

## Portrait of Jihad (The Intolerable Sufferings of Seventy-One) Shahriar Kabir

Since the inception of civilization the heavily immovable scourges that we have been bearing century after century, among them the deadliest one is war. Sometimes to show one's might, sometimes to give proof of one nation's supremacy, sometimes to plunder the wealth of others or to expand the reign of dominance, people have indulged into war. Either civilized or half civilized or uncivilized people have killed people of his own community or national identity and have oppressed physically and mentally the unarmed innocent people irrespective of caste, creed and religion. They have plundered their wealth and have ruined the human habitat. With the loss of lives in the war or battle many glorious achievements of human civilization have been destroyed. Being not efficient in warfare many resourceful nations of the world have been wiped out from the map of the globe.

Since the dawn of Mesopotamian Civilization, knowing war to be inevitable civilized people have enacted some laws and rules to control loss of lives and wealth during wartime. These laws were enacted sometimes in the name of religion and sometimes for the sake of governing a country. Since the introduction of Religious or Secular Laws resolved to mitigate the sufferings of the people created by war the objective of these laws has neither stopped the atrocities nor lessened the sufferings. Rather it is observed that as human civilization has progressed, the catastrophic form of war has increased and the loss of lives and wealth has increased in geometrical progression. In the last century because of war, the total number of people was killed and oppressed was less than the casualties made in all the wars that had earlier broken out in the world.

In the history of three thousand years of wars the Second World War is the most terrible one. Twenty million people were killed in this Great War over five continents in five years, and people hundred

times greater than this number suffered terribly. In the post Second World War the suffering and killing that is considered most horrendous is the Liberation War of Bangladesh that took place in 1971. The war continued for nine months and was confined to Bangladesh of fifty six thousand square miles area. In respect of time and place the loss incurred due to the war of 1971 is undoubtedly higher than any other war.

Mankind around the globe is well aware of the holocaust of the Second World War. Based on the atrocities of Nazi Army of Hitler in the concentration camps, killing people burning them alive in gas chambers, destroying human habitat completely by bombing and other barbaric and cruel activities thousands of books have been published and hundreds of films have been produced. A few hundred museums have been founded in many countries of the world to make the future progeny informed about the horrendous effect of the World War. During the Second World War unique events of chivalry were also accomplished which are very significant in Military history. But common people have stored the holocaust of the war in their mind permanently more than that of heroism. People have read Anne Frank's Diary more than that of General Patton's unequal heroism in Military History.

In spite of the loss of life and destruction of property being very high the people of the world know very little about the Liberation War of Bangladesh. One of the reasons for it is that Bangladesh had to fight against Pakistan which was very powerful in military might. In this war only India and Soviet Union and a few countries who were allies of the Soviet Union were in favour of Bangladesh. On the other hand, in support of Pakistan there were the United States of America, a super power like China and the western world and most of the Muslim countries of the world. The United States of America and most of the governments of the western world were in favour of Pakistan, as a result of which Pakistani Striking Army and the religious fundamentalists and collaborators committed many war crimes. They specially committed genocide and crimes against humanity, but these were always shown with lesser intensity and volume. Still from what a few researchers of the west and eye witness journalists have written in 1971 and 1972 and afterwards, an idea can be derived about the intensity of those atrocities. Senator

Edward Kennedy, Congressman Cornelius Gallagher, and Congressman Adlai Stevenson of the United States of America and other people's representative of different countries visited Bangladesh during war time and after the war and most of them became astounded, aggrieved and shocked seeing the cruelty of the warmongering Pakistanees.

The genocide in 1971 began at midnight of 25 March. In the name of the infamous 'Operation Searchlight' the Pakistani occupation force killed about sixty thousand unarmed people in Dhaka through military attack in one night. Ninety percent of the victims were the people of slum area. Throwing gun powder over the slum area the occupation army killed panicky people as if they were birds. Students, teachers and staff of the university were killed. Attacks were made on the EPR and Police Head Quarters. Havoc was done to the Hindu majority areas in the old part of Dhaka. At that time the foreign journalists staying in Bangladesh witnessed the atrocities in first hand and wrote in different papers after returning home. A few hundred students and staff of Dhaka University were killed in a row but before firing the killer army forced them to dig the trenches where their bodies were dumped. A teacher of Dhaka University secretly captured a part of the ghastly scene by a video camera.

