



SNAPS FROM COURT TO STREET

Clockwise from top left: Addressing the press, relatives of July uprising victims give their reaction to Hasina's sentencing at the ICT. Survivors maimed in last year's uprising exit the tribunal after attending proceedings. Former police chief Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun being escorted out after receiving a five-year sentence. Army personnel maintain security at the ICT premises. Protesters torch an effigy of Hasina near her Dhanmondi 32 residence hours before the ruling. A rickshaw-puller stands atop his vehicle outside the court and raises his hands in prayer after the verdict is announced.

PHOTO:
ANISUR RAHMAN, PRABIR DAS, RASHED SHUMON

TELEPHONE CONVERSATIONS OF SHEIKH HASINA USED AS EVIDENCE



WITH THEN DHAKA UNIVERSITY VICE-CHANCELLOR ASM MAKSUD KAMAL ON JULY 14, 2024

"I have hanged the Razakars, and now I will do the same to them. I won't spare a single one, I'm telling you [...] What kind of country do we live in? Haven't you seen what happened to the Razakars – I had them all executed; now I won't spare them either [...] All of these people must be kicked out... I'm giving the order. Let today pass and then I will arrest them, detain them and take whatever action is necessary."

WITH SHEIKH FAZLE NOOR TAPOSH ON JULY 18, 2024

"I have spoken with the army chief, they'll be on alert. Now we are taking other steps. We are taking photos with drones and using helicopters over a few locations [...] I've given the order to arrest all of them [...] RAB, DGF, everyone has been told detain as many as they can [...] I've already given the instruction. They will use lethal weapons now. Wherever they are seen, shoot at sight."

WITH HASANUL HUQ INU ON JULY 20, 2024

"Forces will descend from the air and arrest them from all sides [...] they will bomb the area from helicopters. RAB's helicopters will attack from above."

WITH HASANUL HUQ INU ON AUGUST 4, 2024

"I have told them to update the news scrolls [...] We are telling the guardians that there has been a terrorist attack [...] An international organisation gave me a message that these are terrorist attacks. [...] I will put it in the newspapers."

Hasina sentenced to death

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collaboration with each other and committed atrocities in order to kill protesters across the country," said the tribunal chair.

The court premises and surrounding area were under tight security from early morning. With arson and crude bomb attacks in recent days, security had already been heightened nationwide.

Injured protesters and families of July martyrs gathered outside, demanding that the government ask India to send Hasina back.

In his reaction to the verdict, state-appointed defence lawyer Amir Hossain said he accepted it but was "angry and deeply hurt" by the outcome. "The verdict could have been different. But it

human rights bodies, and newspaper reports.

It also documents the "extent of cruelty" endured by the victims killed, seriously injured, or permanently disabled during the July 2024 uprising.

On the contested casualty figures,



"The videos displayed in the courtroom showing the dead and injured, their cries of agony, and the appearances of victim-witnesses who lost skulls, eyes, noses, hands, and legs were so harrowing that any human being would struggle to remain in a



normal state of mind," the judge said. "Such atrocities must be brought to an end at any cost. Justice must not fail."

In view of the tribunal's findings, Hasina was found guilty on three counts under Charge 1 – incitement, ordering the killings, and failure to prevent the atrocities or take punitive action.

For these, she received imprisonment until natural death.

Under Charge 2, the first count concerned her orders to deploy drones, helicopters and lethal weapons to kill protesters, which the tribunal deemed crimes against humanity.

The second concerned the killing of six persons at Chankharpu and another six at Ashulia in execution of her earlier orders.

On these counts, the tribunal imposed a single sentence of death.

The tribunal also found Kamal and Mamun liable on four counts of crimes against humanity linked to the Chankharpu and Ashulia killings.

They were found guilty of abetment, failure to prevent the atrocities, and failure to take punitive measures.

"For all these four counts, we have decided to award a single sentence of death to Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal," Justice Mozumder said.

The tribunal noted that Mamun materially assisted the proceedings by making a full and truthful disclosure of the facts, admitting involvement across the 36-day movement.

Citing his cooperation and admissions, it showed leniency and sentenced him to five years in prison despite the gravity of offences that typically warrant death.

The tribunal ordered the confiscation of all properties belonging to Hasina and Asaduzzaman in favour of the state.

It also directed the government to pay adequate compensation to the families of the slain protesters mentioned in the case, and to the wounded victims in consideration of the gravity of their injury and loss.

The sentence will be executed under Section 20(3) of the International Crimes Tribunal Act, 1973, "preferably following longstanding practice".

A copy of the judgment will be sent to the Dhaka district magistrate, and one provided to Mamun. The absconding accused will not receive copies at this stage.

BNP, Jamaat, NCP hail

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international standards.

"Those who have provided shelter to a fugitive death-row convict, in our view, have taken a stand in favour of the heinous criminal. We demand that she be returned to Bangladesh."

Speaking to reporters at NCP central office, Convener Nahid Islam said the party welcomed the verdict but would not be satisfied until the sentence was executed.

Terming the judgement "historic", he called for her immediate return from India.

Meanwhile, Islami Andolan Bangladesh, Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis, Hefazat-e-Islam, and a faction of the Jatiya Ganatantrik Party also said the verdict sends a warning to future fascists.

In a statement, Islami Andolan Bangladesh called on the interim government to complete all remaining legal procedures and take steps to carry out the verdict without delay.

Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis said the ICT verdict would serve as an example against the use of state power to murder and abduct citizens.

