

THE INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT AGAINST ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AND RACISM

IMADR Oral Statement: 28th session of the Human Rights Council
Item 4: General Debate

17 March 2015

Thank you Mr. President,

We join ***South Asians for Human Rights*** to condemn the recent killing of blogger Mr. Avijit Roy in the capital of Bangladesh on 26 February, by a group of assailants suspected to be religious extremists. Mr. Roy was known for his writings on various human rights issues, and he had publicly criticised religious extremism.

Also, we are concerned by the statement made by Mr. Sajeeb Wazed Joy, the Communications and IT Adviser to the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, which branded two prominent human rights defenders (HRDs), former UN Special Rapporteur on Afghanistan Dr. Kamal Hossain and editor of Daily Star Mr. Mahfuz Anam, as traitors. His statement demanded arrest and trial of the two men for "treason".

Such a baseless statement must be publicly condemned for exposing the HRDs to risk. We urge the Government of Bangladesh to effectively investigate those incidents and take appropriate measures to ensure the safety of HRDs including political opponents, especially during this time of political instability due to protests and street violence which erupted in Dhaka over the past months.

We are deeply concerned by the recent indication of Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena which UN investigators would not be included in a domestic inquiry into war crimes. President Sirisena's intent to "*get advice and their opinions*" does not assure that international accountability standards will be fully reflected, since he only said, "*we can take account of their opinion in doing our work, to make it more fruitful*".

As IMADR emphasised in our appeal which was issued soon after the deferral of the OISL report, the history of failed domestic measures for their independence and credibility highlights the need for a "hybrid" mechanism co-established by the Government of Sri Lanka and the UN.

Therefore, we call upon the Government of Sri Lanka to reconsider its position and include UN experts into its domestic inquiry mechanism. Without doing so, the Government of Sri Lanka will again fail to meet the expectations of victims, civil society of Sri Lanka and the international community.

Thank you Mr. President.