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UNITED NATIONS
OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS
HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

PROCEDURES SPECIALES DU
CONSEIL DES DROITS DE L'HOMME

SPECIAL PROCEDURES OF THE
HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Mandates of the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances; the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association; the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions; and the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

REFERENCE: UA G/SO 217/1 Assembly & Association (2010-1) G/SO 214 (33-27) G/SO 214 (53-24)
BGD 8/2013

25 June 2013

Excellency,

We have the honour to address you in our capacity as Chair-Rapporteur of the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances; Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association; Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions; and Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 16/16, 15/21, 17/5, and 16/23.

In this connection, we would like to draw the attention of your Excellency's Government to information we have received regarding the alleged enforced disappearance of **Mr. Anwarul Islam Masum**, an opposition activist.

According to the information received:

In the early morning of 4 April 2013, Mr. Anwarul Islam Masum, a university student and the Rajshahi City Office Secretary of Bangladesh Islami Chhatra Shibir (BICS), the student wing of Jamaat-e-Islami, an opposition political party, was allegedly abducted by 30 to 40 officers from the Bangladesh Police and the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) from his home in Rajshahi, Bangladesh. According to the information received, the alleged perpetrators reportedly took Mr. Anwarul Islam Masum inside a RAB vehicle and drove away to an unknown place.

According to the source, the alleged abduction happened a few days after violent clashes between supporters of BICS and the police. The alleged disappearance was reported to the local police and the local RAB office. Allegedly, the police and the RAB both denied the detention of Mr. Anwarul Islam Masum and refused to register a formal report on the disappearance of Mr. Anwarul Islam Masum.

Concern is expressed that Mr. Anwarul Islam Masum may be at risk of torture or extra-judicial execution.

While we do not wish to prejudge the accuracy of these allegations, we wish to draw your Excellency's Government's attention to the right to physical and mental integrity of the above-mentioned person.

Furthermore, we should like to appeal to your Excellency's Government to seek clarification of the circumstances regarding the case of Mr. Anwarul Islam Masum. We would like to stress that each Government has the obligation to protect the right to physical and mental integrity of all persons. This right is set forth inter alia in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT).

We wish to underline article 3 of the UDHR and article 6 (1) of the ICCPR, acceded to on 6 September 2000, which respectively guarantee the right of every individual to life and security and provide that these rights shall be protected by law and that no one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his life.

Moreover, we would like to bring to the attention of your Excellency's Government the Principles on the Effective Prevention and Investigation of Extra-Legal, Arbitrary and Summary Executions, and in particular principle 2 which indicates that "in order to prevent extra-legal, arbitrary and summary executions, Governments shall ensure strict control, including a clear chain of command over all officials responsible for apprehension, arrest, detention, custody and imprisonment, as well as those officials authorized by law to use force and firearms. Furthermore, Principle 6 affirms that "Governments shall ensure that persons deprived of their liberty are held in officially recognized places of custody, and that accurate information on their custody and whereabouts, including transfers, is made promptly available to their relatives and lawyer or other persons of confidence.

In this context, we would like to draw the attention of your Excellency's Government to paragraph 1 of Human Rights Council Resolution 16/23 which "Condemns all forms of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, including through intimidation, which are and shall remain prohibited at any time and in any place whatsoever and can thus never be justified, and calls upon all States to implement fully the absolute and non-derogable prohibition of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment."

In relation to the allegation according to which the fate and whereabouts of Mr. Anwarul Islam Masum are unknown, we would like to bring to your Excellency's Government's attention the United Nations Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance which sets out necessary protection by the State, and in particular:

- article 2 (no State shall practice, permit or tolerate enforced disappearances);

- article 3 (each State shall take effective legislative, administrative, judicial or other measures to prevent and terminate acts of enforced disappearance in any territory under its jurisdiction);

- article 6 (no order or instruction of any public authority, civilian, military or other, may be invoked to justify an enforced disappearance);

- article 9 (right to a prompt and effective judicial remedy and the right to access of competent national authorities to all places of detention); and

- article 10 (right to access of competent national authorities to all places of detention; to be held in an officially recognized place of detention, in conformity with national law and to be brought before a judicial authority promptly after detention; to accurate information on the detention of persons and their place of detention being made available to their family, counsel or other persons with a legitimate interest).

We would also like to appeal to your Excellency's Government to take all necessary steps to ensure the right to freedom of association, as recognized in article 22 of the ICCPR, which provides that “Everyone shall have the right to freedom of association with others, including the right to form and join trade unions for the protection of his interests”.

In this connection, we would like to refer to Human Rights Council resolution 21/16, and in particular operative paragraph 1 that “reminds States of their obligation to respect and fully protect the rights of all individuals to assemble peacefully and associate freely, online as well as offline, including in the context of elections, and including persons espousing minority or dissenting views or beliefs, human rights defenders, trade unionists and others, including migrants, seeking to exercise or to promote these rights, and to take all necessary measures to ensure that any restrictions on the free exercise of the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association are in accordance with their obligations under international human rights law.”

In view of the urgency of the matter, we would appreciate a response on the initial steps taken by your Excellency's Government to safeguard the rights of Mr. Anwarul Islam Masum in compliance with the above international instruments.

Moreover, it is our responsibility under the mandates provided to us by the Human Rights Council, to seek to clarify all cases brought to our attention. Since we are expected to report on these cases to the Human Rights Council, we would be grateful for your cooperation and your observations on the following matters, when relevant to the case under consideration:

1. Are the facts alleged in the summary of the case accurate?
2. Please provide information on the fate and whereabouts of Mr. Anwarul Islam Masum. If his fate and whereabouts are unknown, please provide the details on any

investigation or other queries which may have been carried out. If no queries have taken place, or if they have been inconclusive, please explain why.

We would like to bring to the attention of your Excellency's Government that should sources submit the allegations of enforced disappearance, mentioned in this communication, as a case to the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, they will be considered by the Working Group according to its methods of work, in which case your Excellency's Government will be informed by a separate correspondence.

We undertake to ensure that your Excellency's Government's response to each of these questions is accurately reflected in the report we will submit to the Human Rights Council for its consideration.

While waiting for your response, we urge your Excellency's Government to take all necessary measures to guarantee that the rights and freedoms of the Mr. Anwarul Islam Masum are respected and, in the event that your investigations support or suggest the above allegations to be correct, the accountability of any person responsible of the alleged violations should be ensured. We also request that your Excellency's Government adopt effective measures to prevent the recurrence of these acts.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of our highest consideration.

Olivier de Frouville
Chair-Rapporteur of the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary
Disappearances

Maina Kiai
Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of
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