



35th Regular Session of the UN Human Rights Council
Item 4: General Debate on the human rights situations that require the Council's attention
Oral Statement Delivered by R. Iniyang Ilango on behalf of
Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)
Friday, 16 June 2017

Mr President, FORUM-ASIA draws the Council's attention to declining human rights situations in several Asian countries.

In Bangladesh, we continue to be concerned by reports of extrajudicial killings; enforced disappearances of political activists and dissidents; and persistent attacks against human rights defenders, secular writers, religious minorities and LGBTI persons by state and non-state actors. Prominent lawyer and human rights defender Sultana Kamal recently received threats from a radical group after speaking at a news talk show.¹ The government's systematic use of Section 57 of the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Act to criminalise free speech and dissent online continues to be a worry.

Blasphemy laws, which prescribe death penalty have been used in Pakistan against religious minorities, political opponents, secular activists and critics of religious extremism leaving a chilling effect on freedom of expression. In April, 23 year-old Mashal Khan was killed by a vigilante mob for alleged blasphemy.² In January, five secular activists known for views against extremism were allegedly abducted by state agencies.³

Finally, we are alarmed by the recent reports of enforced disappearances in Malaysia. At least four people, Amri Che Mat, Raymond Koh, Joshua Hilmy, and his wife Ruth Sitepu, have disappeared over the last six months. We are concerned that there have been no credible investigations and the government has instead resorted to persecuting of human rights defenders demanding investigations and accountability.⁴

It is imperative for the Council to continually monitor these situations to arrest further deterioration.

Thank You

¹<https://www.forum-asia.org/?p=24224>

²<https://www.forum-asia.org/?p=23653>

³<https://www.forum-asia.org/?p=22536>

⁴<https://www.forum-asia.org/?p=24055>