

Press release

Statement demanding Bangladesh photographer Shahidul Alam's immediate release

Friday 10 August 2018, by [Collective / Multiple signers](#) (Date first published: 8 August 2018).

The Editor,

Over 250 photographers, Artists, Journalists and activists including: Ram Rahman, Vivan Sundaram, Parthiv Shah, Pushpamala N., Raghu Rai, Devika Daulet-Singh, Pablo Bartholomew, Prashant Panjiar, Dinesh Khanna, Sunil Gupta, Jitish Kalat, Krishen Khanna, Ravi Aggarwal and Gauri Gill, have issued a statement demanding Bangladesh photographer Shahidul Alam's immediate release. The statement with is as follows:

FREE SHAHIDUL ALAM

In a shocking development, late night on 5 August 2018, Dr. Shahidul Alam, internationally renowned photographer, pedagogue, activist, and founder of Drik and Pathshala South Asian Media Institute, was forcibly abducted from his house in Dhanmondi, Dhaka in Bangladesh. According to eyewitnesses, around 30 to 35 plainclothes men, claiming to be from the Detective Branch (DB) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, forcibly entered Dr. Alam's home, pushed him into a waiting car and sped away. They taped up the CCTV camera and took away the camera footage. The security guards were manhandled and locked up.

Additional Commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (Detective Branch), Abdul Baten, told UNB (United News of Bangladesh) that Dr. Shahidul Alam has been detained for interrogation over his Facebook posts on the ongoing student protests in Bangladesh. Later news reports confirm that Dr. Alam has been arrested under the draconian ICT Act (Information and Communication Technology Act), routinely used to suppress freedom of speech, and to harass writers, activists and journalists for their comments on social media. When Dr. Alam was produced before a Dhaka court on Monday, 6 August, he had to be supported as he could not walk on his own. He had been made to wash his own bloodied clothes to wear again. The Dhaka police were granted a 7-day remand after producing him before the court.

There have been further developments. On Tuesday, 7 August, the court ordered that Dr. Alam be taken to a government hospital for a medical check-up in response to a petition filed by his lawyers; however, the written orders were not produced in time and so he spent another night in police custody. He was finally taken to hospital at 9.30 am today, 8 August, but it appears that once the medical checkup takes place he will be back in police custody. The next hearing at the court is on Thursday, 9 August 2018, when the State lawyers will attempt to oppose the High Court order and argue against it.

The detention and murderous attack on Dr. Shahidul Alam is symptomatic. Writers, journalists and

social media activists in Bangladesh have over the last several years suffered similar repression. Dr. Alam is determined to hold on to the ideal of social justice and to engage in cultural action that strengthens democratic and egalitarian values. He has disseminated these ideas through his critical writings, a sustained pedagogical programme around photography and numerous curatorial projects that engage the public. He is admired and respected all across the world and especially in South Asia for his exemplary work as a photographer-activist and for his courageous stand on the fraught relationship between the State and the people.

Consider how Dr Alam's position resonates with that in India; how it adds to the urgencies needing to be addressed by the citizenry here.

We condemn, in the strongest possible way, the arrest, brutality and dishonour done to Dr. Shahidul Alam. The message is simple. Dr. Alam exercised his right as a citizen. No charges must be bought under section 57 of the draconian ICT Act.

We demand his immediate and unconditional release.

