

URGENT ACTION

STUDENT ACTIVISTS AT RISK OF TORTURE

Two student opposition activists in Bangladesh, Al Mukaddas and Mohammad Waliullah, have been missing since 4 February. Eyewitnesses saw them being detained by Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) and the Detective Branch (DB) of the Bangladesh Police in Savar, north of the capital, Dhaka. The RAB have denied holding them, with no credible explanation to counter the eyewitness accounts. The men are at risk of torture and extrajudicial execution.

On 4 February **Al Mukaddas (22)** and **Mohammad Waliullah (23)**, both members of the Islamic student organisation Bangladesh Islami Chhatra Shibir, were travelling by bus from Dhaka to their university in Kushtia province, when the bus got stuck in traffic. Eyewitnesses said a small van stopped next to their bus and seven or eight men in uniform got out, identifying themselves as members of the RAB, a specialised law enforcement agency, and the DB. They said after the RAB and DB officers searched the bus, they removed Al Mukaddas and Mohammad Waliullah from the bus and took them into their custody saying there were allegations against them, which they did not specify, adding that the two men would be released after questioning. They have not been heard from since and their whereabouts are unknown.

On 11 February, the families of Al Mukaddas and Mohammad Waliullah held a press conference at the national press club in Dhaka alleging that the two men had been abducted by law enforcement agencies. RAB has denied detaining the two men in a statement to a Bangladeshi newspaper. However, reports from several sources and a pattern of disappearances thought to have been conducted by RAB in recent months conflict with RAB's denial. There are credible allegations that RAB is often involved in the abduction, torture and extrajudicial execution of suspected criminals.

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

- Calling on the authorities to launch an immediate investigation into the alleged abduction of Al Mukaddas and Mohammad Waliullah, and to publish the conclusions of that investigation
- Seeking assurances that Al Mukaddas and Mohammad Waliullah's physical safety will be protected and that they are not subjected to torture or other inhumane treatment should they be found to be in the custody of the authorities
- If it is established that they are detained, calling on the authorities to release them unless they can bring recognizably criminal charges against them

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 26 MARCH 2012 TO:

Home Minister

Advocate Shahara Khatun

Ministry of Home Affairs

Bangladesh Secretariat

Dhaka 1000

Bangladesh

Fax: +88 02 716 9667; +88 02 717 1611;

Email: sobhansikder@yahoo.com

Salutation: Dear Minister

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.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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'.

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

Name: Al Mukaddas and Mohammad Waliullah

Gender m/f: Both male

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