

Bangla Alert

Bangla Action Alert

Move Forward, not Backward!

April 27, 2012

Save Bangladesh: Call Secretary Clinton Today!

Ask the US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to cancel her trip to Bangladesh unless Bangladesh government guarantees to abide by human rights of its citizens and the democratic rights of its opposition by ending kidnappings and unfair trials of opposition leaders.

The US Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton will visit Bangladesh on May 5. She will be meeting the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, opposition leader Khaleda Zia, and the Foreign Minister.

Call Hillary Clinton Today

It is important to call this whole week every day to the Secretary of State asking her to cancel her trip unless she is able to ensure a firm guarantee from the Bangladeshi government for the strict observation of human rights specially the following two points:

- An independent and credible investigation into the torture, murder and disappearances of a growing number of opposition leaders, labor activists, student leaders and journalists by the Rapid Action Battalion.
- A fair trial of former ministers from the opposition Nizami and Mujahid. They and other opposition leaders are being tried through tribunal, which is criticized by all human rights organizations.

Talking Points

The prime minister should allow opposition to work.

Human Rights Watch in a statement issued today said at least 22 people have disappeared in the last few months. Human Rights Watch says it has long documented abductions and killings by Bangladeshi security forces, especially the Rapid Action Battalion. The rights group said the government of Sheikh Hasina consistently dismisses or ignores evidence of abuses by the security forces. Human Rights Watch said this is why an independent investigation into all cases of disappearances is "urgently required."

Here are some examples of recent torture, murders and disappearances:

- Ilias Ali organizing Secretary of BNP, the main opposition party, was kidnapped on April 17. He is still missing.
- Aminul Islam, a labor leader disappeared on April 4. His tortured body was found next day.
- Two leading journalists, Sagar Sarwar and Meherun Runi, were stabbed to death on Feb. 11, 2012.
- Several members of the student organization Bangladesh Islami Chhatra Shibir went missing early this year.

The Evidence

Amnesty International on disappearances: <http://tiny.cc/g5ifdw>.

Human Rights Watch on the unfair trails: <http://tiny.cc/r8ifdw>

Bangladesh, a progressive country, is at risk at the hands of the ruthless regime, which is killing all voices, all opposition and media. We must act now to save Bangladesh from going backward.

Three Action Items

1) Contact the Secretary of State:

- Call for general comment line: 202-647-6575
- Call Bangladesh Desk at the State Department: 202-647-9516 & 202-647-1450

Email Secretary of State through this page. In subject write Bangladesh Trip of the Secretary, or Cancel Bangladesh Trip, or Save Bangladesh Opposition: <http://tiny.cc/byffdw>

2) Thank Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International for their statements. Ask them to ask Secretary of State to raise the issue of unfair trials of two former opposition ministers as well which has been previously criticized by both the organizations.

Human Rights Watch: 212-290-4700 <http://www.hrw.org/contact/new-york>

Amnesty International: (212) 807-8400 aimember@aiusa.org

3) Write to National Religious Campaign Against Torture campaign@nrca.org or call them at 202-547-1920 to ask Secretary of State to raise with the Bangladesh Government the issues of torture and murders in Bangladesh.