At that time Divisional Commissioner of Dhaka was Alamdar Raza who belonged to Civil Service of Pakistan. Though a loyal officer of Pakistan how much disturbed he was by his conscience seeing the genocide and barbaric destruction of Pakistani Army is graphically reflected in his book, 'Dacca's Debacle'. In this book he cited the war crimes committed by the Pakistani Army and reading of a few articles any civilized and conscientious people be much aggrieved and agitated.

Seventeen years after the independence of Bangladeshi historian Professor Muntassir Mamoon visited Pakistan in early 1998. He interviewed top Pakistani army and civil officers who were in Dhaka during the liberation war of Bangladesh. Prof. Mamoon found Alamdar Raza was the only exception to condemn Pakistan army's atrocities in '71. Mamoon wrote— 'Alamdar Raza, the last Pakistani Commissioner of Dhaka, has filed a writ petition against the Pakistan Government to publish the Hamudur Rahman Commission Report and to punish those who were responsible for stalling its publication

in the first place. In the article 52 of the petition he has said that Pakistan has become the laughing stock of the world for failure to punish those who were involved with grievous crimes. As a result, "The internal effect of this has been such that the extra judicial and custodial killings have become a part of a national tradition". The last comment is worth noting.

Alamdar Raza was explaining how the authority was delaying the acceptance of his writ petition. Then he finally got the chance to submit his petition at the court, and at one point he gave an example of the barbarity of the Pakistani troops. A group of soldiers attacked a house and killed a number of people. They kept the young girl of the family alive to rape her. The girl pleaded that she was also a Pakistani, and she was also a Muslim as were the soldiers. How could a Muslim rape another Muslim woman? At last she placed the Holy Quran on the bed and said if anyone wanted to rape her he would have to first remove the Quran from the bed. The soldiers did that. Alamdar described that the judge could not but shed tears after hearing this.<sup>1</sup>

The genocide started from March 25, 1971, continued during the next nine months or until the country was freed from the clutches of Pakistani occupation army. Apart from mass killings, systematic killings of identified personalities or professionals was carried out under a blueprint. This process started with the slaying of Dhaka University teachers and reached its peak ahead of the Victory Day on December 16, 1971, as they realised their defeat was imminent.

In conducting the killings, there was a priority list. They had identified five sections of the populace as their main enemies.

1) leaders, activists and supporters of Awami League, 2) communists and socialists, 3) freedom fighters and their associates, 4) the Hindu community irrespective of sex or age and 5) students and intellectuals or professionals.

There was no specific type of killings. The Pakistanis at first shelled by tanks and mortars to kill a large number of people of a locality. Then they killed innocent ones lining them up after taking them away from their houses. Some were put to death by bayonets or burnt alive by the barbaric Pakistani army. They also slaughtered

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<sup>1</sup> Muntassir Mamoon, "The Vanquished Generals and the Liberation War of Bangladesh", (Samoy Prokashan, Dhaka, 2000) p. 30-31

people like animals. In some cases people were tortured for months until death saved them. The last method was followed specially for the freedom fighters. There are many people who witnessed that freedom fighters were dragged on the streets pulled by army jeeps, which would only stop to confirm if their prey was dead.

The major methods used by the Pakistanis to torture the Banglaeess were: 1) Verbal abuse coupled with beating until blood oozed out, 2) Poking with bayonet or beating with rifle butts after hanging the victim by the leg from the ceiling, 3) the victim was stripped and kept standing for hours in public 4) Burning the whole body with cigarette, 5) Pushing needles through nails and the head, 6) spraying injuries with salt and chilly, 7) Pushing electric rod through the anus, 8) giving urine for drinking when the victims screamed for water, 9) pushing ice through the anus or injuring the entry point of the anus with cigarette burns, 10) the victim, with his hands and legs tied, was put into a gunny bag and kept under the scorching sun, 11) keeping the injured naked body on ice slab, 12) denying sleep for days, high powered lights focussed on the eye, 13) giving electric shock to the sensitive parts of the body, 14) uprooting nails with the help of tweezers and 15) the head was repeatedly forced into hot water with the body hanging from the ceiling. Besides extremely brutal sexual tortures were also very common whether male or female.<sup>1</sup>

Depositions of some witnesses of torture by the Pakistani forces were recorded in the eighth volume of '*Bangladesher Swadhinata Juddher Dalilpatra*'. A brief idea about the brutality of Pakistani forces could be known from statements of some sweepers of the then Dhaka municipality. They were picked up from their houses to remove the bodies.

