

09 May 2019

Bangladesh: Sultana Kamal receives death threat from militant group

On 4 May 2019, **Sultana Kamal** filed a complaint at the Dhanmondi Police Station in Dhaka, detailing a threat on her life and requesting protection from state authorities. The death threat against her was made by the militant Islamist group Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh in their online publication 'Lone Wolf' dated March 2019.

[Sultana Kamal](#) is a human rights defender and lawyer known for her work on civil and political as well as gender rights. She is currently the chairperson of several human rights organisations, including South Asians for Human Rights, Transparency International Bangladesh and We Can Bangladesh. Sultana Kamal is also the co-chairperson of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission. For over 15 years, she served as the Executive Director of Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK), a legal aid and human rights organisation in Bangladesh.

The death threat against Sultana Kamal was published in the March 2019 issue of 'Lone Wolf', a publication of the militant Islamist group Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen circulated on the Telegram messaging app. Sultana Kamal's name was mentioned in a list of "targets" identified by the group alongside suggestions of possible ways to kill them. She and a few others were also labelled as 'murtad' or apostates in the publication.

This is not the first time that Sultana Kamal has received threats from fundamentalist groups. On 2 June 2017, another hardline Islamist group named Hefazat-e-Islam had threatened her with arrest, exile, and violence for disagreeing with one of their representatives on a TV show.

Front Line Defenders expresses concern about the death threats against human rights defender Sultana Kamal, which it believes are solely motivated by her peaceful and legitimate work for human rights in Bangladesh.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Bangladesh to:

1. Carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the threats and intimidations against Sultana Kamal, with a view to publishing the results and bringing those responsible to justice in accordance with international standards;
2. Take all necessary measures to guarantee the physical and psychological integrity and security of Sultana Kamal, as well as of the members of her family;
3. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in Bangladesh are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.

Front Line Defenders respectfully reminds you that the United Nations Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, adopted by consensus by the UN General Assembly on 9 December 1998, recognises the legitimacy of the activities of human rights defenders, their right to freedom of association and to carry out their activities without fear of reprisals. We would particularly draw your attention to Article 6 (b and c): *"Everyone has the right, individually and in association with others: (b) As provided for in human rights and other applicable international instruments, freely to publish, impart or disseminate to others views, information and knowledge on all human rights and fundamental freedoms; (c) To study, discuss, form and hold*

opinions on the observance, both in law and in practice, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and, through these and other appropriate means, to draw public attention to those matters”, and to Article 12 (2): “The State shall take all necessary measures to ensure the protection by the competent authorities of everyone, individually and in association with others, against any violence, threats, retaliation, de facto or de jure adverse discrimination, pressure or any other arbitrary action as a consequence of his or her legitimate exercise of the rights referred to in the present Declaration.”

Please inform us of any actions that may be taken with regard to the above case.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Andrew Anderson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a light blue background behind it.

Andrew Anderson

Executive Director