Date: 08-08-2018

Aban Raza

Abhay Sardesai

Abhijan Gupta

Abhishek Hazra

Adira Thekkuveetil

Aditi De

Aishwaryan K

Ajay Sinha

Akkitham Vasudevan

Alnoor Mitha

Aman Bahl

Amar Kanwar

Amita Desai

Amrita Jhaveri

Anant Joshi

Ananya Vajpeyi

Anita Dube

Anita Khemka

Anju Dodiya

Anmol Vellani

Anoli Perera

Anshuman Dasgupta

Anup Mathew Thomas

Anuradha Kapur

Anusha Yadav

Aquin Mathews

Archana hande

Arpana Caur

Arshiya Lokhandwala

Arun Kumar HG

Arundhati Ghosh

Arvind Lodaya

Ashish Rajadhyaksha

Ashwathi Vijaykumar

Astad Deboo

Avinash Veeraraghavan

Ayesha Singh

Babitha Lingraj

Babu Eshwar Prasad

Bari Kumar

Belinder Dhanoa

Bharat Chowdhary

Bharat Sikka

Bharati Kapadia

Bhavna Kakar

C.F. John

Chandan Gomes

Chander Haat

Chimuk Kaur

Chinar Shah

Chittrovanu Mazumdar

Clay Kelton

Cop Shiva

Daljeet Wadhwa

Dayanita Singh

Deepa Bhasthi

Deepak Ananth

Deepanjana Pal

Desmond Lazaro

Devika Daulet Singh

Dhruv Malhotra

Dileep Prakash

Dimple B. Shah

Dinesh Khanna

Diva Gujral

Fawzan Husain

Franck Barthelemy

Gargi Raina

Gauri Gill

Gayatri Sinha

Geeta Kapur

Gigi Scaria

Gitanjali Dang

Gopika Chowfla

Gopika Nath

Gulammohammed Sheikh

Hans Kaushik

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Jamshed Chinoy

Jasmeen Patheja

Jatin Das

Jeroo Mulla

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K. P. Reji

Kajri Jain

Kaushik Narayan Ramanathan

Ketaki Sheth

Kirtana Thangavelu

Krishen Khanna

Kristine Michael

Kurchi Dasgupta,

Lalitha Shankar

Leena Chethan

M. Madhava Prasad

M. S. Prakash Babu

M.K. Raina

Madan Gopal Singh

Madhuban Mitra

Madhusree Dutta

Malvika Murali

Manas Acharya

Manas Bhattacharya

Manish Pushkale

Manisha Gera Baswani

Manmeet Devgun

Mariam Suhail

Maseeh Rahman

Maya Krishna Rao

Meenakshi Shedde

Megha Mehndiratta

Mekhala Bahl

Mithu Sen

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Mrugen Rathod

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Nalini Malani

Nancy Adajania

Nandakumar Raman

Nandesha Shanthi Prakash

Naveen Kumar

Navjot Altaf

Navroze Contractor

Neha Choksi

Nilima Sheikh

Nimi Ravindran

Nina Sabnani

Niyati Ozha Srivatsava

P. Daroz

Pablo Bartholomew

Parthiv Shah

Parvathi Nayar

Parvathi Nayar

Pooja Sood

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Prabir Purkayasth

Pradeep Das Gupta

Prakash Babu

Prakash Moorthy

Prashant Panjiar

Pratul Dash

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Purshottam Diwakar

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R. Siva Kumar

Radhakrishnan KS

Radhika Chopra

Raghavendra Rao Kulkarni

Raghu A Wodeyar

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Ram Rahman

Raman Siva Kumar

Ranbir Kaleka

Randhir Singh

Ranjit Hoskote

Rashmi Munikempanna

Ratnabali Kant

Ravi Agarwal

Ravikumar Kashi

Reena Saini Kallat

Rekha Hebbar Rao

Ribhu Borphukon

Riyas Komu

Rohini Devasher

Rohit Chawla

Rosalyn Dmello

Roshan Shahani

Ruchira Gupta

Sabeena Gadihoke

Sabih Ahmed

Sabina Kidwai

Sadanand Menon

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Sandeep Biswas

Sasanka Perera

Sashi Kumar

Saurab Hura

Seher Shah

SG Vasudev

Shaina Anand

Shalini Sawhney

Shamala Billava

Shamala Nandesha

Shanta Gokhale

Shantamani Muddiah

Sharbendu De

Sheeba Chhachhi

Shefalee Jain

Shilpa Gupta

Shireen Gandhi

Shohini Ghosh

Shreyas Karle

Shukla Sawant

Siddharth Laxman

Sindhu Thirumalaisam

Sohail Akbar

Sohail Hashmi

Sonal Khullar

Sonia Khurana

Soumyadip Ghosh

Srinath Iswaran

Subba Ghosh

Suchismita Ukil

Sudharak Olwe

Sudharshan Shetty

Sudhir Patwardhan

Sumakshi Singh

Suman Gopinath

Sumesh Sharma

Summer Kohli

Suneel Mamadapur

Suneet Chopra

Sunil Gupta

Sunil Kothari

Sunitha Kumar Emmart

Surabhi Sharma

Suresh Jayaram

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Vidya Shivadas

Vijay Prashad

Vinod Bhardwaj

Vivan Sundaram

Vivek Vilasini

Yashodhara Dalmia

P.S.

- SACW, 09 Aug 2018 02:04 PM PDT:
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