Describing the experiences of March 29, 1971, Pardeshi, son of Chhoton, a sweeper of Government Veterinary Hospital said:

'After I went to office on March 29 morning, I was asked to go to Sakharibazar along with others for lifting bodies by trucks. As there were Pakistani troops patrolling the road and fire was in front of the Judge Court, we couldn't go to Sakharibazar through that way. We

entered Sakharibazar on its west side after crossing the Patuatuli police box. We went to every house of the area and found bodies of female, male, youths, elderly people, boys, girls and children in every room. Most of the buildings were destroyed. Most of the bodies of women were without any clothes. Their breasts were cutoff. We found sticks pushed into their vaginas. Many bodies were burnt. As the Punjabi soldiers sprayed bullets, the Biharis looted their homes. We took bodies on two trucks and left the area shortly. Though there were many bodies, we, being afraid, didn't go to Sakharibazar on that day again. I was asked to take bodies from Mill-Barrack on March 30 morning.

After going to the Mill-Barrack ghat with the truck of municipality, I saw many scattered bodies. Many bodies were tied with rope in a ring. We removed the rope and took the bodies. Most of them were youth. Their hands were tied with rope, blind folded and faces blackened by acid burns to avoid identification. Foul smell filled the air and we found bullet-ridden bodies and those badly mutilated after bayonet charge. Some skulls were smashed with brain seeping out. I saw bodies of six beautiful women on the bank of the river. They were naked and were shot to death. Their breasts and sexual organs were bloody. I dumped some 70 bodies at Dhalpur garbage after taking those from Mill-Barrack ghat.

Later I was asked to carry bodies from Sadarghat, Shyambazar and Badamtali ghat. I took decomposed bodies from the areas to dumped at Dhalpur garbage. The day I took bodies from Kalibari, I had to carry bodies also from a professor's residence behind the Rokeya Hall of Dhaka University. I carried a total of nine bodies, including of male and children, from the staff quarters behind the Rokeya Hall. And I also took away the body of a professor from the staircase of his residence. The body was wrapped with mattress.<sup>2</sup>

The Pakistanis in 1971 by killing philosopher professor Govinda Chandra Dev, who was innocent could be compared to a child, showed their brutality had no limits.

The newspapers in 1972 carried the news of brutality of Pakistani forces depicting in 1971 killing of Mashihur Rahman,

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<sup>1</sup> Tormenting Seventy One, editor Shahriar Kabir Committee for Resisting Killers & Collaborators of Bangladesh Liberation War of 1971, Dhaka, November 1999

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<sup>2</sup> *Bangladesher Swadhinata Juddher Dalilpatra*: Eighth volume, Editor: Hasan Hafizur Rahman, Information Ministry of Peoples Republic of Bangladesh, Dhaka June 1984, P. 51-52.

elected to Pakistan National Assembly in 1970 and a popular leader of the Awami League.

‘The Pakistani forces killed him by torturing for days ... They hated people like animals and tortured him so that he gave into their demands. Different parts of his body were burnt. They also chopped him time and again and sprayed salt on the wounded parts. He was also given electric shocks. But he didn’t compromise although he was proceeding towards death everyday. He always said the same: ‘I’ll never say or write anything against my people.’

He stood by his faith until the last day and only trembled when the occupation forces chopped his left hand off and ordered him to write with the remaining one. He didn’t groan. He didn’t say a single word of compromise although all of his hands and limbs were cut off one after another.’<sup>3</sup>

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman burst into tears when he came to know that his comrade died such a cruel death.

Repression on women by occupation forces is no exception in world history. There are many books and films on women repression by Nazis of Germany, fascists of Italy and soldiers of Japan during the Second World War. But there is no second example of brutal ways of repressing women by Pakistanis in 1971. More than 250,000 women were raped by them. As the women couldn’t bear the pain of repression many of them committed suicide. The sadist Pakistanis also killed many women meeting their instinct of rape.

It is most unfortunate that the incidents of repression on women was not recorded properly although there were many witnesses. A victim of rape in this society doesn’t want to disclose her tragedy due to social taboos and family barriers.

The post-liberation Awami League government had taken steps to rehabilitate the women who were repressed during the War of Independence. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was very sympathetic towards them and called them as ‘*Beerangana*’ (heroic women). A social worker, Maleka Khan, assigned to rehabilitate the repressed women at that time, said that no list of the women was prepared as they didn’t want these women to be identified to ensure their quick to return to normal life.

