

Anisul Huq
Minister of Law Justice and Parliamentary Affairs
Building No – 04
Bangladesh Secretariat
Dhaka – 1000
Bangladesh

Groningen, 2023

Honourable Minister Anisul Huq,

I wish to express my concern about Shahnewaz Chowdhury, an engineer and activist, who was arrested from his Gandamara residence in Banshkhali on 28 May 2021. He could face up to 10 years in prison, solely for sharing his opinion on Facebook.

In the Facebook post, Chowdhury expressed his opinion that a coal-fired power plant in Banshkhali was environmentally destructive. He also criticized the incidents that allegedly led to the killing of 12 people during protests in the plant. For this, he has been accused of posting “false and offensive information”, “tarnishing the reputation of the power plant” and “creating animosity, instability and chaos” under sections 25, 29 and 31 of the draconian Digital Security Act.

I urge you to immediately drop the case against Shahnewaz Chowdhury. Furthermore, I ask that you repeal the Digital Security Act unless it can be amended in line with international human rights law including the ICCPR, to which Bangladesh is a state party.

Yours sincerely,