



24th Anniversary of Odhikar: Continuing to defend human rights and justice amid persecution

Statement from Odhikar

Dhaka, 09 October 2018: Odhikar remembers the victims of human rights violations around the world while commemorating its 24th founding anniversary on the 10th of October 2018. The Organisation was formed in 1994 with the vision of a just society based on the rights and responsibilities of State and citizens. Odhikar is striving to achieve this goal through carrying out various activities centered around human rights, based on foundations established by principles of justice and rule of law and international human rights instruments. For 24 years, Odhikar has been consistently working to defend the rights of the people, through documentation, monitoring, awareness, research and advocacy. This day coincides with the World Day against the Death Penalty; and Odhikar in principle stands against the death penalty and it urges for moratorium of execution as an entry point towards abolition of the death penalty.

Odhikar releases a status report every month, highlighting the repression and persecution against human rights defenders and dissenting voices; violation of rights to freedom of speech and expression, of peaceful assembly and of association; and acts of violence against women. The Organisation regularly campaigns to stop the human rights violations of enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, torture and degrading treatment, violations to ethnic and religious minority rights and violence against women that occur in Bangladesh, as well as joining international campaigns on these issues. It also makes submissions to the United Nations Human Rights Council.

While working on human rights issues, Odhikar has been facing extreme repression and harassment by the incumbent government since 2013. The government continues to harass Odhikar for being vocal against human rights violations and repressive laws. Despite facing persecution, harassment, non-renewal of its registration and the freezing of its bank accounts, Odhikar remains steadfast in its defense of human rights and justice. The Organisation unconditionally stands beside the victims of oppression and their families. As an organisation of human rights defenders, Odhikar knows it is necessary to highlight violations, with no discrimination whatsoever; and make appropriate recommendations and create awareness to prevent future violations. The Organisation is still operating due to the volunteer services of grassroots level human rights defenders associated with Odhikar and its members and staff; and their commitment to human rights activism.

Odhikar would like to express heartfelt gratitude to all the human rights defenders, international and regional organisations, local partners and networks, supporters and well-wishers who have stood by the Organisation for the last 24 years; that have expressed solidarity with it and that have actively and continuously campaigned against the persecution it faces. Odhikar will continue to fight against repression to uphold justice and will continue its struggle to establish democracy and human rights.

In Solidarity,
The Odhikar Team