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<sup>3</sup>. *Dainik Bangla*, February 16, 1972.

Maleka Khan has herself read the deposition of more than 5,000 war-repressed women. These papers were destroyed after the assassination of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Maleka Khan said abortion was done on women who were in an early stage of pregnancy.<sup>4</sup> She introduced us to Dr. Geoffrey Davis, who came from Australia and travelled across Bangladesh to provide medical help to these women. According to Dr. Davis the number of women raped was more than 400,000. The *Banglar Bani* newspaper published an article on Dr. Davis in 1972. Excerpts follows:

“A large number of women raped by the Pakistanis are suffering from infertility or sexually transmitted disease. Sydney’s Dr. Geoffrey Davis recently said in London that these women were mainly suffering from syphilis or gonorrhoea or both and most had abortion which could lead to infertility or can suffer from the diseases for the rest of their life.

Dr. Davis, who arrived in Dhaka when the victims were at least 18 weeks pregnant, said 170,000 women took the help of quacks or village doctors with no educational background for abortion before international help arrived either because they were forced to do so or were victims of social conditions.

Some girls suffered immensely because they were too young to have sex and even if they could afford to a doctor “it will be difficult to find a man to marry them,” he said.

Doctors working at a government clinic to help the tortured women estimated their number at about 200,000. But Dr. Davis rejecting the figure, said it was over 400,000 and of them 170,00 had been aborted.

Many of the 30,000 out of the 200,000 government estimate committed suicide and some kept their babies.

Dr. Davies reasoned to clarify his stand on the figure by saying on an average two women were reported missing daily which put the number at 200,000 as the Pakistani troops controlled 480 police stations for 270 days. No count of women raped in villages as the occupation forces moved from one village to another and they kept many of them in their camps to meet their sexual demands. Many of these women were thrown out of the camps or killed when they got pregnant or were infected with disease. In some areas girls as young as 12 or 13 were repeatedly raped and kept naked always so that they did not flee.

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<sup>4</sup>. Interview with the writer, Dhaka 28 June, 1998

Some of them hanged themselves when they got the chance to wear a sari, the traditional Bengali dress, while others jumped into rivers tying themselves with heavy stones.

Dr. Davis said those who survived were rejected by their families as untouched “unclean” as they were raped and pregnant, which was indeed very sad.<sup>5</sup>

Information about the war-babies born in 1972 is also very rare. Most of them were adopted by Europeans or Americans.

Renowned academic Professor Neelima Ibrahim was involved with the government rehabilitation programme. Based on experiences of the war-repressed women, she also wrote a book titled ‘*Ami Berangana Bolchhi*’ (I am the heroic woman speaking). Those who gave statements to her are from middle and higher-middle class families. They were made captives during the nine-month. One of them wrote:

‘We’re not allowed to wear sari or scarf as one woman had committed suicide by hanging herself by her sari. We only wore blouse and petty-coat. Those were dirty and torn. Those were thrown to us after taking from shops. The style was like giving something to a beggar during the Eid. Our eyes would fill into tears.

‘... The next day a girl died. She was pregnant. Bleeding continued since morning. The girls had shouted from the other side of the closed door. But none turned up. Her name was Moyna. She was only 15-year-old. She was first screaming and later became frozen. Her face was looking blue. Elderly Sufia’s mother covered the body by the blanket. There was no bed cover as it was not provided. They took away the body in the evening.’<sup>6</sup>

The book by Neelima Ibrahim has such descriptions.

About the list of rape victims, Neelima Ibrahim said Bangabandhu himself had asked to destroy the list, because he had understood that our society would not accept the war-repressed women if their names were disclosed. Bangabandhu from the core of his heart had wanted a normal life for every repressed woman.

Neelima Ibrahim said that she heard 30/40 raped women are leaving country along with the war detainees who were going to

India in 1972. In cooperation with the Indian and Bangladesh authorities, she instantly met the women and requested them to stay here. But they were determined to leave the country as they were not accepted by their close kins. A 14 or 15 year old girl was among them. Neelima Ibrahim told her ‘You’ll be staying at my home like my daughter.’ But she didn’t agree. She said: ‘What will happen to me when you’ll not be there. Everyone will hate me when people will know I was touched by the Pakistanis.’ Neelima Ibrahim asked if she knew what the Pakistanis will do with her. The girl said: ‘Yes, I know. They will sell me. But none will know me there.’<sup>7</sup>

