

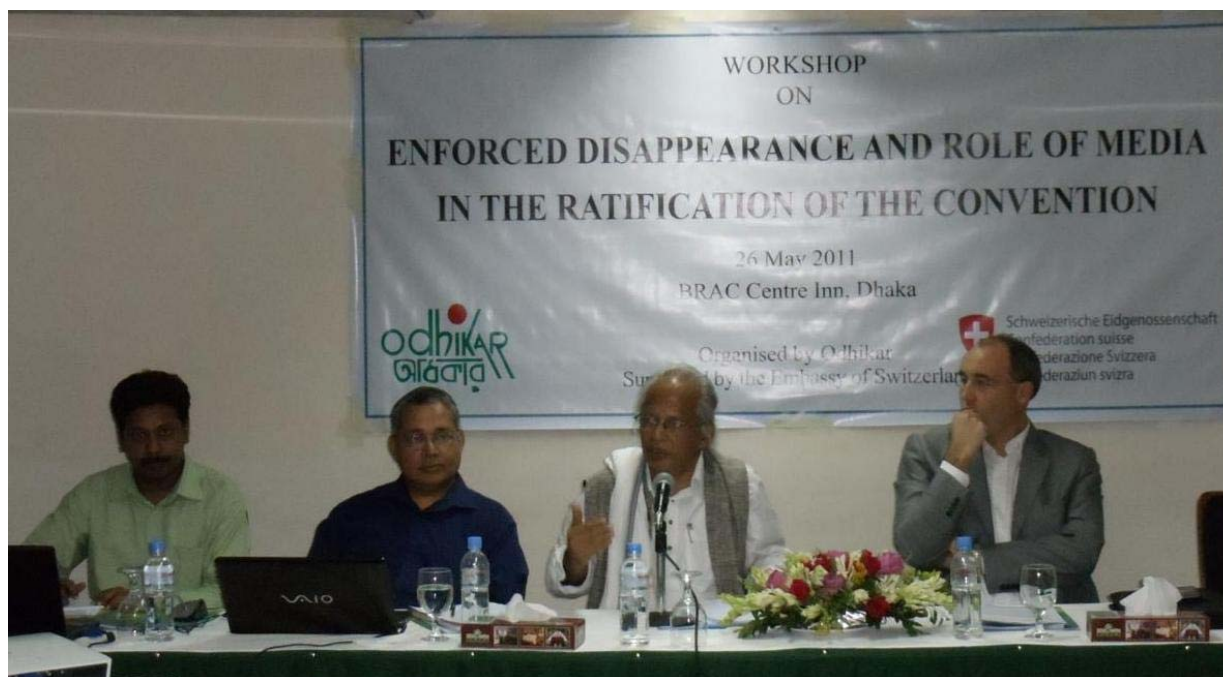
Press-release

Odhikar

**Accession to the Convention on enforced disappearance would strengthen the human rights protection in Bangladesh**

May 26, 2011, Dhaka;

A group of 35 media persons and human rights defenders urged the government to accede to the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance 2006. Odhikar, organised a media workshop on May 26, 2011 in BRAC Centre Inn, Dhaka with the support of the Embassy of Switzerland. The workshop titled “Enforced Disappearance and Role of Media in the Ratification of the Convention “was designed to promote the understanding about the Convention, its contents and the role of media to promote acceding to the convention.



The convention adopted by the UN General Assembly resolution 47/133 on 18 December 1992, came into force on December 23, 2010 following ratification by 20 countries. As of February 2011, this Convention has been signed by 88 states and ratified/acceded by 23 states. The convention defines enforced disappearance as arrest, detention, abduction or any other form of deprivation of liberty by agents of the state or by persons or groups of persons acting with the authorization, support or acquiescence of the state, followed by a refusal to acknowledge the deprivation of liberty or by concealment of the fate or whereabouts of the disappeared person, which place such a person outside the protection of the law. Clearly, for an act of constitute enforced disappearance, three essential

elements must be present: 1) deprivation of liberty, 2) direct or indirect participation by the State authorities, and 3) refusal to acknowledge the disappearance of the victim or to disclose his/her fate and whereabouts, consequently denying the disappeared protection of the law.

Gabriele Derighetti, Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Switzerland said that within next couple of months Switzerland will accede to the Convention after completing domestic processes. Facilitators have stressed the importance of adjusting domestic laws of Bangladesh accordance to the provisions of the convention in the process to acceding to the Convention.

While presiding over the session Farhad Mazhar, Advisor of Odhikar, stated that enforced disappearances in Bangladesh are not a new phenomenon. We have witnessed its severe form in our liberation war of 1971. Killing of national intellectuals he said, clearly resonates a chapter of brutal enforced disappearance. Dr. Ahmed Ziauddin, Advisor of Odhikar and an expert on international law, elaborated the concepts and contents of the Convention. Among others, Dr. Piash Karim of BRAC University and Sazzad Hussain, Programme Coordinator of Odhikar, highlighted different aspects of the Convention and the role of the media in the accession of the Convention on Enforced Disappearance for the audience.