



## Why a Bangladesh mob burned down home of independence icon Mujibur Rahman



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Six months after a mass uprising toppled former Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, a mob set the house of her late father and the country's independence hero, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, on fire on Wednesday night.

Along with Rahman's Dhanmondi 32 residence, protesters also set the homes of exiled leaders of Hasina's party, the Awami League, on fire.

The mob gathered after Hasina delivered a fiery online speech on Wednesday evening from exile in India, in which she called on her supporters to stand against the interim government led by Nobel laureate, Muhammad Yunus.

tacked during the July-August protests against Hasina that culminated in her ousting after 15 years of rule. The protests, led largely by students and young people, began over a controversial government job quota system and transformed into nationwide unrest following a harsh crackdown by authorities, where at least 834 people were killed and 20,000 were injured in clashes with the police. Rahman, widely known as "Bangabandhu" (Friend of Bengal) and "Mujib" – led the nation's liberation struggle against Pakistan that led to its independence in 1971.

As the new nation's first president and later prime minister, Rahman's leadership shaped the country's early years. On January 24, 1975, he introduced a controversial one-party state system, known as Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Awami League (BaKSAL), which eliminated political opposition. This system gave the state complete control over the media; merged state, government, and party functions; and required military personnel, police, judges and civil servants to become party members.

On August 15, 1975, Mujib and all other members of his family, except Hasina and her younger sister, Sheikh Rehana, were assassinated during a military coup at his residence on the Dhanmondi 32 road in Dhaka.

At the time, Hasina and her sister, Rehana, were in Germany. They took refuge in India and stayed there until Hasina's return to Bangladesh in May 1981. Upon her return, she announced the conversion of the residence to a museum as a memorial of the country's freedom on June 10, 1981. The museum was inaugurated on August 14, 1994, by which time,

Bangladesh had a democratically-elected government after a series of four military or military-backed governments until 1990.

Hasina's Awami League eventually came to power, defeating the incumbent Bangladesh Nationalist Party government of Begum Khaleda Zia. The house held great significance within Bangladesh's independence movement, and many global leaders met with Rahman in this house until his assassination. A campaign on social media to demolish the Dhanmondi 32 house had been mounting since Hasina was ousted from power last year.