

URGENT ACTION

ACTIVIST RELEASED ON BAIL AFTER MONTHS IN DETENTION

Shahidul Alam, photographer and outspoken social activist, has been freed on permanent bail after spending more than 100 days behind bars for comments he made in an interview with Al-Jazeera in August 2018. In detention, he was ill-treated and subjected to prolonged detention merely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression.

Shahidul Alam was released from prison on 20 November 2018, five days after the High Court granted him permanent bail, meaning he cannot be imprisoned without a court order. Accused of violating the draconian section 57(2) of the Information and Communication Technology Act (ICT), he could still face up to 14 years in prison if formal charges are made against him.

Thanking Amnesty International members and supporters for the action they took to secure his freedom, Shahidul Alam said: "It's tremendous to, in some way, be able to connect with you because all of you across the globe, particularly the members of Amnesty who have played such an important and crucial role in facilitating this, but also in creating the pressure that led to my release."

Shahidul Alam was arrested from his home in Dhaka on 5 August 2018, after giving an interview to Al-Jazeera English, where he criticized the Bangladeshi authorities' use of excessive force and crackdown on students protesting for safer roads. Regarded as a prisoner of conscience, Shahidul Alam had been arrested for nothing but peacefully exercising his right to freedom of speech.

No further action is requested from the UA network. Many thanks to all who sent appeals.

This is the second update of UA 146/18. Further information: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/ASA13/9065/2018/en/>

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