

URGENT ACTION

NEWSPAPER EDITOR FACES TORTURE

Bangladeshi newspaper editor Mahmudur Rahman was transferred from jail custody to police custody in the capital Dhaka on 4 December, putting him at risk of torture. Credible allegations that he was tortured in police custody in April heighten the fear that he might be tortured now.

Mahmudur Rahman was arrested at his office on 11 April 2013 after the newspaper he works for, Amar Desh, published articles that criticised both the current government and also a number of bloggers whose comments were perceived by some religious groups to have been blasphemous. Mahmudur Rahman's lawyers say he was tortured in police custody.

On 17 April he was produced before a magistrate who ordered that he be transferred from police to jail custody. The next day he was sent to hospital, after his condition deteriorated following a two day hunger strike. He had been on hunger strike to protest against a government ban on the publication of his newspaper and the harassment and detention of some members of its staff. Later he was returned to jail custody.

Mahmudur Rahman was transferred from Kashimpur Jail 2 to Tejgaon police station in Dhaka on 4 December, putting him at risk of torture. It is widely known that torture is more common when in police custody as opposed to jail.

Please write immediately in Bangla, English or your own language:

- Calling on the Bangladesh authorities to ensure that Mahmudur Rahman is not subjected to torture or any other ill-treatment;
- Calling on the authorities to ensure that journalists are able to exercise their rights to freedom of expression without fear of reprisals, including harassment or arbitrary detention;
- Calling on the authorities to ensure that attacks against journalists are thoroughly investigated and those responsible brought to justice;

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 16 JANUARY 2013 TO:

Sheikh Hasina

Prime Minister, Prime Minister's Office
Old Sangsad Bhaban, Tejgaon,
Dhaka-1215, Bangladesh
Fax: +880 2 811 3244
Email: pm@pmo.gov.bd;
ps1topm@pmo.gov.bd;
psecy@pmo.gov.bd

Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

Inspector General of Police

Mr Hassan Mahmud Khandker
Bangladesh Police HQ
Dhaka-1000
Bangladesh
Fax: +880 2 7125840
Email: ig@police.gov.bd

Salutation: Dear Inspector General

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the second update of UA95/13. Further information:

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/ASA13/007/2013/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Bangladesh is currently in the grip of a political crisis which has been marked by violent demonstrations across the country. The ruling Awami League government and opposition parties are in deadlock over who will lead the country through its next general election, due to take place on 5 January 2014. In recent weeks, opposition parties have staged a number of nationwide hartals (strikes or day stoppages), which in some cases have led to acts of vandalism and violent clashes between opposing political party members and with the police, resulting in a number of deaths.

Mahmudur Rahman was previously detained and tortured in 2010 after publishing articles critical of the current Awami League government. Since December 2012 he has been threatened with prosecution for publishing a Skype conversation between the then chairman of the Bangladeshi court, the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) and a Bangladeshi legal expert. Following the publication of the conversation, the chairman of the court resigned.

Name: Mahmudur Rahman
Gender m/f: M

Further information on UA: 95/13 Index: ASA 13/017/2013 Issue Date: 5 December 2013