



## JOINT PRESS RELEASE

### Bangladesh: UN Day for Victims of Torture - an Urgent Call for Justice

**Geneva–Dhaka, 26th of June 2015. On the occasion of the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, the World Organisation against Torture (OMCT) and its member organization in Bangladesh, Odhikar, demand justice for victims of torture and extra judicial killings.**

*“Two years ago, Bangladesh passed the Torture and Custodial Death (Prevention) Act 2013; and committed itself to eradicating torture. Yet torture and impunity remain widespread in Bangladesh. No serious efforts have been made to give effect to the said Act or the UN Convention against Torture. Hundreds of victims of torture and their families are awaiting justice”* says Adilur Rahman Khan, Secretary of Odhikar

Today on June 26, 2015 we want to commemorate and pay tribute to the numerous victims of torture and their families, some of which are named below:

- **Rezaul Islam**, from Khayersuti village, was picked up from his house by the Detective Branch (DB) police in May 2015. He was beaten with chains and taken to the Pabna Sadar Police Station. He died in police custody later the same day. The police claimed that Rezaul was a drug addict and a drug peddler and had died of a heart attack after his arrest.

- **Jahangir Hossain** was arrested in March 2015 as a suspect in a robbery. He was subsequently granted two-day remand by the Magistrate. One day later, the police claimed that Jahangir had committed suicide by hanging himself in his cell. As there were wounds on different parts of his body, his family claimed that the police had beaten him to death. Jahangir’s father was given 10 thousand taka and threatened that if he speaks to anyone about his son’s death, he and his other sons would face the same consequences.

- **Mizanur Rahman** was arrested for allegations of beating a police officer in March 2015. In the police station. he was severely beaten by three police officers till he became unconscious. Five days later, Mizanur was produced before the court. As he could not walk, two policemen physically supported him to the courtroom. Despite his visibly severe physical condition and despite showing the marks of torture to the judge, the court refused to grant him bail.

- **Shapla Khatun**, from Mathail Chapar village under Kazipur upazila in Sirajganj District, was arrested as a murder suspect in January 2015 and tortured in Kazipur Police Station for six days. Her family and lawyer alleged that police arrested Shapla due to a telephone conversation with an accused murderer. Police took one hundred thousand taka as a bribe from her family. Shapla's lawyer brought up the matter of torture before the Court, when police produced her before the Court after six days of arrest and sought remand.

These victims, their families, as well as many, many other torture victims are awaiting independent investigations and rehabilitation, as per the CAT and the Act of 2013. On the day dedicated to torture victims, Odhikar and the OMCT urge Bangladesh to take effective steps to effectively implement the landmark Convention against Torture and the Torture and Custodial Death (Prevention) Act.

*“17 years ago, Bangladesh ratified the Convention against Torture and promised to prevent torture, to condemn any act of torture and to meet the needs of victims. It is time that Bangladesh steps up to its obligations and develops an action plan that includes the submission of the very first state report to the Committee against Torture”* says Gerald Staberock, Secretary General of the OMCT.

Every year, Odhikar conducts a series of events, including rallies and public awareness events in several districts to commemorate this international day condemning torture and ill treatment and remembering the victims. The events are part of OMCT's global campaign entitled 'nothing can justify torture under any circumstances'.

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The OMCT wishes to thank the European Commission for their financial support to the OMCT global campaign on June 26 'nothing can justify torture under any circumstances'.

