

4 August 2017

## **India: Killing of minority rights defender Lafiquil Islam Ahmed in Assam State**

On 1 August 2017, two unidentified gunmen shot and killed minority rights defender **Lafiquil Islam Ahmed** in Kokrajhar district, Assam state.

[Lafiquil Islam Ahmed](#) was a human rights defender and a student leader. He was the president of **All Bodoland Minority Students' Union (ABMSU)**, a student group working to defend the rights of migrant Muslim communities in Bodoland Territorial Area Districts (BTAD), an autonomous administrative division in northern Assam. ABMSU have protested against the forceful eviction of Muslims from government land across the state, and demanded compensation and rehabilitation for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Assam. Under Lafiquil Islam Ahmed's leadership, the union has also campaigned to end child marriage, child labour and dowry and have worked on women's empowerment. Lafiquil Islam Ahmed was also vocal against corruption, smuggling and arbitrary anti-Muslim policies and harassment.

On 1 August 2017, around 4.30pm, Lafiquil Islam Ahmed was on his way to the Titaguri market in Kokrajhar district after returning from a ABMSU meeting when two assailants on a motorcycle opened fire and shot him. The human rights defender died instantly. The gunmen were wearing helmets and fled immediately after the shooting. The human rights defender had previously been subjected to threats. The Superintendent of Police in Kokrajhar has opened an investigation into the murder and two persons were arrested in connection to the case on 2 August 2017.

Lafiquil Islam Ahmed, along with the ABMSU, was to lead a march on 2 August 2017 to protest against the discrimination of Muslims through the "D voters" system. This is a category of voters in Assam whose citizenship rights, entitlements and privileges are withheld until they can prove their citizenship. Many members of the Muslim community in the state have allegedly been arbitrarily categorized as such, making them second-class citizens and severely restricting their civil and political rights.

Front Line Defenders condemns the killing of human rights defender Lafiquil Islam Ahmed, which it believes was solely motivated by his legitimate and peaceful activities in the defence of human rights in the state of Assam.

### **Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in India to:**

1. Strongly condemn the killing of Lafiquil Islam Ahmed;
2. Ensure that the ongoing investigation into the killing of Lafiquil Islam Ahmed be thorough and impartial, with a view to bringing those responsible to justice in accordance with international standards;
3. Take all necessary measures, in consultation with the defenders, to guarantee the physical and psychological integrity and security of members of All Bodoland Minority Students' Union (ABMSU);

4. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in India are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.