

Seminar

Protecting Freedom of Expression

Speaker: Tahmina Rahman

Chair: Advocate Z I Khan Panna

Moderator: Sara Hossain

Abstract

Everyone has the **right to freedom of opinion and expression including the right to seek, receive and impart information**. This is a fundamental human right recognised in all of the main international human rights treaties including in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), 1948. It is also enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), 1966. In Bangladesh, the right to freedom of expression is guaranteed as a fundamental right under Article 39 of the Constitution and the country has also ratified the ICCPR in the year 2000. This requires the State to take active steps to remove obstacles to free expression and to refrain from interference. In this Seminar, Tahmina Rahman will speak on the implications of this right for the protection of journalists, media freedoms and those who exercise this right in the context of Bangladesh.

Speaker

Tahmina Rahman has a distinguished career in promoting human rights. For about a decade now, she conducted human rights projects on freedom of expression (FoE) and access to information speaking out as a staunch advocate for the promotion of FoE, and protection of journalists and social media communicators. As the Regional Director of ARTICLE 19 Bangladesh and South Asia, Ms. Rahman has advocated for media reforms and has represented civil society organisations as a member in various National Committees of the Government. She leads ARTICLE 19's flag-ship annual country reports on FoE in Bangladesh and at the UN has highlighted challenges to FoE in Bangladesh through the UPR submissions. After the grotesque attacks on individual bloggers in Bangladesh in 2015 -2016, Ms. Rahman has been particularly active in providing support to communicators under threat. She led orientations and training for hundreds of social media communicators on the "*Right to Blog*" and her work during this period also included the creation of an ARTICLE 19 *12-point Charter of Rights* for the protection of online expression in Bangladesh. Active in the promotion of women's rights, Ms Rahman has also been a driving force against discrimination and gender-based censorship in the Bangladeshi media. Her work includes promoting tolerance within the framework of Rabat Plan of Action in Bangladesh. Ms. Rahman studied law at the University of Dhaka and has a Master in Laws from the University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies. She was a McArthur fellow at Harvard University and has recently been awarded the Franco-German Prize for Human Rights and Rule of Law. Awarded for the first time, in 2016, jointly by Germany and France to human rights defenders from around the world the prize honors the work of the recipients for demonstrating great civic courage in order to improve the protection of human rights in their respective countries.

Date and Venue

Date: 6th March 2017 | **Time:** 3.00pm |

Venue: RC Majumder Auditorium, University of Dhaka

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