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Asia - Asia

Death threats

Bloggers on hit-list posted by supposed Islamist group in Bangladesh

19 November 2014

A group identifying itself as Islamist has claimed responsibility for three murders, including that of Rajib Haider, a blogger whose throat was cut on 15 February 2013, and has named other future victims including Asif Mohiuddin, a blogger who narrowly survived a stabbing on 14 January 2013.

The group, which calls itself Ansar al Islam Bangladesh (Defenders of Islam), posted the message on a newly-created Facebook page on 15 November, just hours after the fatal stabbing of sociology professor Shafiul Islam, one of the murders claimed by the group. Since then, the Facebook page seems to have been closed.

The police have said they are trying to establish the authenticity of the claims.

"*We are outraged by this post*," said Benjamin Ismaïl, the head of the Reporters Without Borders Asia-Pacific desk. "*To combat all forms of impunity, it is vital that the Bangladeshi authorities conduct an investigation in order to quickly identify those responsible for these murders and death threats, whoever they are.*"

Ismaïl added: "*Protection must also be given to the future targets named in the message so that the list of victims does not get any longer.*"

The link between the victims is clearly their opposition to religious extremism. In his blog "Almighty only in name, but impotent in reality," **Asif Mohiuddin** (upper left) often expressed scepticism about religion and the teachings of Islam in particular. He also criticized the lack of freedom of expression in Bangladesh.

Rajib Haider (lower left), a 30-year-old architect, was a member of the Shahbagh activist network, which became well known for its opposition to Islamic fundamentalism.

Bangladesh is ranked 146th out of 180 countries in [the 2014 Reporters Without Borders press freedom index](#).