Hefazat-e-Islam said justice had been served and peace had reached the families of the martyrs.

"Those who want to become fascists

and autocrats again in the future will also have to face the consequences of Hasina and the Awami League," Hefazat Ameer Muhibullah Babunagari said in a statement.

A faction of the Jatiya Ganatantrik Party went as far as to demand that Hasina's death sentence be executed in public.

Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam Bangladesh welcomed the verdict, while the Biplobi Workers Party, in a statement, said the judgement proves that even dictators are not above the law.

Earlier in the day, Hasina was given the death penalty after being found guilty of crimes against humanity for the violent suppression of student protests last year that led to the collapse of her government.

A panel of three judges from the ICT delivered their verdict, ruling that she was responsible for inciting hundreds of extrajudicial killings carried out by law enforcement.

Hasina was tried in absentia, having been exiled in India since she was forced from power in August 2024.

Former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, who was on trial alongside Hasina, was also sentenced to death, while former police chief Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun was sentenced to five years in prison.

A courtroom of tears

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Mir Mahbubur Rahman Snigdho said, "The verdict has not brought complete satisfaction to the families of the martyrs and the injured.

"We agree with the death sentence of killers Sheikh Hasina and the former home minister, but we reject the ruling given against former IGP Chowdhury Al-Mamun."

The former inspector general of police, also an accused in the case, has been sentenced to five years. According to the tribunal's order, Al-Mamun, who had turned a state witness, made "a full and true disclosure of the circumstances within his knowledge, including details of his own involvement and that of the other accused".

Mamun is the first accused to become a state witness since the tribunal was set up in 2010.

Snigdho continued, "On behalf of the families of the martyrs and the injured, we will appeal to the higher court against that verdict [on Al-Mamun]."

"It's not enough to just announce the verdict. The process must be clarified – how Sheikh Hasina and the former home minister will be brought back to the country and executed. We, the families of the martyrs and the injured, demand that this process begin as soon as possible."

Hasina and Kamal have been in India since the fall of the Awami League regime following the uprising in August last year.

Rabiul Hasan, brother of martyr Imam Hasan Taim, said that in their appeal they will seek at least life imprisonment.

"We'll also request the government

to arrange a prisoner-exchange agreement, or by whatever means necessary, to ensure the verdict is carried out. As much as we are satisfied with this ruling, the souls of the martyrs will only find eternal peace when it is executed."

Several families said it was under Al-Mamun's orders that police across the country opened fire on protesters, killing their loved ones.

Zartaj Parvin, mother of martyr Ahnaf, said, "Such a massacre took place under the direction of Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun, yet he has been given only five years' imprisonment. We don't accept this sentence."

Meanwhile, back in Rangpur's Pirganj, parents, siblings, relatives and neighbours of martyr Abu Sayed, the first reported victim of the July killings, were waiting in front of the television with bated breath since early morning, our Lalmonirhat correspondent reported.

As soon as the verdict came, they all raised their hands in the air, expressing their gratitude to the Almighty. Some rushed to Abu Sayed's grave and prayed for his departed soul's peace.

Abu Sayed's father Mokbul Hossain said, "I am satisfied with the ICT court's verdict. I'll be even happier if it's executed soon. This is one execution I want to witness in my lifetime. My son was very talented. Had he been alive today, our home would still be filled with joy. My child was shot dead on killer Hasina's orders."

Breaking down at the news, Monowara Begum, mother of Abu Sayed, prayed that the verdict be executed without delay. "The government must ensure this happens swiftly."

Hasina can't appeal before surrender

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The next legal recourse for ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina is to file an appeal against the tribunal's verdict, but she must surrender before she can do that, legal experts have said.

Talking to The Daily Star after the tribunal sentenced her to death on charges of crimes against humanity, state-appointed defence lawyer Amir Hossain said he cannot file an appeal as his client is absconding. "If she is arrested or if she surrenders before the tribunal, only then can an appeal be filed," he said.

Eminent lawyer Dr Shahdeen Malik echoed his view, saying that convicts cannot challenge any verdict while in absentia.

"Normally, you file an appeal when the verdict goes against you. This is the normal legal recourse. But you cannot do so while in absentia. If you are convicted, you must first appear before the court and then file an appeal," he told The Daily Star last night.

In that case, her lawyers can directly appeal the tribunal's verdict to the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, and can point out legal errors, misuse of evidence, or irregularities in the trial process, if any, according to legal experts.

The Appellate Division will then examine whether all procedures and standards required by law for conducting the case were properly followed. After hearings, the Supreme Court may uphold, modify, or overturn the tribunal's judgment.

The defence, if still dissatisfied with the SC verdict, can also file a review petition against the Appellate Division order. In that petition, the defence must present new evidence, legal errors, or serious injustice.

The judges concerned may uphold the Appellate Division's verdict, amend it, or order a rehearing. This is the final stage of the judicial process.

Even after the final verdict in the review, Hasina will still have the option to seek clemency from the president. Under article 49 of the constitution, the president can pardon, commute, or suspend the sentence.

The International Crimes Tribunal-1 yesterday sentenced Hasina to death on several counts of crimes against humanity committed during last year's July uprising that toppled her, forcing her to flee to India.

At the start of the trial on June 1 this year, the tribunal first issued an arrest warrant for her. The tribunal then issued circulars in newspapers for her to appear before then court and face the trial, but she did not. Separately, the interim government has requested India to return Hasina, but New Delhi is yet to honour the request.