

February 3, 2005

Appeal to the Freedom Fighters of Bangladesh

To the Muktiyoddhas of this country: as the widow of a fallen comrade I would like to appeal for your help and support.

I am calling for various programs that involve peaceful mass protests. Please join these protests wherever you are. Remember that your mere presence in a gathering gives renewed inspiration to the young and reminds them of the courage that Bengalis are capable of. When you lose sight of what we are fighting for, please remember the sight of the blood-soaked body of my husband, and do not just weep, but promise to yourselves that with Almighty Allah's blessing you will take the right steps to ensure that Shah A.M.S. Kibria's death was not in vain.

I know many of you are old and gray. Your steps are slower and less certain: many of you suffer from the pain of old wounds and the ailments of old age. You have given so much to this nation, and some of you may feel it is unfair for anyone to ask you to give something more. But you must do so to defend your legacy. I know your flesh is weak but I also know your spirits are strong and willing. I now beseech you to summon every last reserve of strength in your bodies to once again gird yourselves with steely resolution for the struggle ahead, remembering the past.

Perhaps no one remembers the past better than you. When we began the journey from darkness to light on that fateful night in March 1971, did anyone know how long that war would last? It took nine months but it could have taken nine years and cost many more lives. Would we have hesitated then had we known that the fight would be even longer and more difficult than it was? Would we then have compromised our beliefs and convictions in the face of the brutality of that barbarous regime? In your hearts all of you know the answer to these questions.

My husband was one of you and I know that even his own modest contributions to the struggle for Liberation have not gone unappreciated. There is one less of your number today, the "band of brothers" that brought freedom to our country. But there are still enough of you to make a difference, to turn the tide of battle and sweep away the forces of evil that have gripped the throat of this country that we love.

As the wife of a Muktiyoddha, I say to you, "It is time to make a stand". It is time to confront the forces of evil. It is time for you to lead us back towards the bright vision of the Republic that millions died for in 1971.

Mrs. Asma Kibria