

## Asma Jahangir (1952-2018): A tragic loss for South Asia and the world

(Bangkok/Kathmandu, 12 February, 2018) - The Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA) is deeply saddened by the sudden demise of eminent human rights defender, lawyer and social activist Asma Jahangir today in Lahore, after she suffered a cardiac arrest on 11 February 2018. Asma Jahangir was known for her social activities in Pakistan and South Asia on gender, minority and human rights.

Asma Jahangir was well-known for her activism in the field of democracy, peace and justice globally, and has made an immense contribution in the South Asian region. She was associated with several human rights organisations, initiatives and networks for decades, both nationally and internationally.

Born in Lahore on 27 January 1952, Asma was Pakistan's first woman to serve as the President of the Supreme Court Bar Association of Pakistan from 2010 to 2012. She co-founded and served as chairperson of the [Human Right Commission of Pakistan \(HRCP\)](#), a member of FORUM-ASIA, from 1987 to 2011.

She also contributed enormously to international legal standard setting while serving as the United Nations Special Rapporteur summary executions and later as the United Nations Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion. After, she continued to be involved in several other capacities with the UN. She also co-founded South Asians for Human Rights.

Asma was a powerful voice against dictatorships and use of religion for political gains. She was also a staunch critic of the judiciary for not being pro-active towards the oppressed.

'Asma Jahangir was a person with extraordinary determination. She was, and remains to be, an icon, not only in Pakistan but across the globe, who stood up and fought back against authoritarian regimes. As symbol of resistance against militarisation, which often undermines rule of law, Asma's legacy will continue to inspire all that work for human rights,' says John Samuel, Executive Director of FORUM-ASIA.

FORUM-ASIA and its members express deep condolences to the family and loved ones of Asma Jahangir, and to the human rights community as a whole. Her passion, knowledge, energy, and inspiring dedication to human rights will be remembered in the decades to come.

### 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 democratisation.*

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