



35th Regular Session of the UN Human Rights Council
Item 3: Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, Ms Annalisa Ciampi

**Oral Statement Delivered by Shahindha Ismail on behalf of
Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)**

Wednesday, 07 June 2017

Mr President, FORUM-ASIA welcomes the report of the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association. We echo recommendations on ensuring civil society participation in decision-making processes without discrimination or undue restrictions; policies that emphasise substantive engagement with civil society at the domestic and international levels; and ensuring the ability of civil society to use funding, including foreign funding, without undue impediments. We share concerns on narrowing political space for civil society at the domestic and multilateral level, including at the UN.

We draw the Council's attention to restrictions against peaceful assembly and of association in several Asian states. In the Maldives, recent amendments to the 2013 Freedom of Peaceful Assembly Act have effectively prohibited street protest, and were used to block a protest calling for justice for the murder of the blogger Yameen Rasheed.¹ In the Philippines, the declaration of martial law in Mindanao has brought about undue restrictions on assembly throughout the southern part of the country. We call on the Maldives and the Philippines to remove restrictions on peaceful assembly.

Lastly, in South Korea, the Supreme Court recently upheld the conviction of labour union leader Sang-gyun Han for alleged violations against the Assembly and Demonstration Act, criminal provisions on general obstruction of traffic (Article 185 of Criminal Code), and allegations of orchestrating anti-government protests in 2014 and 2015.² We call on the government of South Korea to drop undue charges against Sang-gyun Han.

Thank you.

¹ <http://maldivesindependent.com/society/police-block-march-for-murdered-blogger-130758>

² <https://www.forum-asia.org/?p=24050>