



Disappearance of Mohammad Chowdhury Alam, Ward Councilor Number-56 of Dhaka City Corporation

Fact finding Report
Odhikar

Mohammad Chowdhury Alam (66), Councilor of 56 number ward of Dhaka City Corporation and a resident of 315/C Khilgaon, was abducted from in front of Metro Garden on 75, Indira road on June 25, 2010. The family alleges that he was taken away in a micro-bus, by 7/8 men who dressed in plain clothes and identified themselves as law enforcement officers.

His son, Abu Syed Chowdhury Himu, claimed that, Mohammad Chowdhury Alam was abducted by law enforcement officers and in response, on the 4th of July, 2010, he filed a Habeas Corpus petition at the High Court Division of the Supreme Court. At that time, Judge H.M Shamshuddin Chowdhury and Judge Sheikh Md. Zakir Hossain, sat at the division bench. The Court, without issuing any rule on the habeas corpus, wanted to give the police a directive. Hearing this, the concerned lawyers decided to withdraw the writ petition.

On 18th July, 2010, Abu Syed Chowdhury Himu, again filed a petition about Mohammad Chowdhury Alam having gone missing, at the division bench which comprised of Justice Mamunun Rahman and Justice Syeda Afsar Zahan. Having taken the matter into consideration, on 19th July, 2010, the court ordered the Police IGP and RAB DG to immediately investigate the matter and take effective steps. The Court also ordered for a report to be submitted on Mohammad Chowdhury Alam's abductors.

Human Rights organization, *Odhikar*, has conducted a fact finding mission in to the matter. During this, they interviewed:

- Relatives of the victim
- Eye witnesses
- Police Officers



Photograph: Mohammad Chowdhury Alam

Abu Syed Chowdhury Himu (35), Chowdhury Alam's son-

Abu Syed Chowdhury Himu told *Ohikar* that, his father, Mohammad Chowdhury Alam, was a member of the Executive committee of the main opposition party, BNP and President of BNP Ramna unit. Also, he was Ward Councilor of 56 number ward of Dhaka City Corporation.

Himu said that, on the evening of 20th June, 2010, his father went to the United Hospital in Gulshan-2 to visit Dhaka City Corporation Mayor Sadek Hossian Khoka, who was admitted there for medical attention. On that day, a man named Billal Hussein from the Detective division of RAB headquarters, attempted but failed to take his father into a microbus and abduct him.

Himu further told *Odhikar* that, a man attempting to cause political harass his father, Mohammad Chowdhury Alam, filed a case at Shahbagh Police station on 20th June, 2010. To prevent being arrested for that accusation, his father went into hiding at a relative's place at 38 Indira road.

At 5:00 pm on the evening of 25th June, 2010, Khilgaon Police station's Sub Inspector(SI) Tafazzal Hussein came to their Khilgaon residence and asked Himu whether his father was home. When Himu told him that he was not there, the SI informed him that a case had been filed against his father on 20th June, 2010 and he had brought the warrant for that arrest. SI Tafazzel Hussein then menacingly told him that another case had been filed against his father that morning, as in 25th June, 2010, at Shahbagh Police station.

At around 8:00 pm on the evening of 25th June, 2010, his father came to their Khilgaon residence in a relative's car which was driven by their Chauffeur Ashim Chandra Bhaumik. After spending approximately 15 minutes there, Mohammad Chowdhury Alam headed out towards the house of Momtaz Begum, the owner of PRS garden at 42/B-1, Indira road. At around 10:00 pm that night he received news at his cell phone that his father had been abducted from in front of Metro Garden at 75 Indira road, by 7/8 plain clothed men and identified themselves as law enforcement officers. The men picked Mohammad Chowdhury Alam up in a micro-bus and took him away.

On the next morning, 26th June, 2010, the private car from which Mohammad Chowdhury Alam was abducted from was found abandoned by the WASA centre at Kaoron bazaar. He said that, he then searched for his father in numerous locations but was unable to find him. Afterwards, he went to Tejgaon Police station to file a general diary (GD) about his father having gone missing, but the Police officers at the station refused to register the GD, saying that they could not do so as the place of the incident fell under the Shere Bangla Nagar police station. On his insistence, however, the police officers brought the private car from where it was abandoned and kept it under police custody.

On the 30th of June, 2010, Himu went to Shere Bangla Nagar Police Station as he wanted to file a case there. However, the police officers refused to register the case and asked him to file a GD instead. The police officers filed his GD under the allegation that a group of plain clothed men had abducted his father. GD number- 1766; Date 30/06/10.

On 1st July, 2010, officer in-charge (OC) of Shere Bangla Nagar police Station, Mohammad Reaz Hussein, called Himu and asked him to come to the police station.

