

Hasina, 12 others charged in JIC enforced disappearance case

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Online Desk : The International Crimes Tribunal (ICT)-1 on Thursday framed charges against 13 people, including ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina, in a case filed over enforced disappearances and torture at the Joint Interrogation Cell (JIC) during the previous Awami League government. The three-member tribunal, headed by Justice Md Golam Mortuza Mazumder, passed the order, setting January 19 for submitting the opening statement by the prosecution.

The other 12 in the case are ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina's former security and defence adviser, Tarique Ahmed Siddique, and Md Akbar Hossain, Md Saiful Abedin, Md Saiful Alam, Md Tabrej Shams Chowdhury, Hamidul Haque, Mohammad Touhidul Islam, Sheikh Md Sarwar Hossain, Kabir Ahammed, Md Mahbubur Rahman Siddiqui, Ahmed Tanvir Mazhar Siddiqui and Mokhchurul Haque. Chief Prosecutor Muhammad Tajul Islam took part in the hearing, pleading to frame five charges against the accused. Defence counsel, however, argued for discharging them, saying their clients are innocent.

Three of the 13 accused are in custody and are facing the trial in person. They are Sheikh Md Sarwar Hossain, Md Mahbubur Rahman Siddiqui, and Ahmed Tanvir Mazhar Siddiqui. The three pleaded not guilty before the tribunal. Earlier on October 8, the tribunal took cognisance of charges against 30 people, including Sheikh Hasina, in two separate cases over enforced disappearances and torture allegedly carried out at the Taskforce for Interrogation (TFI) Cell and the JIC during the Awami League's rule.

The prosecution has also brought another five charges against 17 people, including Sheikh Hasina and Tarique Ahmed Siddique, over similar crimes allegedly committed at the TFI Cell. The other accused in that case are Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, Benazir Ahmed, M Khurshid Hossain, Barrister Md Harun Ur Rashid, Anwar Latif Khan, Md Jahangir Alam, Tofayel Mostafa Sarwar, KM Azad, Md Qamrul Hasan, Md Mahabub Alam, Abdullah Al Momen, Md Sarwar Bin Qashem, Md Khairul Islam, Md Moshiur Rahman Jewel and Saiful Islam Suman.