

URGENT ACTION

MAN ABDUCTED IN BANGLADESH

KM Shamim Akhter, former vice-president of a left wing student organisation, the Bangladesh Chhatra Union, was abducted by men in plain clothes suspected of being security officials on Thursday 29 September near his house in Bangladesh's capital, Dhaka.

On 29 September at around 8.30 am, a group of around eight men in plain clothes suspected of being security officials took 37-year-old **KM Shamim Akhter** into their custody near his house in the Purana Paltan Line area of Dhaka. The men put Shamin in a small white van that was parked nearby and took him away. His whereabouts are unknown and he has not been heard from since. According to local witnesses, the abductors acted in a manner consistent with the behaviour of law enforcement officials, and Shamin's family believe that he may have been abducted by the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), a special police force. The small van that was used to abduct Shamin is similar to those used by RAB.

There are credible allegations that RAB is often involved in the abduction, torture and extrajudicial execution of suspected criminals and KM Shamim Akhter has been implicated in a number of criminal cases in the past. His family alleges that these cases were politically motivated. Shamin's family has contacted RAB and the Home Ministry, but both have denied that he is in their custody. They have also registered the incident in the Police's general diary without naming anyone as a suspect. It is the responsibility of the authorities to establish his whereabouts, and reveal the truth of what has happened to him.

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

- Calling on the authorities to launch an immediate investigation into the abduction of KM Shamim Akhter
- Seeking assurances that KM Shamim Akhter's physical safety is protected and that he is not subjected to torture or other inhumane treatment should he be found to be in the custody of the authorities

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 17 NOVEMBER 2011 TO:

Home Minister

Advocate Shahara Khatun
Ministry of Home Affairs
Bangladesh Secretariat
Dhaka – 1000
Bangladesh
Fax: +88 02 716 9667; +88 02 717 1611;
+88 02 716 4788
Email: sobhansikder@yahoo.com
Salutation: Dear Home Minister

Inspector General of Police

Mr Hassan Mahmood Khandker
Police Headquarters
Phoenix rd
Dhaka 1000
Bangladesh
Fax: +88 02 712 5840
Email: ig@police.gov.bd
Salutation: Dear Inspector General

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Hardly a week goes by in Bangladesh without people being shot in Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) operations. RAB is a special police force, created, to much public acclaim, to combat criminal gang activity throughout the country. But since its inception in 2004, RAB has been implicated in the unlawful killing of at least 700 people. At least 200 of these killings have occurred during the tenure of the current Awami League government, despite the Prime Minister's pledge to end extrajudicial executions. In some cases, RAB has not even explained how people, whom witnesses say were detained by RAB, were later found dead.

For further information, see 'Crimes Unseen: Extrajudicial Executions in Bangladesh' (Index: ASA 13/005/2011):

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/ASA13/005/2011/en/c18ad74b-75fe-4b15-b043-5982eebdb27d/asa130052011en.pdf>

Name: KM Shamim Akhter

Gender m/f: male

UA: 298/11 Index: ASA 13/009/2011 Issue Date: 7 October 2011