



Asian Federation Against Involuntary Disappearances

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IMMEDIATELY RELEASE MR. ADILUR RAHMAN KHAN AND PROTECT HIS RIGHT NOT TO BE TORTURED!

The Asian Federation Against Involuntary Disappearances (AFAD) condemns the arbitrary arrest of its Council Member, Mr. Adilur Rahman Khan in his residence in Dhaka last night, 10 August 2013. AFAD also calls on the government to respect his right from torture and to immediately release him.

Based on reports received from Odhikar, AFAD member organization in Bangladesh as well as reports from the Asian Human Rights Commission, Mr. Adilur Rahman Khan was with his family and children when arrested without warrant by about 8-10 plainclothes men just as his vehicle entered the family compound. The security guard on duty tried to prevent the men from entering but to no avail. Upon the demand of Mr. Adilur Khan, the men who surrounded his car informed him that they were from the Detective Branch of Bangladesh Police. He was forced into a white microbus vehicle reportedly from United Commercial Bank and a blue and silver Mitsubishi Pajero.

Mr. Adilur Khan was arrested without warrant and his family was not informed of where they were taking him. Members of the Gulshan Police Station when approached by Odhikar at 2:00 a.m. this morning denied that a case was filed against Mr. Khan. It was learned later, through a media interview of DB Deputy Commissioner Masudur Rahman that Khan is being held at the DB Headquarters in Mintu Road for violations of the Information and Communication Technology Act of 2006 - Section 57 which prohibits the "publication of fake, obscene or defaming information in electronic form." He supposedly distorted facts about Hefazat-e-Islam and distorted photographs using Photoshop.

In May 2013, Odhikar, of which Mr. Adilur Rahman Khan sits as Secretary, released a fact-finding report on the Hefazat-e-Islam incident on 5-6 May wherein it reported the killings of 61 persons in the Shapla Chottor crackdown. The Information Ministry on 10

July 2013 released a letter asking for information and identity of the family of the 61 victims including a complete list of family names and addresses. Odhikar, concerned of the security of the victims' families, replied in a letter dated 17 July 2013 that it was willing to disclose the information only to an independent and impartial commission that it requested government to constitute.

AFAD is very much concerned of the safety of Mr. Khan in the hands of his captors and to other fellow human rights defenders in Bangladesh who are critical of the government's human rights performance. AFAD believes the reported violation of Mr. Khan was a veiled attempt to silence him and other human rights defenders who are documenting government violations of human rights.

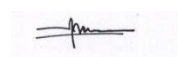
AFAD reminds the government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina of its duty to protect the human rights of its citizens. During the Universal Periodic Review of the United Nations on Bangladesh last January 2013, its Minister said there was no scope for impunity for its law enforcement agencies under Bangladeshi laws and that her government has a zero tolerance policy against human rights violations.

However, the arbitrary arrest of Mr. Adilur Rahman Khan by plainclothes men at 10:30 p.m. is contrary to the Minister's promise at the United Nations. The act was a clear violation of Mr. Khan's right to be informed of why he was arrested, the charges against him and where he will be brought to. This action by the detective police on the person of Mr. Khan, a senior lawyer and former Deputy Attorney General of Bangladesh who is also affiliated with regional and international organizations sends a creeping signal to fellow human rights defenders in the country.

AFAD puts to task the Hasina government to address cases of human rights violations, such as the recommendation of the government of Netherlands "to take all necessary action to tackle problems of persistence of extrajudicial executions, cases of torture and brutality as well as impunity, by ensuring particularly impartiality of investigations and prosecution of those responsible." (Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review on Bangladesh, OHCHR, July 2013)

Lastly, AFAD reminds the Hasina government that respect for human rights is a core obligation as a State party to International Human Rights treaties. Her landslide victory in December 2008 was also based on the mandate to restore democratic institutions. She only has a few months to fulfil this promise prior to elections in 2014, AFAD concludes.

Signed by:

A small, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the initials 'Am', is located at the bottom left of the page.

MUGIYANTO
Chairperson

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Mary Aileen D. Bacalso". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

MARY AILEEN D. BACALSO
Secretary-General