



email: alrc@alrc.net
web: www.alrc.net
phone: (+852) 2698 6339
fax: (+852) 2698 6367

An NGO with general consultative status
with the Economic and Social Council of the
United Nations.

Unit 701A, Westley Square
48 Hoi Yuen Road
Kwun Tong, KLN
HONG KONG

ASIAN LEGAL RESOURCE CENTRE

Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada

NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations
www.lrwc.org; lrwc@portal.ca; Tel : +1 604 738 0338 ;Fax : +1 604 736 1175

Check Against Delivery

date: June 15, 2011

HRC section: Item 4: General Debate

Speaker: Ms. Catherine Morris

An Oral Statement to the 17th Session of the UN Human Rights Council from the Asian Legal Resource Centre (ALRC), a non-governmental organization in general consultative status, and Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada (LRWC), a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

ASIA: Attacks on journalists in Bangladesh and Pakistan denounced

Thank you Mr. President,

The ALRC and Lawyers Rights Watch Canada (LRWC) are gravely concerned by attacks on journalists in Bangladesh and Pakistan, and call on the Human Rights Council to take action concerning the following situations.

Dozens of journalists have been killed in Pakistan since 2000. On May 29, 2011, journalist Saleem Shahzad was abducted in Islamabad; his tortured, mutilated body was discovered May 31. He had received threats reportedly from Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) about his article in *Asia Times Online* linking Pakistan's Navy with Al-Qaida. The government initially failed to investigate his abduction; while it has now announced a judicial inquiry, we remain concerned that the suspected role of the ISI will be covered up. We condemn this killing and deplore the lack of credible government action.

We are also gravely concerned about a suspected campaign of reprisals in Bangladesh to silence those raising concerns about torture and extrajudicial killings. For example, journalist and human rights defender FMA Razzak has faced past threats, attacks and fabricated legal cases while working to expose human rights violations. On April 29, around 40 men linked to army major Mustafizur Rahman Bokul severely beat Mr. Razzak, gouging his eyes and breaking his limbs, leaving him for dead. Other human rights defenders connected with this case have been arrested and tortured.

Police have named 38 perpetrators but no one has been charged. By contrast, police have lodged two further concocted cases against Razzak, his relatives and supporters. The army has not investigated or suspended Major Bokul. Local judiciary and the National Human Rights Commission have reportedly supported Major Bokul. We deplore the impunity for serious human rights violations which appears to be routine within the Bangladesh justice system. Thank you.