

38th Regular Session of the UN Human Rights Council

Item 3: Special Rapporteur on Summary Executions

**Oral Statement Delivered by Joëlle Klein on behalf of
World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) and Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development
(FORUM-ASIA)**

Tuesday, 19 June 2018

Mr. President,

We welcome the report of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial executions. We share her concerns regarding extrajudicial killings by nonstate actors. We are also concerned by extrajudicial killings in the 'war on drugs' in Bangladesh and welcome the statement made by the High Commissioner for Human Rights on June 6, that calls for a stop to the 'zero-tolerance' policy for suspected drug offenders which has caused widespread extrajudicial killings and mass arrests in Bangladesh.

At least 150 people have been killed and 23,476 arrested as a result of the anti-narcotics campaign announced by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina earlier this year. This crackdown is inspired by the Philippines' 'war on drugs' that has led to the deaths of over 12,000 Filipinos, and there is growing concern that the situation in Bangladesh will follow this direction towards rampant death tolls.

The killings were allegedly the result of shootouts in raids to arrest drug dealers. However, several family members of the individuals that have been killed report that their relatives were taken away by plainclothes police officers and were later found dead. There are reported cases in which the victims were political activists with no connection to drug trafficking. This method of operation is common among law-enforcers in Bangladesh, who are widely known for massive human rights violations and ensuring impunity. There are also due process concerns for the 23,476 individuals arrested in the crackdown.

This offensive campaign is not tackling the root causes of drug crime, which have been widespread in Bangladesh for years. Instead it appears to be largely used as political intimidation in light of the upcoming elections in December this year.

We call on the Council to demand the Government of Bangladesh stop this deadly anti-narcotics campaign. We call on the Government of Bangladesh to cease deadly crackdowns on drug trafficking, and tackle the root causes of drug crime while respecting human rights and the rule of law.

Thank you