of five of the seven charges against him. The ICT is a Bangladeshi court trying people accused of crimes committed during Bangladesh's 1971 war of independence. The ICT sentenced Muhammed Kamaruzzaman to death on two of the charges, (one for murder, another for mass killing) and to periods of imprisonment on the other charges.

Following his appeal, the Supreme Court changed one death sentence to life imprisonment in November 2014 as it did not find the punishment proportionate to the crime and upheld the other death sentence, which relates to a mass killing. Muhammed Kamaruzzaman filed a review petition before the Supreme Court on 5 March 2015 when this petition became available to him. This review petition, which would have allowed him an additional scrutiny of his death sentence by the same bench of judges, was rejected on 6 April. This ruling opened the door for his execution.

Bangladeshi civil society, Amnesty International and other international bodies have welcomed the government's move to end the longstanding impunity in Bangladesh for serious human rights violations in 1971. However, most observers including Amnesty International have expressed concern over how the proceedings before the ICT violated international fair trial standards. There were also irregularities in the proceedings, for instance, the court did not allow the defence to challenge the credibility of prosecution witnesses.

Muhammed Kamaruzzaman's chance of avoiding execution now lies with the President of Bangladesh who can grant him clemency if Muhammed Kamaruzzaman requests it. However, Bangladeshi newspapers say the Dhaka Central Jail's Superintendent has denied his lawyers the possibility to meet him to discuss his clemency options. They quote the Superintendent as justifying this action by saying there is no provision for this in the law. International law clearly states that anyone sentenced to death has the right to seek pardon or commutation of their death sentence, and that such pardons or commutations may be granted in all cases.

Please write immediately in Bangla, English or your own language:

- Calling on the Bangladeshi authorities not to execute Muhammed Kamaruzzaman and halt plans to carry out any other executions;
- Urging the President to commute Muhammed Kamaruzzaman's death sentence and of all other persons under sentence of death, to terms of imprisonment;
- Calling on the Bangladeshi authorities to immediately establish an official moratorium on executions with a view to abolishing the death penalty.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 20 MAY 2015 TO:

President
Abdul Hamid
President's office, Bangabhaban
Dhaka 1000, Bangladesh
Fax: +880 2 958 5502

Salutation: Dear President

Prime Minister
Sheikh Hasina
Old Sangsad Bhaban
Tejgaon
Dhaka 1215, Bangladesh
Fax: +880 2 811 3244
Email: info@pmo.gov.bd
Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

And copies to:
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Abul Hasan Mahmood Ali
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Segun Bagicha
Dhaka, Bangladesh
Fax: +880 2 956 2188

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 283/14. Further information:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/ASA13/007/2014/en/>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Amnesty International viewed the establishment of the ICT in Bangladesh as a historic opportunity with the potential to end more than 40 years of impunity for the mass-scale crimes under international law and other human rights.

Bangladesh has a responsibility to ensure justice for countless civilians who were reportedly killed by Pakistani forces and their allied groups, tens of thousands of women who were allegedly subjected to rape and other crimes of sexual violence, and more than eight million people who fled the country into India in search of safety.

Amnesty International recognizes the obligation and duty of the Bangladeshi governments to protect the rights of the victims of these crimes and of their families. The organization believes that those found responsible, after a fair judicial process, should be punished, but without recourse to the death penalty.

The President has the power to grant pardons, reprieves and respites and to remit, suspend or commute any sentence passed by any court, tribunal or other authority. He can therefore stop his execution.

In 2014 Amnesty International did not record any executions in Bangladesh, where at least 141 men and one woman were sentenced to death. At least 1,235 people were under sentence of death at the end of the year.

As of today, 140 countries have abolished the death penalty in law or practice. Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases without exception, regardless of the nature or circumstances of the crime; guilt, innocence or other characteristics of the individual; or the method used by the state to carry out the execution.

Name: Muhammed Kamaruzzaman

Gender m/f: M

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