

Bangladesh: Respect Bail Order and Release Mahmudur Rahman Immediately [UPDATE]

(Bangkok, 19 February, 2016) – Ahead of the next hearing on the remand of journalist Mahmudur Rahman on 22 February 2016, the Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA) reiterates its call for his immediate release and strongly condemns his continued persecution and unlawful detention despite the Bangladesh's highest court upholding his bail appeal.

FORUM-ASIA earlier issued a [statement](#) demanding his immediate release from prolonged arbitrary detention without bail.

On 14 February 2016, the Supreme Court of Bangladesh upheld a High Court order that granted bail to Mahmudur Rahman in a case filed against him under the Information and Communication Technology Act, 2013 (ICT). The Supreme Court verdict was supposed to pave the way for his release since he was arrested from his Karwan Bazar office on 11 April 2013. Mahmudur Rahman has been granted bail in all 70 cases filed against him in different parts of the country.

Alarmingly, a day after the Supreme Court verdict Mahmudur Rahman's release was stayed, and he was shown arrested in a bomb blast case filed in 2013¹. Police refused to release him and extended his custody under a 7-day remand order, with a new remand hearing scheduled for Monday, 22 February 2016. Police have alleged that Mahmudur Rahman damaged property at the gate of the Quazi Mukarram Hussain building near Dhaka University, at about 8.30 am on 28 January 2013. This case was filed against him along with 40 other leaders, alleging that he exploded a bomb in the Dhaka University campus injuring many.

"We fear that denial of Mahmudur Rahman's release may lead to further harassment. He has already been subjected to torture and degrading treatment in custody and his emotional and physical health is constantly deteriorating," says Evelyn Balais-Serrano, Executive Director of FORUM-ASIA. *"Bail is an essential element of fair trial and the Bangladesh Government must respect it."*

FORUM-ASIA calls on the Government of Bangladesh to release Mahmudur Rahman as per court order and restore his right to life and liberty.

About FORUM-ASIA:

FORUM-ASIA is a regional human rights group with 58 member organisations in 19 countries across Asia. FORUM-ASIA addresses key areas of human rights violations in the region, including freedoms of expression, assembly and association, human rights defenders, and democratisation. FORUM-ASIA operates through its offices in Bangkok, Jakarta, Geneva and Kathmandu.

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¹ Shahbagh Police Station Case No. 50 (1) 2013