

FORUM-ASIA deeply troubled by the detention of Adilur Rahman Khan in Malaysia today

(Bangkok, 20 July 2017) – The Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA) expresses deep concern about the restriction of the freedom of movement of Adilur Rahman Khan by the Malaysian authorities today. FORUM-ASIA calls upon the Government of Malaysia, and all Governments in the Asian region to ensure the right to movement, assembly as well as the right to safety, security and freedom of all human rights defenders. FORUM-ASIA also urges the Government of Bangladesh to ensure the safety, security and freedom of Adilur Rahman Khan upon his return to Dhaka.

Today, at around 4:00 am local time, Adilur Rahman Khan, Secretary of Odhikar and Vice Chair of FORUM-ASIA, was denied entry into Malaysia and prevented from entering the country to attend a conference on abolition of death penalty organised by the Anti-Death Penalty Network (ADPAN). He was detained by Malaysian Immigration at Kuala Lumpur International Airport for the remainder of the day, and deported back to Bangladesh in the evening. Upon boarding the plane, he had not been given his passport back yet.

During the whole time he was held in detention, he was not given a clear reasoning for his detention. Additionally, he was not allowed to meet with lawyers throughout the day. The officers of Suruhanjaya Hak Asasi Manusia Malaysia (SUHAKAM), the National Human Commission of Malaysia were given access to him towards the end of his detention. Throughout the day, enquiries to the Department of Immigration on his detention were referred to Bukit Aman Police Headquarters.

Adilur Rahman Khan is an Advocate of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh, a former Deputy Attorney General for Bangladesh (October 2001 – May 2007) and a founder and the Secretary of the human rights organisation Odhikar. He has been part of the Executive Committee of FORUM-ASIA since 2012, and became Vice Chair in 2016.

The practice of the Malaysian Government to deny entry of human rights defenders, is a violation of the right to freedom of movement. As such, this goes against the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, which requires States to protect and facilitate the legitimate work of human rights defenders. Unfortunately, this seems to be part of a pattern of cases in which Malaysian authorities disallowed both travel out of and into the country.

FORUM-ASIA calls on Bangladeshi authorities to ensure his safety, security and freedom of movement upon return to Dhaka. Additionally, FORUM-ASIA urges the National Human Rights Commission of Bangladesh to guarantee his safety and protection, as it should with all human rights defenders.

About FORUM-ASIA:

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

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