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**UN Human Rights Council
Twenty-fourth session, 9 – 27 September 2013**

**Item 6:
Consideration of UPR reports**

BANGLADESH

Mr. President,

Bangladesh has accepted recommendations to ensure that human rights defenders are protected and allowed to conduct their work without hindrance, intimidation or harassment.¹ Yet Adilur Rahman Khan, secretary of the non-governmental human rights organisation, *Odhikar*, is currently detained solely for reporting alleged human rights violations committed by the security forces during opposition protests on 5 and 6 May 2013.

Amnesty International considers Adilur Rahman Khan a prisoner of conscience and calls for his immediate and unconditional release.

Mr President,

Bangladesh should immediately commute all death sentences, including that of Abdul Quader Mollah, a senior member of Jamaat-e-Islami who was initially sentenced to life imprisonment for crimes committed during Bangladesh's independence war.

This is the first known case of a prisoner sentenced to death directly by the highest court in Bangladesh. It is also the first known death sentence in Bangladesh with no right of appeal.

Finally, Mr President,

¹ A/HRC/24/12, recommendations 129.103-104 (Canada and Norway). Both enjoy the support of Bangladesh.

We are deeply concerned that at least four bloggers, Subrata Adhikari Shuvo, Mashiur Rahman Biplob, Russel Parvez and Asif Mohiuddin, have been charged under Section 57 of the Information and Communications Technology Act and face up to 10 years' imprisonment. The broad limitations on the right to freedom of expression contained in Section 57 are incompatible with Bangladesh's obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

During the review, Bangladesh accepted a recommendation to ensure freedom of expression and a safe enabling environment for social media.² We call on the government to drop all charges against the bloggers which breach Bangladesh's human rights obligations, and to protect their right to freedom of expression.

Thank you, Mr. President.

² Ibid, recommendation 129.101 (Norway)