

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
GOVERNMENT OF THE  
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH  
DHAKA



পররাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রণালয়  
গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার  
ঢাকা

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The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh presents its compliments to all Diplomatic Missions in Dhaka and has the honour to enclose herewith an *Information Note* regarding recent disapproval of application for renewal of registration of an NGO named ODHIKAR.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh avails itself of this opportunity to renew to all Diplomatic Missions in Dhaka the assurances of its highest consideration.

Encl.: As stated.



Dhaka, 08 June 2022

**All Diplomatic Missions  
Dhaka**

## **Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

*Dhaka*

07.06.2022

### **Regarding Disapproval of ODHIKAR's Application for Renewal of Registration :**

The Government of Bangladesh acknowledges the role of NGOs and the vibrant civil society in fostering its democratic environment and advancing its socio-economic goals. While Bangladesh boasts a vibrant GO-NGO partnership that is rather unique for many other comparable settings, it believes, it is the responsibility of the government to promote and protect the NGOs that functions objectively, and in line with the applicable rules and regulations of the country within the legal framework for the NGOs.

ODHIKAR, an NGO registered under the NGO Affairs Bureau of the Govt. of Bangladesh, has been operating in Bangladesh since 1995. Recently, the Govt. **decided not to approve** its application for renewal of registration for the following shortfalls:

- i) The registration period of ODHIKAR expired on March 25, 2015, and they applied for renewal of the registration. However, their application was faulty, and didn't comply with the relevant provision of the Right to Information Act-2009 in the Application process.
- ii) In order to process their application of renewal of application, ODHIKAR was asked to respond to the procedural queries in light of the Foreign Donation (Voluntary Activities) Regulation Act, 2016 and other applicable rules, which they chose to ignore and did not respond to. The queries were made in relation to (a) violation of the Terms of Reference regarding submission of Audit report and failure to respond to the Objections of the Eight Audit Reports against the projects funded with foreign donations; (b) irregularities of the payment of the fees and violating the VAT rules of the Govt.
- iii) ODHIKAR was asked about the financial irregularities vis-à-vis three foreign funded projects; namely, (a) Education on the Convention against Torture and OPCAT Awareness, (b) Empowering Women as Community Human Right Defenders, (c) Human Rights Research and

Advocacy. Due to their reticence on the queries and also, following the thoroughly carried out investigation thereon, the allegation of financial irregularities were **proved**.

iv) ODHIKAR uploaded information vis-à-vis so-called extra-judicial killings, enforced disappearances etc. on their website. The Govt. noted those information with utmost seriousness and, in order to rescue the reported victims, approached them for obtaining further details about the alleged victims to feed to the law enforcers to conduct investigation. They were also asked to furnish their income-expenditure statement and their workforce strength. However, ODHIKAR never turned out with any response. The Government, therefore, convincingly concluded that ODHIKAR uploaded the falsified and fabricated information and concocted stories of human rights abuse, thereby being involved in subversive activities with a view to tarnishing the image of the country, and to destabilize and upset the public order.

It would be pertinent to mention that, earlier, the Election Commission cancelled the registration of ODHIKAR as 'Election Observer' as per sub-section 2, Section 6 of the Election Observer Rules-2017. It is to be underscored that, ODHIKAR is widely known for its disproportionate bias and prejudice against Bangladesh, which is evident in its various reports. Besides, one of the top members of 'ODHIKAR' was earlier appointed by the BNP-Jamaat Govt. as the Deputy Attorney General, which should provide disqualification to accept it as an objective and neutral organization due to its inherent biasness and motivation.

For the aforementioned reasons, the Govt., as per the Foreign Donation (Voluntary Act) Regulation Act 2016, Article 4(4), decided **not to approve their application for registration**. Also, it would not be correct to say that their registration is cancelled.