



PRESS RELEASE

UN side panel meeting to discuss Bangladeshi war crimes trials

8 March 2014

CONTROVERSIAL war crimes trials in Bangladesh which have divided the country and passed death sentences against two opposition leaders will come under scrutiny during the 25th session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva next week.

Human rights organisations and opposition groups have condemned the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) set up in 2010 by the ruling Awami League to investigate atrocities carried out during the 1971 war for failing to meet international standards of justice. They have accused the ruling Awami League of using the ICT as a tool with which to weaken its political rivals, particularly the Jamaat-e-Islami.

Last December, Abdul Kader Mullah, a former leader of the Jamaat, was hanged after being convicted of war crimes in a ruling that sparked mass civil unrest throughout the country.

And last February Maulana Motiur Rahman Nizami, a former MP and leader of the Jamaat-e-Islami, was sentenced to death after being convicted of smuggling arms to Assamese insurgents in India in 2004.

The IHRC has consistently criticised the war crimes tribunal which seems to be motivated by a political agenda and falls far short of acceptable standards of justice. In the case of Abdul Kader Mullah, the government retrospectively changed the law to send him to the gallows after an initial life imprisonment sentence had failed to satisfy popular demands.

Human Rights in Bangladesh: Failings of the Judiciary in the War Crimes Tribunal, will take place on 12th March between 16:00 - 18:00 in room XXI. It will be chaired by IHRC's Arzu Merali, and the speakers include Mohideen Abdul Kader, Director of Citizens International, Toby Cadman, Barrister and International Criminal lawyer and Muhammad Abu Baker Siddique Molla, Barrister.

Notes to Editors:

For media enquiries please email media@ihrc.org or call 4420 8904 4222 or 447958 522196