Three repressed women had come to Dhaka to give witnesses when the public court led by Jahanara Imam tried war criminal Ghulam Azam on March 26, 1992. Newspapers had news items on them. They were boycotted by others when they returned to their village. People started to ridicule them. It was a new pain for them, which made their hearts bleed again. The bleeding will continue until their death. One of them said: ‘We didn’t give a second thought. We rushed to Dhaka for justice. The justice is yet to be ensured, but we’re getting hurt everyday as people started to tease us indicating towards our worst time we experienced in 1971.’<sup>8</sup>

In 1971 we saw cruelty and brutality of Pakistan army. At the same time we also saw the greatness of Indian forces. Freedom fighters, who had escaped from the Pakistani captivity or were injured in war fields were given treatment at the hospitals of Indian army. The injured Bangalees at the refugee camps in India were also provided treatment by the military hospitals.

An example of humanity of Indian forces can be given from the book of Neelima Ibrahim. The repressed women who were in the bunkers became overwhelmed when they heard the slogans ‘*Joy Bangla*’ (victory to Bangla) on December 16. They could understand that the country has been freed from the occupation forces. But they were not able to come out as they were not wearing any clothes. Neelima Ibrahim quoted tortured Shefa as saying:

‘All on a sudden we heard shouts of many people who were coming and going. One gave a look through a small opening of the bunker and said in Urdu ‘*Koi hai? Idhar Aou.*’ (Is there any body ? Come here.)

<sup>5</sup>. Daily Banglar Bani, Special issue on Genocide, Dhaka, Decmber, 1972

<sup>6</sup>. Neelima Ibrahim, ‘Ami Beerangona Bolchchi’, (Jagriti Prokashonee, Dhaka, January, 1998), p. 15-16

<sup>7</sup>. Interview with the writer, Dhaka, October 9, 1998

<sup>8</sup>. Interview with the writer, Dhaka, February 25, 1997

We started crying. The language gripped us with fear of new torture. Later we heard several were saying in Bangla 'Mothers, come on.' I was courageous than others. I got up. But again I tried to enter into the bunker as I was totally naked. The man who had the voice 'Koi hai' covered me with his headscarf. I told them there are six more women in the bunker. They collected some shirts and lungis and covered all of us by the clothes. I embraced the Shikh commander and started weeping. The gentleman kept his hands on my head and said 'Ro mat mayi' (Don't cry mother).

Shefa returned to her normal life. She got married. Her father-in-law gave the name of her eldest son Arman. But Shefa used to call him Yogi.

'None knows the significance of the name, Yogi. Shefa had met a man like a saint at the end of her worst time in 1971. He was Yogindar Singh who had covered her with his headscarf and called her mother. Shefa thinks Yogindar is her first child. She kisses Arman time and again and prays to Allah so that he could maintain the honour and dignity of his mother as Yoginder did.'<sup>9</sup>

In post-independent Bangladesh more than three thousand mass graveyard and killing fields have been identified. Such a killing place is at Chuknagar in Khulna where more than ten thousand people were killed on 20 May 1971. These innocent people had assembled in a big field in order to save their lives from the barbarian Pakistani Army and their destination was the refugee camp in India. Among the assassinated people ninety percent belonged to Hindu community. Starting from new born baby to eighty years old persons nobody was spared from the bullet of the Pakistani Army.

A major part of the assassinated people during the Liberation War was the lone earning member of the family. Thousands of families fell into great disaster for consecutive years of their life, losing their only earning member. Their life became unbearable. Not only killing, all sorts of their belongings were plundered by the Pakistani Occupation Army and their collaborators of this country. Those who were killed, their sufferings ended with the loss of their lives. Captives in the concentration camp of the army got release from untold mental and physical sufferings on 16 December 1971 after the surrender of the Pakistani Army. But the women victims of

Pakistani Army could not get rid of social and psychological torture and denigration even after thirtyeight years of liberation. With the exception of a few the raped women, for fear of social disgrace, never disclosed their brutal torture they underwent during the liberation war by the Pakistani rapist occupation army. A few narration and picture is available in the 'Documents of the Liberation War' published by the government and the book, 'The Facts of a Captured Woman' ('Ami Birangana Bolchi'), written by Dr Nilima Ibrahim. Many raped women had no alternative do but to commit suicide unable to bear the pangs and miseries of life. Many raped women, driven out by their families went away with the Pakistani Army, which was synonymous to committing suicide. A few description of the tragic event of such ill fated women can be read in the book of Dr Nilima Ibrahim.

