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Subject: KEY HOUSE MEMBERS PRESS FOR ANSWERS IN BANGLADESH POLITICAL KILLING

news release from

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KEY HOUSE MEMBERS PRESS FOR ANSWERS IN BANGLADESH POLITICAL KILLING

Congressman Barney Frank (D-MA) today released a letter sent last Friday by a bipartisan group of leading House members to the Bangladesh government expressing concern about the adequacy of the progress made in the investigation into a grenade attack at a political rally that killed five opposition party members last year, including Shah A.M.S. Kibria, a major figure in Bangladesh politics.

Since the January 2005 murder of Shah A.M.S. Kibria, a member of the Bangladeshi parliament who had also previously served as the Bangladeshi finance minister and foreign secretary, a great deal of international attention has focused on this case, notably from the EU Parliament, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and the U.S. government.

Last year, members of the U.S. House and Senate wrote a series of letters to the U.S. State Department and the Bangladeshi government urging a complete, fair, and transparent investigation in the attack. The State Department, in response, assured members of Congress that the U.S. has made clear to the government of Bangladesh that "its investigation into this case and subsequent prosecution will be closely scrutinized and will affect Bangladesh's reputation with the United States and the rest of the international community."

In their recent letter to the Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, the 15 federal lawmakers state, in part, "Although we appreciate the fact that Ambassador Chowdhury has assured many members of Congress of your government's commitment to conducting a thorough and transparent investigation to bring the perpetrators of this heinous act to justice, we must tell you that there does seem to us to be doubt as to whether the authorities have fully pursued all available leads that could clarify the full scope and circumstances of Mr. Kibria's assassination."

The House members outline several specific questions in their letter that they believe remain outstanding and emphasize their interest in having answers to the questions because, as the letter closes, "we believe that prosecuting this case without further inquiry under the time limits imposed by the Speedy Trial Court would go contrary to the public interest, to the interest of justice, and to the assurances many of us received from your government that justice will be achieved."

The letter was organized by Frank, the leading Democrat on the House Financial Services Committee, and signed by 15 senior House members, including Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), the House Democratic leader; Rep. Tom Lantos (D-CA), the leading Democrat on the House International Relations Committee; Rep. James Leach (R-IA), chairman of the International Relations Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific; Rep.

Charles Bass (R-NH), Republican member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee; and Rep. Carolyn Maloney (D-NY), the senior Democrat on the Financial Services Subcommittee on Domestic and International Monetary Policy, Trade and Technology.