

Don't execute Mujib killers, Amnesty tells Dhaka

International human rights watchdog Amnesty International has urged Bangladesh not to execute five former army officers who have been sentenced to death for the killing of country's founding president Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

It said the killing of Sheikh Mujib and his family members Aug 15, 1975 was a grave abuse of human rights and the killers should be brought to justice.

'However, bringing people to justice must not itself violate the human rights of the accused,' it said in a statement issued here and urged President Zillur Rahman to commute the death sentences 'as a matter of urgency'.

It also asked Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Mujib's elder daughter, to request the president to commute the sentences.

'Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases regardless of the nature of the crime, the characteristics of the offender, or the method used by the state to kill the prisoner,' the statement said.

Bangladesh Supreme Court Thursday rejected the appeals of the five jailed convicts, upholding a previous High Court order awarding death sentences to twelve former army officers. Six of the convicted men are living abroad while one has died as a fugitive in Zimbabwe.

The five condemned convicts - retired Major Bazlul Huda, dismissed Lieutenant Colonel Syed Faruk Rahman, retired Lieutenant Colonel Sultan Shahriar Rashid Khan, retired Colonel Mohiuddin Ahmed and retired Major A.K.M. Mohiuddin Ahmed - await the gallows in Dhaka Central Jail.

'The death penalty violates the right to life as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,' the rights' body said.

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