When he arrived at the police station the OC asked him to file a case. He then filed a case, using a copy of the GD as primary statement of complaint, against 7/8 unnamed assailants for abducting his father. Case number- 4; Date: 01/07/10, under Section: 341/365 of the Penal code. The investigation was initiated by SI Kamruzzaman. Later, on 4th July, 2010, the case was transferred to the Detective Branch (DB). Himu was informed that the investigating officer on the case was now Inspector Mashiur Rahman.

Himu further told *Odhikar* that, on 4th July, 2010, he filed a habeas corpus petition at the High court division of the Supreme court, alleging that his father was abducted by law enforcement officers. At that time, Justice H.M Shamshuddin Chowdhury and Justice Sheikh Md. Zakir Hussein, sat at the Division Bench and heard the petition. The Court, without issuing any rule on the habeas corpus, wanted to give the police a written directive. Hearing this, the concerned lawyers decided to withdraw the Writ.

However, seeing no progress on the case at the Shere Bangla Nagar police station, he re-filed the petition at the High Court Division of the Supreme Court on 18th July 2010. The Division Bench which consisted of Justice Mamunun Rahman and Justice Syeda Afsar Zahan, heard the petition this time. Having taken the matter into consideration, on 19th July, 2010, the court ordered the Police IGP and RAB DG to immediately investigate the matter and take effective steps. The court also ordered the Inspector General of Police and Director General of Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) to submit a report at the court regarding his abduction.

Mohammad Jasimuddin Chowdhury (27), Chowdhury Alam's Chauffeur

Mohammad Jasimuddin told *Odhikar* that, at 5:00 pm on the evening of 20th June, 2010, Mohammad Chowdhury Alam headed out, from his residence in Khilgaon, towards United hospital in Gulshan- 2 in his private car. He was going there to visit Sadek Hussein Khoka, the Mayor of Dhaka City Corporation, who was admitted there for medical attention. When Jasimuddin had parked the car in front of the hospital, Mohammad Chowdhury Alam stepped out and entered the hospital building.

Later, at around 7:30pm that evening, Mohammad Chowdhury Alam left the hospital and headed out towards Gulshan- 2 in the same private car. At that time, a micro-bus appeared from near the United Hospital and blocked the path of his private car. He said, at that time 5/6 people came out of the micro-bus and surrounded the car. Seeing the situation that was before him, he instinctively picked up speed and headed towards Gulshan-2. They were being pursued by two men on a motor cycle. They stopped when they reached the Gulshan-2 traffic signal. There, through the window of his private car, Mohammad Chowdhury Alam informed SI Mohammad Ali of Gulshan Police station about the situation. The Sub- Inspector was there in charge of traffic duty. SI Muhammad Ali then chased the motor cycle which was following Chowdhury Alam's car. He caught one of the two men who were on the motor-cycle, while the other one escaped. The SI came to know that the man was a member of the intelligence wing of the RAB headquarters and that his name was Billal Hussein. He is Assistant Sub Inspector of RAB. His ID number was 314772 and PIR No 4016801. SI Mohammad Ali took Billal Hossain to Gulshan police station and filed a General Diary against him. The General Diary Number was 1748 , dated June 20, 2010. Later, men arrived from the RAB headquarters and arranged Billal Hussein's release and took him away. Jasimuddin told *Odhikar* that, since that day, Law enforcement officers had been trying to arrest Mohammad Chowdhury Alam.

SI Mohammad Ali, Gulshan Police Station, Dhaka Metropolitan Police, Dhaka

SI Mohammad Ali told *Odhikar* that, he had heard about the abduction of Mohammad Chowdhury Alam. However, he refused to say anything about the incident or about the pursuit of Mohammad Chowdhury Alam's car, which took place before him.

SI Tafazzel Hussein, Khilgaon Police Station, Dhaka Metropolitan Police, Dhaka

SI Tafazzel Hussein told *Odhikar* that, on 24th June, 2010, an arrest warrant arrived at their station through police mail. The warrant was issued from the Shahbagh police station bearing the case number- 43; Date: 20.06.2010; under Section 385/506 of the Penal Code. At around 5:00pm on the evening of 25th June, 2010, he went to Mohammad Chowdhury Alam's residence at 315/C Khilgaon, with the arrest warrant. On his arrival he found that Mohammad Chowdhury Alam was not there and accordingly he returned to the police station

Ashim Chandra Bhaumik (20), Private car Driver

Ashim Chandra Bhaumik told *Odhikar* that, he was an employee as a chauffeur at the house of Momtaz Begum, the owner of PRS Garden at 42/B-1, Indira road. The private car he drove was a Black X- Fielder, with license plate no- Dhaka- Metro- GA- 23-3516. Mohammad Chowdhury Alam was hiding at that residence. At around 5:00 pm on the evening of 25th June, 2010, he drove Mohammad Chowdhury Alam to BNP's Central Office, situated in 28/1, Naya Palton VIP road. Mohammad Chowdhury Alam stayed there in a meeting for about one hour. At around 8:00 pm that evening he drove Mohammad Chowdhury Alam to his residence at 315/C Khilgaon.

