

**SHAHNEWAZ CHOWDHURY  
BANGLADESH**

## **Facing prison for a Facebook post**

A big cricket fan, Shahnewaz has been playing since childhood. He also has a passion for writing and uses the written word to speak out about the struggles faced by people in his region of Banshkhali, a low-lying coastal area in the south-east of Bangladesh, vulnerable to the impact of climate change.

A new coal-fired power plant in Shahnewaz's village was supposed to be a turning point in the region's development. But Shahnewaz was scared about the environmental destruction it would bring.

On 26 May 2021, the area was swept up by a storm. Heavy rainfall and strong winds pounded the village. Homes were destroyed. Worried about the impact of environmentally damaging projects like the new power plant, which he believed contributed to an increase in tidal surges, Shahnewaz took to Facebook to raise his concerns. Encouraging young people to speak out, Shahnewaz wrote: "the youth of Banshkhali must resist injustice and support development through fearless writing."

The following day, the power plant company filed a case against Shahnewaz, accusing him of posting false information. On 28 May 2021, he was arrested by the police for his Facebook post under Bangladesh's oppressive Digital Security Act. He was detained in inhumane conditions for 80 days, without trial. Shahnewaz was granted bail on 16 August 2021, but if he's convicted, he faces many years in prison.

**Tell Bangladesh to drop the charges today**

## **WRITE TO THE BANGLADESHI AUTHORITIES**

Tell them to immediately and unconditionally drop the charges against Shahnewaz Chowdhury.



Minister of Justice  
Law and Justice Division Ministry of Law  
Justice and Parliamentary Affairs  
Building No – 04  
Bangladesh Secretariat  
Dhaka – 1000  
Bangladesh

Email: [minister@minlaw.gov.bd](mailto:minister@minlaw.gov.bd)  
Salutation: Honourable Minister

His Excellency Dr Khalilur RAHMAN  
High Commissioner for the People's Republic of  
Bangladesh  
350 Sparks Street, Suite 1100  
Ottawa ON K1R 7S8

Email: [mission.ottawa@mofa.gov.bd](mailto:mission.ottawa@mofa.gov.bd)  
Salutation: Your Excellency

## **SHOW SHAHNEWAZ HE'S NOT ALONE**

Write him a message of friendship and support. Take a photo of it and post it on your social media channels, tagging Shahnewaz. Or send cards and letters by post to the address below.

**Address:**  
Shahnewaz Chowdhury  
C/O Rashid Ahmed Chowdhury  
East Baraghona  
Post office: West Baraghona  
Police station: Banshkhali  
Chittagong  
Bangladesh

Twitter: @Shahnewaz9

