

# Masud Sadique Chullu

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***During The Liberation War of Bangladesh, Masud Sadique Chulla was a valiant Freedom Fighter of the Guerrilla Squad, Crack Platoon, under Sector 2. On August 30,1971, he was arrested in Dhaka where he was to***

***carry out an operation. He was taken to the Nakhhalpara MP Hostel Concentration Camp, Dhaka, and was tortured brutally. Fortunately enough, he was spared death as his elder brother Mr. ASHK Sadique (present Education Minister) was a key bureaucrat in the then Pakistan Government. Masud Sadique Chullu's testimony***

***was recorded on September 20,1999.***

During the liberation war I was a member of a, 17-18 member Guerrilla group, known as 'Crack Platoon.'

We spent nights at 1 Tenament House, Elephant Road (Near Ramna Thana) the official residence of my elder brother Mr. S.S.H.K. Sadique, who was a top civil servant of the then Pakistan Government. There we stored enough arms and ammunitions to resist the Pakistan army for three to four hours.

On the midnight of August, 29,1971, the Pakistan army attacked our house. Lead by Major Quaiyum, followed by a small group, knocked at the door. When my brother opened the door the Major asked, "Sir, how many people live in this house?" My brother replied, "My mother, wife and children." The Major asked again,

"Anybody else?" My younger brother Masud Sadique," replied my brother, carefully avoiding my nickname.

The Major, however, wanted to know my nickname, to which my brother said, "Chullu".

I was hearing all this from an adjoining room. My brother asked me to get up. I came in front of the army team. The Major said, "Sir, we want to take him to the police station for an hour. Don't worry, he'll be back in'

the morning.

Such a situation was apprehended as we were making preparations for an operation at Azimpur that very morning. For this I had to go to my house at Dhanmondi Road No.28. Which was used as a camp of the Guerilla group and arms and ammunitions were hidden underground. While entering my house, a guard of an adjacent house informed me that some members of our group were caught by the army and were brought to that house. Although I could not know who were arrested, I suspected possible danger. For security reason, members of our group were careful not to live in the same place, but to divide and

live in different places in separate small groups. We never took permanent shelter. When I told my brother about the arrests they advised me to go into hiding and thus I decided to leave the house next morning with all the arms and ammunition. I spent a restless night. However, before I could leave, the army reached my brother's house to arrest me.

My brother asked the guard to open the gate. The Major said sarcastically, "No need. he (indicating me) is used to jumping over walls." I could understand what the officer actually meant. I started to get mentally prepared to face a tough situation. When I got into the army jeep they blind folded me and tied my hands. I could not figure out the destination. On the way, the jeep stopped several times. They whispered to each other.

I was still in the jeep, when they surrounded the house of Major Dalim to arrest his brother Swapan, who was able to escape by jumping from the roof.

After about half an hour, the vehicle finally reached its destination (I came to know later that it was the Nakhhalpara M.P. Hostel).

They took me to a small dark room measuring about 10 feet by 10 feet. When I entered the room, Colonel Hejaji of field intelligence unit asked rudely "What is your name?" I replied. Then he shouted in urdu

"Musalmanka bachcha, musalmanko marta hai? (Being a Moslem you are killing Moslems) You have killed my brother." He kicked me on the face. My teeth broke with the spikes of his boot. Then he asked in English,

"How many Pakistanis have you killed so far? How many operations have you conducted?"

I replied "I don't understand what you're saying." The Colonel said "You will understand in a few moments" and ordered Havildar Shafin Gul to hang me up. He hung me from the hook of the ceiling fan. Then the Colonel himself started beating me up. After his turn, Havildar Shafin Gul and three others took charge.

Shafin Gul was the most notorious person among the Pakistan army contingent camped at the M.P. Hostel. He continued interrogation while torturing me. He asked, "Where are the arms?" Groaning in pain, I replied, "I don't know."

As I repeatedly denied their allegations, they increased the level of torture and at one stage I fell unconscious. I can not recall how long I remained unconscious, but I do remember somebody bringing me down and projecting a search light towards my face. Suddenly I heard the sound of a window opening. Hejaji came and asked a man beyond the fence "Is this Chullu?" I heard the reply, "Ha, yeto Chullu hai" (Yes, this is Chullu).

