

2<sup>nd</sup> October 2018

To: Ms. Sheikh Hasina Wazed, Prime Minister of Bangladesh

Through: The High Commissioner for Bangladesh in Sri Lanka

Madam Prime Minister,

**PETITION FOR THE RELEASE OF DR. SHAHIDUL ALAM**

We, the undersigned Sri Lankans, strongly condemn the detention of Dr. Shahidul Alam, Managing Director, Drik, since 5<sup>th</sup> August 2018.

He was arrested after being interviewed on the Al-Jazeera English news channel, where he had criticized the Bangladeshi government's heavy-handed response to student protests calling for safer roads after two students were killed and 13 others injured by a speeding bus while waiting at a bus stop. The student protests have been met by excessive police force, including the use of tear-gas and rubber bullets. More than two hundred students have been injured. Men in plainclothes wearing helmets and wielding machetes and iron bars had also attacked other photojournalists and journalists from local media who were also covering the protests.

Global protests on Shahidul's incarceration continue unabated and have included statements made by 12 Nobel Laureates, many eminent citizens and journalists across the globe. We add our voices to theirs.

Dr. Alam has worked tirelessly for decades to promote the welfare of Bangladeshi citizens through his photography and journalism, and to bring national and international attention to their resilience in the face of adversity and oppression.

He has also visited Sri Lanka and captured in photos life of Sri Lankan people and used his skills to raise awareness about social problems such as HIV aids.

His photographs echo the voice of the people. His continued detention is counter to the principles of democracy.

We call for the immediate release of Dr Shahidul Alam and drop all charges against him.

We also call for a stop to all attacks on freedom of expression, enforced disappearances, extrajudicial executions and other human rights violations in Bangladesh and to ensure independent and impartial investigation into those violations.

**Signatories**

**On Behalf solidarity with #Shahidul Alam**

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