



**41<sup>st</sup> Regular Session of the UN Human Rights Council**  
**Item 4: General Debate on Human Rights Situations that Require the Council's Attention**

**Oral Statement Delivered by Ahmed Adam**  
**On behalf of the Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)**

**Wednesday, 3 July 2019**

Mr. President, FORUM-ASIA calls for the Council's attention on human rights situations in several Asian countries.

In Sri Lanka, we are alarmed by the escalation of violence and hate speech against minorities, particularly Muslims, after the Easter Sunday terrorist attacks in April. These attacks have fueled reprisals and hostilities against asylum seekers and refugees. These concerns are compounded by the government's decision to resume the death penalty. Resumption of the death penalty risks backtracking the limited progress towards justice and accountability for grave human rights violations of the past. We call on the government Sri Lanka to protect minorities as well as refugees and asylum seekers in accordance with international law and abolish death penalty.

In Bangladesh, human rights situation continues to deteriorate. At least 166 alleged extra judicial executions by law enforcement authorities have been reported since January 2019<sup>1</sup> violating rights to life and fair trial. Additionally, abuse of the Digital Security Act against human rights defenders, journalists, political opponents and critics has reinforced the chilling effect on freedom of expression and media. In May 2019 alone, three individuals – *human rights defender, Md. Abdul Kaium, journalist Henry Swapon and writer and lawyer Imtiaz Mahmud* – were arrested on fabricated charges under the Digital Security Act.<sup>2</sup> We call on the Council to act urgently to address the human rights situation in Bangladesh.

In Cambodia, restrictions on civic space imposed by the government in the lead up to the July 2018 elections remain in place. The Law on Associations and Non-Governmental Organisation (LANGO) remains a serious threat to freedom of association and expression in Cambodia. Several local and foreign NGOs have been shut down or de-registered for allegedly violating the law. Furthermore, several new legislative measures including the introduction of lèse-majesté offences in the Criminal Code, the Trade Union Law adopted in 2016, the Law on Political Parties and recent constitutional amendments risk criminalising legitimate exercise of freedom of expression, particularly targeting human rights defenders, civil society, and political activists. We call on Cambodia to review and repeal these repressive legislations in line with its international obligations and take genuine steps towards restoring civic space and democracy. Thank you.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.askbd.org/ask/2019/06/17/death-by-law-enforcement-agencies-january-may-2019/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.forum-asia.org/?p=28806>