

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার  
এনজিও বিষয়ক ব্যুরো  
প্রধানমন্ত্রীর কার্যালয়  
১৩ নং শহীদ ক্যাপ্টেন মনসুর আলী সরগি  
মৎস্য ভবন(১০ম তলা), রমনা, ঢাকা।

নং-এবিব্য/এ-৪/অধিকার/১৫-২৯/০৮ = ১৬৬  
প্রাপক

তারিখ : ১৭ আগস্ট, ২০০৯  
০২ ভাদ্র, ১৪১৬

নির্বাহী পরিচালক,  
অধিকার  
বাড়ী নং-৩৫, সড়ক নং-১১৭, গুলশান, ঢাকা।

বিষয় : সংস্থার “Human Rights Defenders Training and Advocacy Programme in Bangladesh” শীর্ষক  
অনুমোদিত প্রকল্প বাতিল প্রসঙ্গে।

সূত্র : (ক) এবিব্য/এ-৪/অধিকার/১৫-২৯/০৮-১৩১, তারিখ: ২৮/০৪/২০০৯ খ্রিঃ।  
(খ) স্বঃমঃ(নিরা-৪)/প্রকল্প-৬/০৯-১১৬৫, তারিখ: ৩০/০৭/২০০৯ খ্রিঃ

প্রিয় মহোদয়,

উপর্যুক্ত বিষয়ে সূত্রোক্ত 'খ' ক্রমিকে বর্ণিত স্মারকের মাধ্যমে স্বরাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রণালয়ের আপত্তির প্রেক্ষিতে সূত্রোক্ত 'ক' ক্রমিকে বর্ণিত  
স্মারকের মাধ্যমে অনুমোদিত বিষয়ে উল্লিখিত প্রকল্পটি এ পর্যায়ে নির্দেশক্রমে বাতিল করা হলো।

আপনার বিশ্বস্ত

১৭/০৮/০৯

(নূরজাহান)  
এসাইনমেন্ট অফিসার  
ফোন- ৯৫৬২৭৪৩-৫  
Info@ngoab.gov.bd

নং-এবিব্য/এ-৪/অধিকার/১৫-২৯/০৮

তারিখ : ১৭ আগস্ট, ২০০৯  
০২ ভাদ্র, ১৪১৬

সদয় অবগতি ও প্রয়োজনীয় ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণের জন্য অনুলিপি প্রেরণ করা হলো :

- ০১। সচিব, অর্থনৈতিক সম্পর্ক বিভাগ/আইন, বিচার ও সংসদ বিষয়ক মন্ত্রণালয়/সমাজ কল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয়/স্বরাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রণালয়।
- ০২। মহাব্যবস্থাপক, বৈদেশিক মুদ্রা নীতি বিভাগ, বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক, ঢাকা।
- ০৩। জেলা প্রশাসক, ঢাকা/কুষ্টিয়া/যশোর/সাতক্ষিরা/টাংগাইল/সিরাজগঞ্জ/রাজশাহী।
- ০৪। উপ-পরিচালক (পওনি), এনজিও বিষয়ক ব্যুরো।
- ০৫। ম্যানেজার, স্ট্যান্ডার্ড চার্টার্ড ব্যাংক, ৬৭, গুলশান এভিনিউ, গুলশান-১, ঢাকা।
- ০৬। মাস্টার নথি/অফিস কপি।

(নূরজাহান)  
এসাইনমেন্ট অফিসার

Dear Friends,

The NGO Affairs Bureau is under the Office of the Prime Minister and is the institution that clears all NGO projects prior to gaining permission to use foreign funds. For the 14 years, Odhikar, like many other NGOs, has been submitting projects to the NGO Affairs Bureau, for approval from the Ministry of Home Affairs as per government mandated procedure.

On 20 November 2008, Odhikar submitted a project entitled Human Rights Defenders Training and Advocacy Programme in Bangladesh to the NGO Affairs Bureau, along with the project budget and prescribed government forms. The project was to be funded by the Rehabilitation and Research Centre for Torture Victims (RCT) in Denmark as part of a large project funded by the European Union. The project was sent to the Ministry of Home and Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs by the NGO Affairs Bureau for their comments. After a long, tense wait of five months, the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs through the NGO Affairs Bureau, finally gave its approval and the project commenced with RCT funds. The Ministry of Home Affairs has been silent so far regarding this approval till issuing this cancellation letter.

Under the project, Odhikar had already completed five district levels advocacy meeting on criminalising torture, fact-finding and documentation on issues relating to torture, rallies on the occasion of International Day in Support of Victims Torture, organised tribunal against torture and roundtables and campaign programmes for signing OPCAT.

On 31 August 2009, Odhikar received a letter dated 17 August 2009, from the NGO Affairs Bureau informing the organisation that the Ministry of Home Affairs had given object to the project and according the NGO Affairs Bureau has cancelled the project as per institution. No valid reason was mentioned in the letter for the Ministry's objection.

It must be noted that despite being a member of the UN Human Rights Council for second consecutive term and being a party to the Convention against Torture, the human rights record of the Government of Bangladesh has never been good. Torture by police and other law enforcement agencies is extremely common and in the last 10 years, Odhikar has recorded numerous incidents of torture by law enforcement agencies and carried out a large number of fact finding missions into such incidents. Between 2003 and 2006 Odhikar, in fact, carried out a project funded by the Academy for Educational Development (AED) of USAID into monitoring levels of impunity by law enforcement agencies in 21 police stations. This project, too, needed and was granted approval by the NGO Affairs Bureau.

