

24 July 2017

## Malaysia: Adilur Rahman Khan detained at airport by Malaysian authorities, forced to board flight back to Bangladesh

On 20 July 2017, Bangladeshi human rights defender **Adilur Rahman Khan** was arrested upon his arrival at Kuala Lumpur International Airport, as he attempted to enter Malaysia in order to attend a conference on “The abolition of the death penalty in Malaysia and the Asia-Pacific”. He was detained within the airport for most of the day and was not allowed to meet with a lawyer. No reason was given for his detention. He was forced to board a flight to Bangladesh in the evening.

[Adilur Rahman Khan](#) is a prominent human rights lawyer and the Secretary of **Odhikar**, a human rights organisation founded in 1994 with the aim of spreading awareness of human rights and conduct monitoring throughout Bangladesh. He is also the Vice Chair of **Forum-Asia**, a member of the **OMCT** (World Organisation Against Torture) General Assembly and a Vice-President of **FIDH** (International Federation for Human Rights). In 2014, Adilur Rahman Khan was nominated as a finalist for the Front Line Defenders Award for Human Rights Defenders at Risk as well as the Martin Ennals Award for Human Rights Defenders.

On 20 July 2017, at around 4am, Adilur Rahman Khan was detained by immigration officers after he landed in Kuala Lumpur International Airport. He was due to attend and speak at a conference organised by the Anti-Death Penalty Asia Network (ADPAN) from 21 to 22 July 2017 in Kuala Lumpur. Adilur Rahman Khan was held in the airport for 16 hours without an access to a lawyer, during which time he was questioned. The human rights defender was forced to board a flight back to Bangladesh at 8pm the same day.

On 18 June 2017, Singaporean human rights defender **Han Hui Hui** was similarly [prevented](#) from entering Malaysia as she was travelling to Kuala Lumpur International Airport to attend a human rights event. After being detained for four hours and interrogated by airport officers, she was subsequently forced to return to Singapore. Malaysian authorities have denied several human rights defenders and activists entry into the country in the past, without given explanation, in a clear attempt to prevent discourse on human rights and democracy.

Adilur Rahman Khan has been facing judicial harassment from the Bangladeshi authorities since 2013, when he and **Nasiruddin Elan**, the director of Odhikar, were [charged](#) with “*publishing false images and information*” and “*disrupting the law and order situation of the country*” under the controversial Information and Communications Technology Act of 2006.

Front Line Defenders condemns the denial of entry of human rights defender Adilur Rahman Khan, which it believes is solely motivated by his peaceful and legitimate work for human rights in Asia.

### Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Malaysia to:

1. Immediately and unconditionally remove all restrictions on the free movement of **Adilur Rahman Khan** and cease all further forms of harassment against him, as it is believed that these measures are not only solely related to his legitimate human rights activities but, furthermore, constitute a direct transgression of the rights of **Adilur Rahman Khan**;

2. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in **Malaysia**, foreign and local, are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.

Front Line Defenders condemns this act of intimidation against human rights defender XXXX, which it believes is solely motivated by his peaceful and legitimate work for human rights in XXXXX.

**Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in XXX to:**

- 1.

*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 16: “Individuals, non-governmental organizations and relevant institutions*

*have an important role to play in contributing to making the public more aware of questions relating to all human rights and fundamental freedoms through activities such as education, training and research in these areas to strengthen further, inter alia, understanding, tolerance, peace and friendly relations among nations and among all racial and religious groups, bearing in mind the various backgrounds of the societies and communities in which they carry out their activities.*

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 clear, legible font.

Andrew Anderson

Executive Director