



Unterdrückungsmaßnahmen gegen Odhikar gab es schon in der Vergangenheit. Das Bild zeigt den Gründer der Organisation, Adilur Rahman Khan bei einer früheren Verhaftung. Amnesty International hat auch dies auch damals als Verletzung des Rechts auf Meinungsfreiheit kritisiert.

Foto: Demotix

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Deregistration of NGO Odhikar detrimental to human rights work

Authorities in Bangladesh must immediately rescind the decision to arbitrarily deregister the NGO Odhikar and allow the leading human rights group in the country to function without fear of reprisals, Amnesty International said today. In a letter issued by the NGO Affairs Bureau of Bangladesh on 5 June 2022, the renewal of Odhikar's registration was cancelled. The authorities stated that

Odhikar's publication of "misleading information" on enforced disappearances and extrajudicial executions in the country severely tarnished the reputation of the state globally. The organization had filed a writ petition in May 2019 seeking explanation from the Bureau as it withheld Odhikar's renewal application for eight years since 14 September 2014.

"Odhikar's documentation of human right violations have been critical in holding perpetrators to account in Bangladesh. It is absurd that the authorities withheld the registration of the rights group for eight years and then cancelled it because of the global ire they faced for a poor human rights record. The reprisals against Odhikar are an egregious and shameless act to silence and intimidate human rights defenders in Bangladesh," said Saad Hammadi, South Asia Campaigner at Amnesty International.

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The suspension and involuntary dissolution of an organization are among the severest restrictions on the right to freedom of association, protected under Article 22 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to which Bangladesh is a party. Given the severity of the measure, it may only be used when there is a clear and imminent threat to national security or public order, and it must be strictly necessary and proportionate to the legitimate aim pursued and used only when less restrictive means would be insufficient. The decision to suspend or dissolve an association should only be made by an impartial and independent court, and not by administrative bodies.

"The revocation of Odhikar's registration also shows the authority's disregard for rule of law as the matter of renewal is currently pending review at the High Court, which in 2019 ruled upon the NGO Affairs Bureau to explain the non-renewal of Odhikar's registration. We have also learnt about disconcerting inquiries from the Bureau seeking sensitive details about families of individuals subjected to enforced disappearance and extrajudicial execution on a sub-judice matter as this is one of the core areas of Odhikar's work," said Saad Hammadi.

This is not the first time the government has attempted to obstruct the work of Odhikar. In 2014, Odhikar's secretary Adilur Rahman Khan and director Nasir Uddin Elan were detained for 62 days and 25 days, respectively, on allegations of producing "fabricated reports" after they

documented the violent dispersal of protests at the hands of government forces during May 2013, which left several people dead. The latest actions against Odhikar raises fears of further retribution against members of the organization and the larger civil society in the country.

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“Odhikar’s deregistration is a clear demonstration of the government’s anger about the credibility the human rights organization enjoys internationally. Reporting on human rights violation is not anti-government or anti-state. Their decision to deregister Odhikar is akin to shooting the messenger. The government must respond to the allegations of human rights violations through credible independent investigations and refrain from punishing human rights defenders and civil society organizations,” said Saad Hammadi.

Link zum Originalbericht:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/06/bangladesh-deregistration-of-ngo-odhikar-detrimental-to-human-rights-work/>