The main aims of Odhikar are promotion of human rights through awareness building, documentation, fact finding, monitoring and research on human rights abuses; fighting against impunity and working for the promotion of international justice and the prevention of torture; advocacy and lobbying for incorporation and ratification of various international instruments by the government and also for the enactment of human rights friendly laws and necessary amendments of existing laws; fostering mass awareness on rights and duties; creating a group of human rights promoters among the policy makers; strengthening the human rights movement and establishing participatory democracy and good governance in Bangladesh; mobilising and networking between the activities of its members and enhancing institutional capabilities of individual groups, organisations and agencies on human rights issues; monitoring of national and local government elections for ensuring free and fair electoral process to ensure voters right to participate; and facilitating mass awareness raising events on national and international days that create positive images of work and it has carried out several NGO Affairs Bureau approved projects relating to torture and impunity in the past. The organisation has not been given any valid reason behind the Home Ministry's objection and after 14 years of NGO Affairs Bureau and Home Ministry

approvals.

Through the project that has now been cancelled, Odhikar sought to educate human rights defenders about the Convention against Torture and its Optional Protocol and highlight the fact that the persisting acts of torture by law enforcement agencies goes against both national and international laws.

With this cancellation of the project, it seems as if the present government does not wish to do away with the practice of torture and has stopped Odhikar from exposing the perpetrators of such human rights violations. In all the 14 years of Odhikars activities in this field, this is the first time that a project has been cancelled after approval without giving any prior notice.

Please send urgent appeals to the following persons, urging them to withdraw the objection and assist Odhikar in the fight against torture in Bangladesh and bring perpetrators to justice.

**Ms. Sheikh Hasina**

Honorable Prime Minister  
Prime Ministers Office  
Old Sangsad Bhaban  
Tejgaon, Dhaka-1215, Bangladesh  
Tel: +880 2 8151157 (PS-I to PM)  
Fax: +880 2 8153846  
Email: info@pmo.gov.bd

**Advocate Sahara Khatun**

Honorable Minister  
Ministry of Home Affairs  
Bangladesh Secretariat  
Building: 8 (1st - 3rd Floor)  
Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh  
Tel: +880 2 7169069  
Fax: +880 2 7169667  
Email: minister@mha.gov.bd

**Barrister Shafiq Ahmed**

Honorable Minister  
Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs  
Bangladesh Secretariat  
Building: 4 (7th Floor)  
Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh  
Tel: +880 2 7160577, 9550016, 7164693  
Fax: +880 2 7168557  
Email: minoflaw@bdonline.com, info@minlaw.gov.bd

**Dr. Dipu Moni**

Honorable Minister  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Segun Bagicha  
Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh  
Tel: +880 2 9562852, 9562954  
Fax: +880 2 9562188  
Email: dirfe@mofa.gov.bd

**Mr. Abdus Sobhan Sikder**

Secretary

Ministry of Home Affairs

Bangladesh Secretariat

Building: 8 (1st - 3rd Floor)

Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh

Tel: +880 2 7160405

Fax: +880 2 7164788

Email: secretary@mha.gov.bd

**Mr. Mustak Hassan Md. Iftekhar**

Director General

NGO Affairs Bureau

13, Shahid Captain Mansur Ali Sarani

Motsho Bhaban (10th Floor), Ramna

Dhaka, Bangladesh

Tel: +880 2 9562743-5

Fax: +880 2 9562844

Email: info@ngoab.gov.bd

Encl: A scanned copy of the cancellation letter from the NGO Affairs Bureau along with English translated version.

Best regards,

Adilur Rahman Khan

Secretary

Odhikar

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh  
NGO Affairs Bureau  
Office of the Prime Minister  
13, Shahid Captain Mansur Ali Sarani  
Motsho Bhaban (10<sup>th</sup> Floor), Ramna, Dhaka

No.-ABBU/A-4/Odhikar/15-29/08-688

Date: 17 August 2009

To  
Executive Director  
Odhikar  
House No. 35, Road No. 117  
Gulshan, Dhaka

Subject: Regarding cancellation of the project titled "Human Rights Defenders  
Training and Advocacy Programme in Bangladesh"

Ref: (ka) ABBU/A-4/Odhikar/15-29/08-131, dated 28/04/2009  
(kha) Sha. Ma. (Nira-4)/Project-6/09-1165, dated 30/07/2009

Dear Sir,

This has reference to the aforesaid letter (kha) under which the Ministry of Home Affairs has given objection to the project and accordingly the NGO Affairs Bureau vide its reference No. (ka) has cancelled the project as per instruction.

Yours Faithfully,  
Sd/-  
Noor Jahan  
Assignment Officer  
Phone: 9562743-5  
Email: info@ngoab.gov.bd

Copy to:

1. Secretary, Economic Affairs Division/ Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs/  
Ministry of Social Welfare/Ministry of Home Affairs
2. General Manager, Foreign Exchange Division, Bangladesh Bank, Dhaka
3. Deputy Commissioner, Dhaka, Kushtia, Jessore, Satkhira, Tangail, Sirajganj, Rajshahi
4. Deputy Director (Audit and Evaluation), NGO Affairs Bureau
5. Manager, Standard Chartered Bank, 67, Gulshan Avenue, Gulshan-1, Dhaka
6. Master file/Office copy