



From
The Lord Carlile of Berriew QC CBE

Friday, 11 March 2016

Re: International Crimes Tribunal (ICT), Bangladesh

In a decision that offends Justice, the Bangladesh Supreme Court has upheld the decision of the Bangladesh International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) in respect of Mir Quasem Ali and condemned him to death.

On 8 March 2016, the Bangladesh Supreme Court delivered its verdict on the appeal of Mir Quasem Ali who had previously been convicted and sentenced to death by the ICT. The Court upheld the conviction and sentence and thus condemned Ali to death.

The case before the ICT was full of inconsistencies, bias, political interference, and denial of any established national or international fair trial standard.

In exchanges between the Chief Justice and the Attorney General, the Chief Justice rightly and appropriately highlighted the lack of evidence against Ali. Also, he castigated the Attorney General for what he saw as a flawed trial process.

The Attorney General had no answer to the clear allegations being made by the Chief Justice.

It is therefore astonishing that, despite the clear opinions of the Chief Justice, the appeal was dismissed and the convictions and sentence upheld.

We need only consider the recent comments of the Bangladesh Minister for Food, who, when publicly discussing the appeal and exchanges between the parties prior to the judgment, stated “...*I think there should be a rehearing of Mir Quasem’s appeal without the chief justice*”.

There has long been suspicion of political influence being wrought over ICT trials. It is clear, given the Minister’s comments, and the fact that the convictions and sentence were upheld despite the Chief Justice’s comments, that this suspicion has now been a significant degree more credibility.

No longer can the supporters of the ICT maintain that it is transparent, independent, and respects of the fair trial rights of those individuals who appear before it.

I call upon the Bangladesh Government to accept the offers of international assistance so as to ensure that the ICT really does deliver the justice that is so sadly lacking at present.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Alex Carlile". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'A' and 'C'.

The Lord Carlile of Berriew QC CBE