

7 February 2017

Bangladesh - Killing of human rights defender Abdul Hakim Shimul

On 6 February 2017, the main accused in the killing of human rights defender **Abdul Hakim Shimul** in Shahzadpur, Sirajganj district on 2 February 2017, was arrested and detained in Dhaka.

[Abdul Hakim Shimul](#) was a journalist and human rights defender affiliated with [Odhikar](#), a human rights organisation that carries out advocacy on the human rights situation in the country, provides training for human rights defenders and conducts fact-finding missions in rural areas of Bangladesh. Abdul Hakim Shimul had actively taken part in Odhikar's trainings and fact finding missions. He was also the Shahzadpur correspondent for Bangla daily '[Dainik Samakal](#)' and reported on issues such as corruption and misuse of power by the local elites.

On 2 February 2017, Abdul Hakim Shimul was reporting on a clash between two factions of the local [Awami League](#) in Shahzadpur, Sirajganj district, Rajshahi division. According to eyewitnesses, Abdul Hakim Shimul was taking photos of the clash but when the Awami League arrived at the residence of the mayor of Shahzadpur municipality, Halimul Haque Miru, the mayor emerged with a shotgun and opened fire. During the shooting, the mayor noticed Abdul Hakim Shimul while he was taking photos of the incident and subsequently shot the human rights defender. He was hit by several bullets and died on 3 February 2017 while being transported to Dhaka to receive medical treatment. Later that night, the wife of Abdul Hakim Shimul filed a murder case at the Shahzadpur Police Station. Abdul Hakim Shimul had recently spoken out against the mayor's decision to raise municipality tax which is believed to have resulted in the targeting of the human rights defender.

On 5 February 2017 around 10 p.m., a joint team of the detective branch of Sirajganj and Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) arrested the Shahzadpur municipality mayor Halimul Haque Miru in Shyamoli area, Dhaka. On 6 February 2017, the mayor was sent to Sirajganj district prison. Halimul Haque Miru is due to be presented before The Chief Judicial Magistrate Court on 13 February 2017.

Front Line Defenders strongly condemns the killing of Abdul Hakim Shimul, which it believes was solely motivated by his legitimate and peaceful activities in the defence of human rights in Bangladesh.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Bangladesh to:

1. Strongly condemn the killing of Abdul Hakim Shimul;
2. Ensure that the ongoing investigation into the killing of Abdul Hakim Sahil be thorough and impartial, with a view to bringing those responsible to justice in accordance with international standards;
3. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in Bangladesh are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.