

# WAR CRIMINALS OF 1971

**IN THE SANCTUM OF  
DEMOCRACY**



Jamaat-e-Islami's Desecration of Bangladesh's Soul While the March 7 Speech Becomes "Terrorism"

## **In the Month of Liberation, a Nation Watches Its Betrayers Reclaim Power**

March is Bangladesh's sacred month — the month of blood and birth.

It was in March 1971 that Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman delivered the historic 7 March speech, igniting the spirit of resistance that would lead to the Bangladesh Liberation War.

It was in March that Pakistani tanks rolled into cities and villages, and militias like Razakar, Al-Badr, and Al-Shams joined the army's campaign of terror. The war left an estimated three million Bengalis dead, 200,000–400,000 women raped, and ten million refugees displaced.

Fifty-five years later, in March 2026, Bangladesh faces a deeply unsettling paradox:

- A convicted Razakar sits in the parliamentary presidium
  - Some MPs refuse to stand for the national anthem
  - Citizens playing the 7 March speech are arrested under anti-terror laws
- This is not irony. It is a profound insult to the nation's founding memory.

## **A War Criminal in the Presidium – The Resurrection of Azharul Islam**

In the 13th Jatiya Sangsad, a five-member presidium panel was nominated to oversee parliamentary sessions in the Speaker's absence.

One of the names on that list: ATM Azharul Islam, Nayeb-e-Amir of Jamaat-e-Islami. In 2014, the International Crimes Tribunal sentenced him to death for crimes against humanity during 1971.

The charges included:

- Running a rape camp in Rangpur
- Leading Al-Badr death squads
- Participating in the murder of over 1,200 civilians
- Burning Hindu villages
- Abducting professors and intellectuals

The Supreme Court upheld the death sentence in 2019.

Yet in May 2025, the same court quietly acquitted him. No new evidence. No national reckoning. Today, the man once condemned for genocide helps preside over the parliament born from the blood of those very victims.

## **Sitting Through the Anthem – Jamaat’s Open Declaration of Disloyalty**

On 12 March 2026, during the first session of parliament, the national anthem “Amar Sonar Bangla” was played.

Most lawmakers stood in respect. But several MPs from Jamaat-e-Islami and allied factions deliberately remained seated.

This was not a mistake. It was a political message.

Jamaat has historically rejected Bangladesh’s birth. During the 1971 Liberation War, the party collaborated with the Pakistani military and helped organize militias such as Razakar, Al-Badr, and Al-Shams.

These forces were responsible for mass killings, systematic rape, persecution of minorities, and the assassination of intellectuals on 14 December 1971.

## **When Memory Becomes “Terrorism”**

While Jamaat MPs sit through the anthem, the state has turned its focus elsewhere — criminalizing remembrance.

In early March 2026, three former Dhaka University student leaders were arrested:

- Sheikh Tasnim Afroz Emi
- Asif Ahmed Shoikot
- Abdullah Al Mamun

Their alleged crime: playing Bangabandhu’s historic 7 March speech through a loudspeaker near Shahidullah Hall.

Police charged them under the Anti-Terrorism Act. Bail was denied and they remain behind bars.

Meanwhile, citizens attempting to lay flowers at the ruins of the Bangabandhu Memorial Museum in Dhanmondi 32 faced similar accusations.

## **Jamaat's 1971 Record – Documented Collaboration and Genocide**

The role of Jamaat-e-Islami during 1971 is not a matter of political debate. It is documented history.

The party collaborated directly with the Pakistan Army during the war.

Its paramilitary wings were deeply involved in atrocities across the country. Multiple Jamaat leaders were convicted by the International Crimes Tribunal.

The scale of the crimes remains staggering:

- 3 million people killed
- 200,000–400,000 women raped
- 10 million refugees forced into exile

## **BNP's Silence – Complicity by Omission**

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) has remained conspicuously silent on the controversy.

There has been:

- No condemnation of the anthem protest
- No demand for Azharul Islam's removal
- No protest against arrests linked to the March 7 speech

This silence reflects a political calculation that risks overshadowing democratic principles.

## **Time to Stand — Or Be Counted with the Traitors**

The people of Bangladesh did not sacrifice their lives for a parliament where Razakars preside and national memory is criminalized.

Three fundamental actions are necessary:

- Removal of ATM Azharul Islam from the presidium
- Parliamentary censure for MPs who refused to stand for the anthem
- Immediate release of citizens arrested for playing the March 7 speech

Bangladesh was born in resistance to tyranny. In March 1971, the nation chose freedom over submission.

In March 2026, it must choose memory over amnesia, dignity over disgrace, Bangladesh over the ghosts of Razakar.

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