Hejaji said, "Well, you're the commander of Dhaka city? You couldn't recognise them, but they recognised you. Now tell me where are the arms?" As I refused to disclose, Hejaji shouted in anger and ordered his men to torture me again.

They hung me up again and beat me up mercilessly. I fell unconscious again. On the afternoon of March 30, I regained consciousness. I realised that my white shirt and black pants had become blood stained. I tried to open my eyes, but could not. I could not make out whether I was alive or dead. I could not move my legs as they felt heavy like stones. I failed to raise my head too. I was thirsty, but I was not given a single drop of water.

I felt pain in my hands also. The army men thought me to be dead. One of them told somebody to bring down my 'dead body'. When they brought me down, I heard the azan of magreb prayer. I saw all the soldiers offering their prayers on the balcony. A few moments later, they returned and realised that I was alive. They again hung me with clamps attached to the wall. I heard them asking the same question, "Tell us, where are the arms?"

"I don't know", I replied. Shafin Gul punched my belly with full strength and started beating me with a cane. Then four soldiers began to torture me pressing my body to the wall with bamboo sticks and iron rods.

Before falling unconscious, I said, "Stop torturing me ... I'll tell you everything."

However, when they released me, I refused to tell them anything. They started torturing me in the same manner and I fell unconscious again. Before falling unconscious, I gave them the addresses of some houses where we used to keep arms previously. They conducted raids on those houses, but failed to recover any arms.

I never told them the real address, because we kept arms at my brother's official house. If I told them that address, they would have killed my brother and other members of my family.

The next morning, I locked myself inside a bathroom. I was feeling severe pain in my leg. My skin had become mutilated due to torture. They once again brought me to Colonel Hejaji for interrogation. Then the same story of interrogation and torture continued. I did not disclose anything. They handed over me to Shafin Gul and Capt. Sajjad again. He ordered to torture me more severely.

Shafin Gul took me to a 10 feet by 10 feet room. Several soldiers sat on my body and pressed me down so strongly, that I felt as if all the internal parts of my body were coming out. After some time, they clamped me to the window of the torture cell. All arrangement of torture were ready in the cell. There were many clamps on the windows, walls and ceiling of the room. Light could barely enter into the cell as there was a high wall outside the window.

During the torture session, they used to press burning cigarettes on my throat and I screamed in pain.

From my throat to knees, they carried out the same method of torture. Once they pressed a burning cigarette into my rectum. I lost all sense due to the acute pain. I can not recall how long I remained unconscious. I could

not make out whether I was alive or dead or on the borderline between life and death. When I regained my senses, I found myself in a dying condition.

They tried to collect information from me by inserting ice into my rectum. They applied new methods of torture everyday. After the first 5/6 days of torture, I could not open my eyes. But I could hear a little. Once I saw the father of a freedom fighter, Ashfaq. The army brought that innocent man to the torture cell. He was astonished to see me there and said, "Don't tell them anything ... if you tell, they'll get the arms and our struggle will remain incomplete. You know, you'll have to die one day". I said, "Uncle, I didn't tell them anything so far. But I can't bear the torture anymore."

When I recall those days, I still feel pain. I don't know how I withstood the torture. I did not tell them about our arms and ammunitions only for the safety of my Brother and others. It became a routine for them to torture me, hanging me with clamps against the wall of the torture cell.

During interrogation, a Captain of the Pak Army asked me, "I'll release you, if you tell me where you have kept the arms." I realised, he was bluffing. So I did not tell him anything. They brought me down from hanging position. I lay in the small dark room alone. I could not see who were being tortured beside me. I only could hear them screaming.

During the first few days, I couldn't distinguish between day and night. They used to bring me to the torture cell at dawn and take me back to Ramna police station late in the night.

As they failed to unleash any information from me by torture for a week, they brought freedom fighter Badiul Alam in front of me and said, "Bodi told us that you have some arms." Due to the torture by the Pakistan army, Bodi's face had become deformed and it was difficult to recognise him. I realised that he might have said something to save his life. The soldiers tied Badi and me with chains in the corridor. Then he described the story of his arrest and torture. Due to pain, he could not speak clearly. He told me that he would try to escape from the torture cell. "I must take revenge" and "I am ready to die for that."

