

URGENT ACTION

DISCLOSE WHEREABOUTS OF UK-BANGLADESHI MAN

The fate and whereabouts of UK-Bangladeshi national Yasin Talukder remain unknown five months after his enforced disappearance. The British diplomatic mission in Bangladesh has confirmed he is being detained by Bangladeshi authorities since July, although the authorities deny any involvement.

Yasin Talukder, a UK-Bangladeshi national, was abducted on 14 July 2016 in Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh. Eyewitnesses claim that a group of men, which they allege were members of the security forces, took Yasin Talukder away in a black microbus. Dr Suraya Talukder, Yasin Talukder's mother, told Amnesty International and also explained to *The Wire*, in an article published on 4 November 2016, that two men who identified themselves as officers of the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB, an elite police force) visited her in the home she shares with her son seven days after the abduction. They seized Yasin Talukder's electrical equipment, including his computers, despite providing no warrant. When asked why they were taking the equipment they said it was because Yasin's phone was not on him. Dr Suraya Talukder asked whether that meant Yasin Talukder was in their custody. They replied, 'No, we do not have him' and insisted they were there to investigate Yasin's abduction. Yasin Talukder's whereabouts remain unknown. He is at risk of torture or other ill-treatment.

The British High Commission, the UK diplomatic mission in Bangladesh, has recently confirmed that Yasin Talukder has been detained by Bangladeshi security forces since his abduction. The RAB, which has been widely implicated in human rights violations, including enforced disappearances, has publicly denied any involvement in Yasin Talukder's abduction. Yasin Talukder's enforced disappearance took place shortly after the attack on a restaurant in Dhaka on 2 July which killed 20 people, including 18 foreigners. His abduction may have been motivated by the suspicion that he is linked to militants.

Rights groups, including Amnesty International, have catalogued an alarming rise in the number of enforced disappearances in Bangladesh since 2009. The Bangladeshi human rights NGO Odhikar recorded 64 cases of enforced disappearance in 2015, compared to 3 cases in 2009.

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

- Urging the Bangladeshi authorities to immediately disclose the fate and whereabouts of Yasin Talukder and release him immediately, unless he is to be charged with a recognizable criminal offence, in line with international law and standards;
- Urging them to ensure that, while in custody, Yasin Talukder is granted access to his family, a lawyer of his choice and any medical care he requires, and is protected from torture and other ill-treatment;
- Requesting the Bangladeshi authorities to grant British consular access to Yasin Talukder while he is detained;
- Calling on the Bangladeshi authorities to immediately end the practice of enforced disappearances and to sign and ratify the International Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 26 JANUARY 2017 TO:

President of Bangladesh
Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina
 Prime Minister's Office, Old Sangshad
 Bhaban, Teigaon, Dhaka 1215
 Bangladesh
 Fax: +88 02 9133722
 Email: info@pmo.gov.bd
Salutation: Honourable Prime Minister

Inspector General of Police
 A.K.M. Shahidul Hoque
 6 Phoenix Road, Fulbaria
 Office of the Inspector General
 1000 Dhaka, Bangladesh
 Fax: +88 02 7125840
 Email: ig@police.gov.bd
Salutation: Dear Inspector General

And copies to:
Minister of Foreign Affairs
 H.E Mr Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali, M.P.
 Ministry of Foreign Affairs
 Segunbagicha, Dhaka 1000, Bangladesh
 Fax: +88 02 9562188

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.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



URGENT ACTION

DISCLOSE WHEREABOUTS OF UK-BANGLADESHI MAN

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On the morning of 14 July 2016, Yasin Talukder, a 34-year-old physics teacher, was due to meet his cousin Sidrat Talukder at a bus stand in central Dhaka. At 11:42am Sidrat Talukder received a phone call from Yasin Talukder where he overheard shouting in the background before the line suddenly disconnected. When Sidrat Talukder called Yasin Talukder back, the call failed to connect. At 11:50am, when Sidrat Talukder arrived at the bus stand, he only found Yasin Talukder's empty car. Dr Suraya Talukder, Yasin Talukder's mother, lodged a complaint with the Bhashantek Police Station in Dhaka on 14 July 2016 regarding Yasin Talukder's abduction. Since then Dr Suraya Talukder has repeatedly approached police and the Rapid Action Battalion for information about her son's whereabouts, to no avail.

The British High Commission, contacted by the Talukder family for support, has pressed the Bangladeshi authorities to be granted consular access to Yasin Talukder but has so far been unsuccessful.

Dr Saruya Talukder told Amnesty International that in 2011 British intelligence officers interviewed Yasin Talukder at the High Commission in Dhaka, possibly because they suspected him of militant ties. But according to his mother, Yasin cooperated fully and there was no follow-up by the British authorities. In February 2016, according to local media, Yasin Talukder was among a group of youth named in a First Information Report - a written document prepared by the Bangladeshi police when they have received information about the commission of a cognisable crime. The report alleged Yasin Talukder was part of a militant group planning attacks in Dhaka.

There has been a disturbing rise in the number of enforced disappearances in Bangladesh. Those targeted often include political opponents of the government, suspected militants or wealthy individuals that can be held for ransom. Many are held for prolonged periods of time and often subjected to torture and ill-treatment; some are never heard from again. The Bangladeshi human rights NGO Odhikar has recorded 84 cases of enforced disappearances between January and November 2016, 20 more cases than in 2015.

Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), the elite anti-crime faction of Bangladesh's police force, has a specific mandate to "defeat terrorism". Rights groups, including Amnesty International, have documented a catalogue of human rights violations committed by RAB since it was formed in 2004. These include enforced disappearances, unlawful detention, extrajudicial killings and torture. RAB has denied all allegations of abuse. These abuses continue with almost complete impunity, as the Bangladeshi government has largely refused to investigate the allegations against RAB, even when official police complaints have been made. It was only in May 2016 that the government changed its course and ordered an investigation be conducted into RAB; the investigation is ongoing.

Enforced disappearances are a violation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, to which Bangladesh is a state party, and an international crime. An enforced disappearance typically occurs when state agents arrest or abduct a person but then refuse to acknowledge the deprivation of liberty or conceal the fate or whereabouts of the disappeared person, placing him or her outside the protection of the law. Once out of the public eye, individuals subjected to enforced disappearance are at great risk of torture, other ill-treatment, and death.

Name: Yasin Talukder (Yasin Mohammad Abdus Samad Talukder)
Gender m/f: m

UA: 285/16 Index: ASA 13/5359/2016 Issue Date: 15 December 2016