**Two suspected Islamists arrested over killing of secular Bangladeshi blogger**

Police investigating murder of Niladry Chattopadhya arrest Saad-al-Nahin and Masud Rana, suspected members of group responsible for previous attacks

Bangladeshi police have arrested two suspects in connection with the killing of a secular blogger earlier this month – the fourth such attack this year.

The suspects, Saad al-Nahian and Masud Rana, are members of the banned hardline Islamist group Ansarullah Bangla Team. Nahian was on bail on a separate charge of attempted murder over an attack on another blogger, [Asif Mohiuddin](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/may/28/bangladeshi-blogger-ananya-azad-named-hitlist), in 2013.

Last Friday at least four men posing as tenants entered an apartment building and [hacked to death](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/aug/07/machete-gang-kills-secular-bangladeshi-blogger-niloy-chakrabarti) 28-year-old Niladry Chattopadhya, who used the pen name Niloy Neel. Chattopadhya’s wife, Asha Moni, filed a murder case against four unnamed persons.

Chattopadhya had told police of threats against him and requested protection weeks before he died. In an interview with the Guardian in May, Chattopadhya said he was scared of being killed and that he had tried to file reports with police about continued harassment. He claimed his complaints were not taken seriously.

Family and friends said police had asked Chattopadhya to leave the country for his safety.

Hours after the killing, a group that has been linked to al-Qaida claimed responsibility in an email. The email was sent in the name of Ansar ul Islam, a little-known organisation that has claimed responsibility for previous murders of bloggers and describes itself as the [Bangladesh](http://www.theguardian.com/world/bangladesh) branch of al-Qaida in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS).

The United States has expressed its concern over the killing, while the United Nations has called for Bangladeshi authorities to ensure accountability and prevent such violence.

The hacking to death in February of Bangladeshi-born US citizen [Avijit Roy](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/feb/27/american-atheist-blogger-hacked-to-death-in-bangladesh), a science writer and blog site moderator, prompted outrage around the world.

His death was followed by that of 27-year-old [Washiqur Rahman](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/mar/30/blogger-hacked-death-bangladesh-dhaka), killed in Dhaka in March, and [Ananta Bijoy Das](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/may/12/third-atheist-blogger-killed-in-bangladesh-after-knife-attack), murdered by a group wielding machetes on 13 May as he headed to work in Sylhet, northern Bangladesh.

Imran H Sarkar, the head of a blogging activist network, said the arrests over Chattopadhya’s death were unlikely to reassure Bangladesh’s bloggers unless police could provide evidence of the suspects’ involvement.

Dev Jyoti Rudro, who says he accompanied Chattopadhya when he tried to file reports about harassment to the police, said investigators had struggled to find witnesses to implicate the suspects, and “shared a rather bleak picture” with him of their inquiries.

An FBI agent has been following the investigation into Roy’s death and met detectives in Bangladesh on 9 August to discuss the Chattopadhya investigation.

Two days after Chattopadhya’s death, a police chief asked bloggers not to write posts that may hurt religious sentiments. According to the Information and Communication Act 2013, anyone who offends religious belief can be punished with 14 years’ imprisonment.

Bangladesh is officially a secular country, but more than 90% of its 160 million people are Muslim.

*Associated Press contributed to this report*

* This article was amended on 14 August 2015 to correct the spelling of   
  Niladry Chattopadhya’s name.