I was surprised to hear of his plan considering his physical condition. He even advised me to flee, but at that time, I did not have sufficient strength to run. My knees were broken due to torture and I could not even stand or walk. I used to crawl on the floor. Badi did not forget his plan. One morning when the soldiers were taking him to another room, Badi attacked a soldier. He snatched the sepoy's stengun and started running. I tried to get up but failed. The soldiers caught us and started to physically abuse us. Badi's nose and mouth started bleeding. We fell unconscious. Two days later, the army took away Badi somewhere else. After that I never saw Badi. To punish me for trying to flee from the torture cell, they tied my hands and legs and kept me there alone. I could not make out whether it was day or night, whether I was dead or alive. The soldiers used to give me water in a container and bad smelling food.

From September 10 or 11, they started threatening me that I would be hanged if I did not tell them about the arms and the guerrillas. I was awaiting death. My face by then, was disfigured due to their torture.

Everyday, soldiers used to inform us about the fate of freedom fighters they had already killed. They wanted to threaten and make me frightened. They used to say, "Your trial will begin soon."

My elder brother A.S.H.K. Sadique, having obtained permission from higher authorities, came to the M.P. Hostel to meet me. He was shocked to see my condition. My face was distorted, my gums were protruded, and eyes were almost shut. I could not see clearly. My brother told me that the army also took him for interrogation. They interrogated him for several hours and wanted to know the whereabouts of arms and guerrillas. They told my brother, "You must know something. Some young men used to come and stay at your house every night." As my brother was a CSP officer, his colleagues protested the army interrogation. They lodged a complaint to the central government that the army was compelling the CSP members to be aggrieved.

In mid-September, I was shifted to Ramna police station from Sher-E-Bangla Nagar M.P. Hostel. A professor of the English department of Dhaka University, Ahsanul Haq and one Abdus Samad were with me.

The army used to take us to the M.P. Hostel interrogation cell everyday.

After about a month and a half, we were taken to Dhaka Central Jail. For the first few days, we were confined in the condemned cell usually kept for the convicts of capital punishment. A few days later, I was shifted to another cell in front of the condemned cell. Up to the time I was brought to the central jail, I had only

one set of dress which had become rough as my blood, urine and stool had dried on it. The whole body had marks caused by burning cigarettes. The jail authorities gave me the clothes used by other prisoners.

Fortunately, they did not torture me in jail.

During the stay in jail, everyday I heard the screaming of other prisoners. I heard the news of killing of freedom fighters from the army sepoys, prisoners and jail police. Jail Super Shamsur Rahman was sympathetic towards me.

One day some soldiers came to my cell and forced me to sign on a piece of blank paper. By November 7/8, they finalised a charge-sheet against me. The allegations were : leading a guerrilla group, possessing and supplying unauthorised arms, carrying out bomb attacks, killing civil and military Pakistani citizens and so on.

One morning, a soldier informed me that two prisoners would be hanged on that day in the ground in front of my cell. Both the victims were employees of PIA (Pakistan International Airlines) who were arrested in April for killing a Pak militia at Gulistan in Dhaka city. The entire arrangement for the hanging were made in front of me. I witnessed it from my cell through the grill of the ventilator. Both the convicts roared like lions when they were hanged.

Everyday we used to get news about mock trials and execution of freedom fighters. My trial began on November 22 or 23. At that time I was waiting in my small dark cell for the verdict. The date of verdict shifted several times. During the trial, my brother came to meet me.

It was the month of December. The Indian army joined the freedom fighters in the war against Pakistan army. At this stage, my trial was postponed. I heard that I would be shot after being taken to the cantonment.

After December 3, every day, I heard news of victory of the freedom fighters and Indian army over the Pakistan occupation army. I started dreaming of survival once again. Other members of our guerrilla group

‘crack platoon’ did not know whether I was alive or dead.

On the morning of December 17, Alam, Zia, Maya Fateh Ali and other members of ‘crack platoon’ came to take me out of jail. They were shooting blank shots. The Jail Super informed them that he can not release me without a government order. As the guerrillas became enraged, the Jail Super released me.

I was overwhelmed to see thousands of people fervently awaiting in front of the jail to receive us.

Amongst them were apprehensive eyes searching their relatives. Amidst firing, everybody was cheering to celebrate the glorious victory.

***Interviewed by Ruhul Motin***

**I had seen many deaths, heard about many incidents of women**

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