



# JAHANGIR ALAM AKASH

BANGLADESH: TORTURED HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER FACING IMPRISONMENT

**'They shot him in both legs at his home in front of his daughter and wife. I revealed this and they tortured me for it.'**

Jahangir Alam Akash

**I RECEIVED A PHONE CALL FROM A SENIOR RAB OFFICIAL. HE WAS ABUSIVE AND ANGRY WITH ME BECAUSE OF MY REPORT AND THREATENED TO PUNISH ME.**

Jahangir Alam Akash, journalist and head of two local human rights organizations, was detained in the north-western city of Rajshahi in October 2007. He was detained for more than a month and tortured by the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), Bangladesh's elite police force.

He was arrested following a television report in May 2007 in which he revealed the shooting of an unarmed man by RAB agents. The victim's wife gave a graphic description of how RAB agents entered their house, shot her husband in both legs and took him away. Akash's harassment by the RAB began the day after the report was broadcast.

In January 2008, Akash publicly testified that whilst in RAB custody he had been given electric shocks, beaten on the soles of his feet with a stick and hung from the ceiling with his hands tied.

Jahangir Alam Akash was charged with extortion – it is widely believed to be a false, politically motivated charge. Since Akash's release, RAB officers have tried to reverse his bail order by invoking emergency regulations that prevent bail. He has lost his job and is afraid of living in his hometown, Rajshahi, for fear of arrest.

There is a pattern of silencing human rights defenders in Bangladesh by bringing contrived criminal charges against them. Dozens have such charges pending before the courts and remain at risk of re-arrest. A lawyer instrumental in securing Akash's bail has complained of his own harassment through a criminal charge brought against him at the instigation of the RAB.

RAB agents implicated in human rights violations continue to operate with impunity.

## ACT NOW

Call on the Chief Adviser of Bangladesh (Head of Government) to:

- End the harassment of Jahangir Alam Akash and his lawyer, and protect them from politically motivated arrest and torture.
- Drop the charges against Jahangir Alam Akash – charges intended to prevent his legitimate right to act in defence of human rights.
- Investigate all reports of torture and bring the perpetrators to justice.

## WRITE TO:

Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed  
Chief Adviser  
Office of the Chief Adviser  
Tejgaon  
Dhaka  
Bangladesh  
Salutation: Dear Chief Adviser

**Amnesty International**  
International Secretariat  
Peter Benenson House  
1 Easton Street  
London WC1X 0DW  
United Kingdom  
[www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org)  
October 2008  
Index: ASA 13/007/2008

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



**BANGLADESH:  
TORTURED HUMAN  
RIGHTS DEFENDER  
FACING IMPRISONMENT**

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**

