

# PRESSEERLÄRUNG

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*Shahidul Alam (links) – hier als Gast der Deutschen Welle in Bonn.*

*Foto: Bernhard Hertlein © Amnesty International*

## **Dismissal of court case against Shahidul Alam is welcome, but more progress needed on freedom of expression**

### **Bangladesh**

Responding to the decision by the Bangladesh High Court to dismiss the case filed in 2018 under the draconian Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Act against photographer, social activist and Amnesty Prisoner of Conscience, Shahidul Alam, Amnesty International's South Asia Research Director, Isabelle Lassee, said:

"This outcome for Shahidul Alam was long overdue. Alam, whom we recognized to be a Prisoner of Conscience while detained, should never have been arrested on charges under

the Information and Communication Technology Act in the first place. He was targeted solely for criticizing the Bangladeshi authorities' excessive use of force and crackdown on students protesting for safer roads back in 2018.

"His case was emblematic of a broader trend which has seen Bangladeshi authorities weaponize legislation such as the ICT Act, repealed in 2018, as well as the the Digital Security Act (DSA) and the Cyber Security Act (CSA) replaced by the Cyber Security Ordinance in May 2025, to suppress freedom of expression, particularly targeting government critics.

"The suppression of the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly in Bangladesh culminated last year with the brutal crackdown on students' protests, with a UN estimate of 1,400 people possibly killed in the violence.

"It is imperative that the interim government of Bangladesh course-correct on the systemic and violent repression of freedom of expression and peaceful assembly in the country. A first step would be ensuring that legislation aligns with international human rights law and standards; and by bringing to justice officials suspected of involvement in the excessive use of force against protesters and the ill-treatment of detainees while in custody, including those who give orders. There is no place for such tactics as Bangladesh transitions towards what many hope will be a more equitable, rights-respecting society."

"Additionally, authorities must provide Shahidul Alam with access to remedy for the ordeal he was made to undergo while detained for more than 100 days for a speech-related offence, including for the torture he allegedly suffered while in custody."

## **Background**

Shahidul Alam was arrested by the Bangladeshi authorities on 5 August 2018 on charges under section 57 of Bangladesh's draconian Information Technology Act for comments he made during an Al-Jazeera English interview about student protests for road safety and the authorities' use of excessive force.

If convicted, Alam could have faced up to 14 years in prison. Alam alleged that he was tortured during his detention.

Amnesty International declared him a Prisoner of Conscience in September 2018.

He was released on 20 November 2018, five days after the High Court granted him bail. On 7 August 2025, the High Court of Bangladesh dismissed the case against Shahidul Alam.

## **Link:**

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/08/bangladesh-dismissal-of-court-case-against-shahidul-alam-is-welcome-but-more-progress-needed-on-freedom-of-expression/>