



**Canadian Committee for Human Rights
and Democracy in Bangladesh**

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Press Release

Concern over deteriorating human rights situation in Bangladesh in the wake of Prothom Alo cartoon issue

We have noticed with deep concern recent street agitation in Bangladesh sparked by a cartoon published in the supplement of the Prothom Alo, the popular daily vernacular news paper. Any knowledgeable and reasonable person understands that the cartoon does not carry any message contending religious belief or values. In the meantime, the editor of the newspaper has made a very sincere overture by meeting religious leaders and expressing deep regret for publishing the cartoon that has affected individual's religious sentiment. Additionally, very boldly he has asked for forgiveness for publishing the cartoon. Amid acceptance of the apology by religious leaders, the protest has been going on unabated. Unfortunately, the arbitrary arrest of contributing cartoonist Arifur Rahman by police and the phrases of the statement of Information Adviser Barrister Mainul Hossain have further boosted the morale of agitators' unscrupulous demand of silencing free press

We condemn this kind of anarchy which foments hatred, defies international human rights charter of free expression and makes inroad to religious intolerance and extremism. We demand immediate release of Arifur Rahman, guarantee of his legal and physical protection and more responsible reaction on sensitive issues from the senior members of the Caretaker Government.

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Convenor
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Secretary