**Woman arrested after son's Facebook post must be immediately released: Amnesty**

Amnesty International has strongly condemned the arrest of a mother over her son's Facebook post criticizing the trial and conviction of an opposition politician by International Crimes Tribunal (ICT).

It has also demanded immediate release of the mother.

Amnesty International issued a statement on its website on Wednesday (August 23).

Responding to the arrest of Anisha Siddika, a 58-year-old woman in Bangladesh who was apparently detained over her son's Facebook post criticizing the trial and conviction of an opposition politician by Bangladesh's controversial ICT, Nadia Rahman, Interim Deputy Regional Director of Research for South Asia at Amnesty International said:

"The Bangladeshi authorities are showing an alarming trend of intolerance towards those expressing opposing views, both in online and offline spaces. Arresting a mother immediately after her son's social media post criticizing the government is ludicrous and a new low in Bangladesh, where endless reports of arbitrary detention of opposition politicians and activists in the lead up to next year's general election has created a climate of fear and distrust.

"Bangladeshi authorities must release Anisha Siddika immediately or promptly charge her with a recognizable offence, in accordance with international standards. They must also urgently stop their practice of arbitrarily detaining people solely for their dissenting views. It is not a crime to hold and express different political opinions."

"Instead of targeting critical voices, the authorities must ensure that people are able to exercise their human rights prior to, during and after the election, including the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly, without fear of reprisal or discrimination."

**BACKGROUND**

According to the first information report (FIR) of the case, Anisha Siddika was arrested on 20 August under Section 15(3) ('sabotage') and Section 25(D)('penalty for attempt') the draconian Special Powers Act 1974. The FIR states that the investigation found that Anisha has "colluded" with the other defendants to carry out "various harmful acts with the intention of causing deliberate sabotage against the government" to protest the arrests of leaders of Jamaat, an opposition political party in Bangladesh. On 23 August, a metropolitan magistrate court in Khulna City denied her bail.