In independent Bangladesh, Awami League Government in a limited way rehabilitated a few thousands tortured women. A few thousands martyr families got allotment of their houses from the government. After the brutal assassination of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman the founder of independent Bangalee nation, as the trial process of war criminals was suspended. The rehabilitation centers of the war tortured women were also closed for ever. Later, the houses allotted to the martyr families were also illegally snatched away from the martyrs' children.

The Liberation War of Bangladesh was the war of mass people in the truest sense. Other than a few followers of the religious fundamentalist and fanatic group, people of all walks of life directly or indirectly participated in the Liberation War. Most of the Freedom Fighters were peasants and working class people of villages. After the war, the surviving warriors returning home found their properties and belongings plundered and destroyed. Most of the houses of the freedom fighters were burnt to ashes. Nobody came forward in the truest sense to rehabilitate the freedom fighters socially or financially. Rather, after the killing of Bangabandhu, when the people of the opposite camp of Liberation War grabbed state power, the freedom fighters were victims of injustice in various ways regarding job or business. In the name of controlling Military Coups General Ziaur Rahman awarded death sentence to about two thousand freedom fighters. Most of the families of those victims

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<sup>9</sup>. Ibid.

were heart broken or paralyzed either partially or completely. After thirty seven or thirty eight years of liberation, the news of freedom fighter's death for want of medical treatment or their family member's death, or freedom fighter's committing suicide for want of food or job or begging alms are being published in newspapers. The State failed to rehabilitate the members of the martyr families, the tortured women or poor freedom fighters during the last thirty-eight years. After thirty-eight years their fight for existence has not ended. Only death may be their saviour.

Another misfortune for Bangladesh is that no trial has yet been held for the war criminals involved in genocide, women persecution and other crimes against humanity committed in 1971. After the liberation of Bangladesh preparation for the trial of war criminals had been taken up in a limited perspective. On 24 January 1972 Law for the Collaborators for the trial of the Collaborators of Pakistani Occupation Army and war criminals was enacted. (See appendix-1) About thirty-seven thousand people were arrested under this law and trial began, too. But the war criminals arrested under the Collaborator Act were tried under the existing Criminal Penal Code. As it was not possible to try them for genocide, war crime or crime against humanity by that law the criminals got release as there was also the limitation of time for trial for killing, oppression, kidnapping, plundering or burning houses. Getting release from the charges, these evil forces have again organized themselves politically.

In 2001, war criminal Jamate Islami party became a co-sharer of State power by forming an alliance with BNP. Two most infamous top war criminals became ministers, too. These were the people who gave birth to Islamic Terrorism and they are directly involved with the International Jehadi Network.

Mainly due to Pakistan and the pressure created by the Islamic World the government declared general amnesty on 16 May 1973. This amnesty was not applicable for those who committed major war crimes & crimes against humanity. (see appendix-4)

After the declaration of general amnesty twenty six thousand convicted with lesser charges, out of thirty seven thousand prisoners got release and exemption. Even then more than eleven thousand war criminals were imprisoned and their prosecution was going on till the

killing of Bangabandhu. On 31 December the Chief of Military Junta General Zia abolished the collaborators law and stopped the trial of the war criminals. During the war those who lost their near and dear ones and all their asset, who were tortured and disabled or were loser in any other form, their greatest consolation would be if the people responsible for the sufferings were brought under law and tried and duly punished. As there was no trial of the war criminals the victims of war and the conscientious people of Bangladesh did not find the balm of their grief and pain till today.

In order to save mankind from the curse of war, those who committed genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, crimes against peace, have to be brought to book. Persons who lost their near and dear ones or became crippled, women who lost their chastity, they will never get these back. Financial rehabilitation and getting social prestige may somewhat redress their agonies and sufferings. The pain and grievance of the victims will be redressed to a great extent if the criminals are severely punished. This step is necessary not only to get penance from the past sin but also to put an end to the sorrows and sufferings of the future world related to war atrocities. After many years the Government of Bangladesh have been speaking about the trial of the war criminals. The victims of 1971 have been waiting for the trial to begin with great concern.

There is no difference with regard to war related sorrows and sufferings in respect of place and time. The consequence of losing near and dear ones everywhere in the world is one and identical. For the transparent trial and ensuring punishment of the war criminals involved in the genocide and crimes against humanity committed in 1971, cooperation of the International Community is also necessary.