

Mr. Asaduzzaman Khan, MP

Ministry of Home Affairs

Bangladesh Secretariat

Dhaka-1000

BANGLADESCH

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Honourable Minister Khan,

I am relieved to learn that Bangladeshi photographer and newspaper editor Shafiqul Islam Kajol is alive, after being disappeared for 53 days. I am, however, concerned that instead of ensuring his wellbeing and letting him return to his family, authorities are holding him in indefinite pre-trial detention.

The circumstances surrounding his disappearance, the filing of multiple cases against him solely for exercising his right to freedom of expression, and the reluctance to release him immediately raise serious concerns about his human rights.

I therefore call on you and the Bangladesh government to:

1. Immediately and unconditionally release Shafiqul Islam Kajol and close investigation against him and all those held solely for exercising their right to freedom of expression;
2. Decriminalize defamation, and treat it as a matter of civil litigation;
3. Promptly amend the Digital Security Act in compliance with international human rights law including ICCPR, to which Bangladesh is a state party and ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance

Yours sincerely,

