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Asia - Bangladesh

Blogger murdered

Call for effective protection after another blogger hacked to death

27 February 2015

After men with machetes killed writer and blogger Avijit Roy, founder of mukto-mona.com ((« free thinking ») and seriously injured his wife, Rafida Ahmed Banna, on a Dhaka street yesterday, Reporters Without Borders urges the authorities to take unprecedented measures to protect bloggers and combat impunity for those who attack them

Roy, who had US and Bangladeshi dual citizenship and normally resided in the United States, had just left a book fair near the University of Dhaka with his wife when they were attacked.

After dealing Roy a mortal blow to the head and severing one his wife's fingers, the attackers dropped their machetes and fled. Roy was rushed to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital where he was pronounced dead on the operating table.

The Islamist militant group [Ansar al Islam claimed responsibility for Roy's murder](#) in a series of messages on its Twitter account, Ansar Bangla 7. One of the tweets said: "The target was an American citizen.. 2 in 1. #America recently martyred 2 of our brothers in #Khurasan & #Shaam. #Revenge+ #Punishment."

"We are shocked by this act of barbarity and offer our condolences to his wife and his family," said Benjamin Ismail, the head of the Reporters Without Borders Asia-Pacific desk.

"The measures so far taken have not led to the arrest and trial of the perpetrators and instigators of crimes of violence against journalists and bloggers. The police and judicial authorities need to focus on the right target. It is unacceptable for them to spend so much time searching news outlets, arresting journalists, censoring news and investigating bloggers, when the many attacks on bloggers are still unpunished."

[Nineteen bloggers were openly threatened on Islamist websites](#) and in street demonstrations in February 2013, while several former leaders of Jaamat-E-Islami and other Islamist parties were on trial. The militants accused the bloggers of blasphemy and demanded their execution.

The authorities responded to the threats by arresting bloggers and closing sites. The blogger **Asif Mohiuddin** was [interrogated by the Dhaka police detective branch](#) on 23 March 2013, two days after the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission blocked access to his blog (<http://www.somewhereinblog.net/blog...>). Bloggers on Islamist hit-list

The author of such books as "Biswaser Virus" (Virus of Faith) and "Sunyo theke Mahabiswa" (From Vacuum to the Great World), Roy had often been the target of vitriolic criticism from Islamist groups, which had repeatedly threatened to kill him in connection with this writing.

Roy's murder recalls that of **Rajib Haider**, a [blogger who was hacked to death near his home](#) in the Dhaka neighbourhood of Palashnagar on 15 February 2013.

In a Facebook entry on 15 November, [Ansar al Islam claimed responsibility for three murders](#), including Haider's and posted a list of future victims, which included Mohiuddin.

According to the information obtained by Reporters Without Borders, the blogger **Subrata Audhikary Shuvo** could be the next target of the radical Islamists, who sentenced him to death after he was [arrested under the blasphemy law](#) in May 2013 and have been threatening him ever since.

Bangladesh is ranked 146th out of 180 countries in the [2015 Reporters Without Borders press freedom index](#).

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