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BANGLADESH: DEATH PENALTY MORATORIUM A MUST AFTER THREE MORE EXECUTIONS

Amnesty International condemns the recent executions of three men in Bangladesh and urges the authorities to immediately impose a moratorium on executions with a view to the abolition of the death penalty.

Two men - Mohammed Shahidul and Saiful Islam – were hanged just after midnight on Wednesday 13 July in Chittagong Central Jail. They had been convicted of murdering an auto rickshaw driver and stealing his vehicle in 2004. Also on 13 July another man, Maku Robi Dass, was hanged in Sylhet Central Jail after he had been convicted of murder in 2003. In both cases, the executions were carried out after the High Court upheld the death sentences on appeal and their mercy petitions were rejected by the President.

In 2015, at least four people were executed in Bangladesh, three of whom had been sentenced to death by the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT), a Bangladeshi court looking into war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during the 1971 Independence War. In 2016, one other person convicted by the ICT - Motiur Rahman Nizami – has been executed. The ICT trials have been marred by irregularities and do not meet international fair trial standards. By the end of 2015, there were at least 1,425 prisoners on death row in Bangladesh.

The continued use of executions in Bangladesh is deeply troubling. Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases and under any circumstance, regardless of the nature or the circumstances of the crime. The death penalty is the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment and is a clear violation of the right to life.

By carrying out executions, Bangladesh is going against the clear global trend of moving toward abolition of the death penalty. In 2015, the majority of the world's countries had removed the death penalty fully from national law. In total, 140 countries worldwide are abolitionist in law or practice.

While Amnesty International opposes the death penalty unconditionally, it is important to note that there is no credible evidence showing that the threat of execution is an effective tool to prevent crime. Studies have consistently failed to show that the death penalty is more of a deterrent to crime than other forms of punishment.

Amnesty International urges the Bangladeshi authorities to immediately impose a moratorium on executions with a view to the full abolition of the death penalty, and to commute all death sentences in the country.