

PUBLIC

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UA 286/06 Incommunicado detention/ fear of torture or ill-treatment

BANGLADESH Tariq Ahmad Dar (m), Indian national, businessman and fashion model

Indian national Tariq Ahmad Dar was reportedly arrested by Bangladesh's Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), a force under joint police and army command, on 15 September in the capital, Dhaka. He is being held incommunicado at an unknown location. The police have not acknowledged his detention, but he is believed to be held by Unit 1 of the RAB. He is at risk of torture or other ill-treatment.

The reason for the alleged arrest and detention of Tariq Ahmad Dar is unknown, though newspapers have reported a number of allegations levelled against him by the police, including forging passports and "militancy". According to reports, he was brought before a court a day after his arrest, and was remanded in police custody for 14 days for interrogation. According to Amnesty International's information, prisoners remanded in police custody are routinely held incommunicado and subjected to various forms of torture during interrogation.

Under Bangladeshi law, detainees must be produced before the court at the end of their remand period for the magistrate to decide whether the prisoner should stay in police custody for further interrogation, or be transferred to jail pending trial. However, though Tariq Ahmad Dar's case is believed to have been brought before a magistrate's court in Dhaka on a number of occasions since his arrest, it is not known if Tariq Ahmad Dar was present during the court sessions. Since his lawyer and family have no access to him, have no confirmation of his detention, and were not informed of the hearings, they cannot confirm that he was present.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Torture and ill-treatment is endemic in Bangladesh, particularly during the initial period of interrogation in police custody. Bangladeshi governments have done little to end the practice. Amnesty International has continued to urge the Bangladeshi authorities to protect detainees against torture and ill-treatment.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Bangla, English or your own language:

- expressing concern for the safety of Tariq Ahmad Dar, who is believed to be held incommunicado by Unit 1 of the RAB, and is at risk of torture or other ill-treatment;
- urging the authorities to make his whereabouts public, and to give him immediate access to his relatives, his lawyer, consular representatives and any necessary medical treatment;
- calling on the authorities to ensure that he is not subjected to torture or other ill-treatment, and to ensure his safety and well being;
- asking for information about his alleged detention, and any charges brought against him;
- reminding the authorities of their obligations under Bangladeshi law and under international fair trial standards to bring detainees before a court, and to allow them access to a lawyer of their choice.

APPEALS TO:

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia
Office of the Prime Minister
Gona Bhaban
Old Sangsad Bhaban, Tejgaon,
Dhaka, Bangladesh
Fax: + 880 2 8113243

Email: Info@pmo.gov.bd
Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

Md. Lutfuzzaman Babar
State Minister for Home Affairs
Ministry of Home Affairs
Bangladesh Secretariat
Building 4
Dhaka, Bangladesh
Email: mediacell@homemin-bd.org
Salutation: Dear Minister of State

Barrister Moudud Ahmed
Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs
Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs
Bangladesh Secretariat
Dhaka, Bangladesh
Email: info@minlaw.gov.bd
Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Bangladesh accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 6 December 2006.