

**Ellis, Alex**

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**From:** Ellis, Alex  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 20, 2021 12:35 PM  
**To:** press@cpj.org; info@cpj.org  
**Subject:** Response letter from the Embassy of Bangladesh

Greetings,

Please consider publishing the below response letter from Ferdousi Shahriar, the Deputy Chief of Mission for the Embassy of Bangladesh, Washington D.C.

The Committee to Protect Journalists' article, "[Bangladeshi authorities arrest journalist Rozina Islam under Official Secrets Act](#)" (May 17) mischaracterizes the arrest of Rozina Islam.

Freedom of speech is a constitutionally guaranteed right in Bangladesh. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the government has rededicated itself to supporting a free and independent media. The reason: Journalists have provided vital information to the public as well as accountability reporting.

Unfortunately, this increased reliance on the press has occasionally been abused. Legal authorities have no choice but to arrest people who appear to have run afoul of the law as was the case with Rozina Islam. Stealing, concealing, removing or mutilating government documents is a crime in countries ranging from the [United States](#) to China. Law enforcement authorities say that Islam attempted to do just that and was arrested.

Islam was found in possession of confidential and sensitive government documents, including illegally-photographed images of materials she found in a government office. After Islam was appropriately arrested, she was not abused or mistreated in any way. She was cared for by female officials who looked after her well-being.

To ensure that the investigation about her actions is fair and independent, the Bangladesh government has formed a three-member committee to look into the incident. The government is not persecuting a journalist but rather is upholding the rule of law in this case.

Sincerely,  
Ferdousi Shahriar  
Deputy Chief of Mission  
Embassy of Bangladesh  
Washington, D.C.

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