

**Statement of Bangladesh to the United Nations in New York at the 6th Committee General  
Debate on “Crimes Against Humanity (Item:80)”**

**10 October 2024, Trusteeship Council Chamber, UNHQs**

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**Mr. Chair,**

The world has recently witnessed an epochal revolution in Bangladesh. Led by the ordinary people, in particular the youth, the revolution has resulted in the fall of an autocracy and given birth to a new Bangladesh; a Bangladesh that aspires to rebuild itself on the foundations of democracy, justice and human rights.

The victory, however, did not come without a cost.

The revolution began in July, with a modest protest by the students who demanded end of discrimination in government jobs. The peaceful protests, however, met with very harsh response from the State. With unprecedented force, the State machinery attempted to suppress the movement, resulting in the death of hundreds of demonstrators. The sheer cruelty of the response led to widespread anger and waves of protest across the country. Students, even school-going teenagers, day laborers and people from all walks of life came down on the streets with a call for justice. They stood firm and determined, often braving bullets; yet they refused to give up until freedom was achieved.

An estimated eight hundred people were martyred in the movement; 105 of them are children. Thousands injured, lost their eyes and limbs forever. According to the latest report, around 400 individuals had sustained eye injuries; 35 people of them lost both eyes.

**Mr. Chair,**

Ensuring justice for the victims of this tragedy is the top priority of our new Government led by Professor Muhammad Yunus. While we welcomed international cooperation including from the OHCHR, the Government is taking all necessary measures to activate its national mechanisms for

investigation and trial of the individuals who were involved in those heinous crimes during the movement.

The International Crimes Tribunal, which had earlier conducted trial of individuals accused of genocide and other crimes against humanity during the 1971 war of liberation, has been revamped. The new Prosecution team has already commenced its functions by inviting information from all sources including the general public.

Additionally, the interim government has also taken initiative to provide reparations to the injured and the families of the martyrs in the form of medical and financial support. To this end, a Foundation has already been launched.

Some of these measures are long-term measures, such as, institutional reforms including in police and judiciary. Within two weeks in office, the Government acceded to the International Convention for Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances. An Inquiry Commission has been established for investigating into all the allegations of enforced disappearances reported during the past decade and a half.

**Mr. Chair,**

As a state party to Rome Statute, Bangladesh has consistently demonstrated its strong commitment to ending impunity and to that end remained supportive to the international efforts to advance codification of international law, including international criminal law. We have also supported the initiatives and work of this Committee to facilitate conversation towards concluding a stand-alone convention on Crime against Humanity, as recommended by the International Law Commission.

The recent experience in our own country has only reinforced our conviction and reminded us of the urgency to make concrete progress in this matter.

**Mr. Chair,**

We believe the draft articles of the International Law Commission on the prevention and punishment of crimes against humanity provide a solid foundation for a potential future convention, to be shaped through inclusive and active participation by all stakeholders. Thanks to Resolution 77/249, the Committee already had the opportunity to hold in-depth discussions on the draft articles during the resumed sessions in 2023 and 2024.

Based on the discussions held in two sessions, we believe time is ripe for taking the process to the next level. In this regard, we thank the delegations of The Gambia and Mexico for proposing a resolution in the current session with a view to convening the United Nations Conference of Plenipotentiaries on Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Humanity. Bangladesh has already cosponsored the resolution and we invite others to join the force.

Mr. Chair,

Before I conclude, allow me to share two specific points:

**First:** While we work towards the conclusion of a Convention for prevention and punishment of crimes against humanity, we must persist in our efforts to strengthen the existing international institutions including the United Nations Security Council, International Court of Justice and International Criminal Court, so that they are able to play their due role in protecting people from atrocity crimes, including crimes against humanity.

Absence of a stand-alone treaty should not be an excuse to evade responsibility to protect the people of besieged Gaza, of Lebanon or the Rohingya minorities of Myanmar. They cannot wait for a new treaty to be concluded, while those responsible for their slaughter enjoy impunity. The ongoing legal processes in the International Court of Justice and International Criminal Court in the situations of Palestine and Myanmar need to be supported and the orders of those Courts must be complied with.

**Second:** We fully recognize that the primary responsibility for protecting its people from crimes against humanity rests with the state itself, and the new Convention on crimes against humanity is going to be an important instrument to guide national institutions in fulfilling their sacred duty in this regard. However, in the absence of international cooperation, especially in the field of mutual

legal assistance and extradition, we cannot expect this instrument to succeed, no matter how strong its provisions are.

We reiterate our call to the member States to demonstrate genuine political will in addressing impunity and cooperate with other member States and relevant international justice mechanisms at all stages of investigation, trial and execution of verdicts. Denying extradition of individuals accused or convicted of crimes against humanity on any ground whatsoever stands against the very spirit of this process.

I thank you, Mr. Chair.