

**Welcome Remarks by H.E. Ambassador Mohammad Ziauddin on the event of the screening of a Documentary Film titled "*Journey to Justice*" by Shahriar Kabir at the Bangabandhu Auditorium of the Embassy of Bangladesh in Washington, DC**

27 September 2016 at 6:30 pm

Distinguished Guests,

Assalamu Alaikum and Good Evening.

Welcome to the Bangabandhu Auditorium. This evening we are about to screen a documentary called the "*Journey to Justice*". It has been meticulously and laboriously compiled by our distinguished guest of honor, Mr. Shahriar Kabir.

The documentary narrates the story of a brutal genocide unleashed on the helpless people of Bangladesh by the Pakistan occupation army in 1971. It tells the story of the treacherous local collaborators who assisted the army in perpetrating its rapacious rampage all across the country. These collaborators belonged mostly to a religious based party called the Jamaati-Islami.

The documentary focuses on the vicious role of the malicious collaborators; their trial by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman after the liberation of Bangladesh; their release after the gruesome murder of Bangabandhu and 18 members of his family on 15 August 1975; and their political rehabilitation by the over ambitious dictator, Major General Ziaur Rahman, after his illegal usurpation of state power.

The long standing demand of the families of the 3 million innocent people killed and the 200,000 women dishonored in the genocide had been to try and punish the collaborators. This was ignored by the dictators and the quasi-dictators in the many years to follow.

Then, in 1992, an unprecedented citizen's movement under the Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee rose in crescendo, demanding the immediate trials of the war criminals. It was spearheaded, among others, by the late Begum Jahanara Imam, a leading women activist, and Mr. Shahriar Kabir.

In 1996, after a long 21 years of bitter struggle for democracy and people's rights, Her Excellency Sheikh Hasina was elected to the high office of Prime Minister. One of her first initiative was to begin the process of trial of these despicable collaborators. She could not complete the process during her first term due to the subversive activities of the BNP-Jamaati Opposition Alliance. This Alliance was vehemently opposed to the war crimes trials.

But, at the beginning of her second term in 2009, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina lost no time in establishing the war crimes tribunals. It then took six long years of trial proceedings to deliver justice to six of the most notorious collaborators.

The documentary we are about to view is meant to ensure that the genocide of 1971 is not lost in time. It is meant to remind all of the heartbreaking tragedy. It is also meant to enjoin the voice of conscience of humanity for the establishment of fundamental human rights, justice and peace allover the world.

Mr. Shahriar Kabir is an admired patriot and a determined crusader against the war criminals and the collaborators of 1971 genocide. His writings and his many books are aimed to keep alive the memories of Bangladesh's historic freedom struggle.

His inflexible, undeterred stand against the Jamaati leaders, the war criminals and collaborators, is an epic narrative that have drawn the admiration and support of the patriotic people of Bangladesh and, in recent years, have caught the imagination of the world.

**Ladies and gentlemen, I am happy to introduce to you - Mr. Shahriar Kabir.**