Ashim Chandra Bhaumik further informs *Odhikar* that, Mohammad Chowdhury Alam left the car and entered his house where he stayed for around 15 minutes before returning to the car. Then he headed out towards Indira road from Khilgaon. While on their way, at around 9:00 pm in front of Metro Garden at 75 Indira, he saw a yellow Taxi cab coming from the south (i.e. the opposite direction). He moved to the side in order to allow the taxi cab to pass, but at the same time the cab mimicked his act. Seeing this he tried to pass but at the same time, the taxi tried to pass too. This led to a head on collision. He then stepped out of the car and asked the cab driver to step down as well. The taxi driver did not do so and told Ashim, from inside the car that, he would go some way ahead and stop the car there. However, the taxi cab did not stop and sped away north. Almost instantly a white micro bus arrived from behind and stood in front of the private car. Seeing this, Ashim went back into the car to pull the car to the side but at that moment 7/8 men stepped out of the micro bus and surrounded it.

He said that, the men were dressed in denim pants, shirts and t-shirts. He said they all looked similar; all of them were tall and had the same short hair-cut. The men opened the door of the private car and forcefully pulled him out. After that they began to slap him. When he wanted to know why they were doing so, they informed him that they were Law Enforcement Officers. At that time they pulled Mohammad Chowdhury Alam out of the private car and took him into the micro-bus. They thrust him on to the street and one of the men drove the private car off to the south. The other men drove the micro-bus away north, with Mohammad Chowdhury Alam inside it. Ashim then used his cell phone to inform Momtaz Begum and her brother Mahbubur Rahman about the incident that just took place. He then went back to Momtaz Begum's house. He said that the private car

was found abandoned beside the WASA center at Kaoran bazaar on 26th June, 2010. The car was later taken and kept in custody at Tejgaon police station.

Omar Farooque (27), Security Guard, Metro Garden, 75 Indira road, Farm gate, Dhaka

Omar Farooque told *Odhikar* that, at approximately 6:00 pm on the evening of 25th June, 2010, he was on duty at the Metro Garden gate with Amidul Islam. At around 9:00 pm, a yellow taxi cab, followed by a micro-bus was approaching from the south while a private car was coming from the north. Since the road was narrow, it made it difficult for both the cars to pass simultaneously. While they attempted to do so, the taxi cab hit the private car and sped off. The micro-bus then stood in the path of the private car and 7/8 men came out of the micro-bus and surrounded the private car. They slapped the driver of the private car several times and then forcefully pulled a man out from the car. The man was dressed in white panjabi and pajamas. Upon resistance from the man, the assailants struggled with him and forced him in to the micro-bus and shut the door. One of the men took the private car and drove it off south, the others entered the micro-bus and it was driven away north.

SI Kamruzzaman, Shere Bangla Nagar Police Station, Dhaka Metropolitan Police, Dhaka

SI Kamruzzaman told *Odhikar* that, on the morning of 30th June, 2010, Mohammad Chowdhury Alam's son Himu, came to the Shere Bangla Nagar police station and filed a GD. In the GD he mentioned that, at approximately 9:00 pm on 25th June, 2010, his father Mohammad Chowdhury Alam was abducted from in front of Metro Garden at 75 Indira road, by 7/8 men who identified themselves as law enforcement officers. GD number- 1766; Date: 30/06/10.

SI Karmuzzaman further said that, at around 7:30 pm on 1st July, 2010, Himu came to the police station again and using a copy of the GD as primary statement of complaint, against 7/8 unnamed assailants for abducting his father. Case number: 4; Date: 01/07/10. SI Kamruzzaman was in-charge of the case. On 04/07/10 the case was transferred to the Detective Branch. Inspector Mashiur Rahman was put in-charge of the investigation.

Inspector Mashiur Rahman, Detective Division (DB), Mintu road, Dhaka

Inspector Mashiur Rahman told *Odhikar* that, on 4th July, 2010 case number 4 of Shere Bangla Nagar Police Station was transferred to the DB. He was then put in charge of the case. He refused to say anything further while the case was under investigation.

Mohammad Rezaul Karim, Officer in-charge, Shahbagh Station, Dhaka Metropolitan Police, Dhaka

Mohammad Rezaul Karim told *Odhikar* that, he had read in the news paper that Ward Councilor Mohammad Chowdhury Alam had been missing since 25th June, 2010. He said that there were 5 cases filed against him in 2007, 2 General Diaries filed against him in 2009, and 2 cases and 2 General Diaries filed against him in 2010. It is not known whether these cases have been filed under political bias.

Odhikar demands that Mohammad Chowdhury Alam be found and that the abductors be brought to justice.