

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	482
Land:	Bangladesh
Kilde:	Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland
Titel:	COI Query Response Bangladesh – Information on oppression and or theft of goods and assets of BNP political party supports of Awami political party members
Udgivet:	21. marts 2024
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	10. oktober 2024

RESEARCHED AND COMPILED BY THE REFUGEE DOCUMENTATION CENTRE OF IRELAND ON THE 21 MARCH 2024

DISCLAIMER

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. All COI Query Responses are compiled in line with the Common EU Guidelines (2008) and the EUAA Methodology (2023). This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to international protection. Please refer to all documents cited.

COI QUERY RESPONSE - BANGLADESH – INFORMATION ON OPPRESSION AND/OR THEFT OF GOODS AND ASSETS OF BNP POLITICAL PARTY SUPPORTERS BY AWAMI POLITICAL PARTY MEMBERS.

The *Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)* in March 2024 points out that: “On 25 May 2023, when the Awami League attacked a BNP procession in South Keraniganj, Dhaka, at least 50 leaders and activists, including BNP's central leader Nipun Roy Chowdhury, were injured in the clash. However, the police filed a report against more than 500 members of BNP. The police fired rubber bullets and tear gas shells at the main opposition BNP supporters on 29 July 2023, leaving dozens of its supporters injured during anti-government protests. The violence broke out as the opposition party organised sit-in protests at all the entry points to Dhaka. The police and ruling Awami League members attacked road marches organised by BNP in different districts on 20 August 2023, resulting in more than 100 injured people while pressing their demand for party chief Khaleda Zia's release from her house arrest and for her to be taken abroad for treatment.”¹

A report issued by *Human Rights Watch* in January 2024 states that: “The Awami League-led government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina arrested over 8,000 leaders and supporters of the opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) ahead of the elections, in an overt attempt to incapacitate the competition and disqualify opposition leaders from participating. Many were allegedly “disappeared” when police arrested and kept them in unlawful detention for days or weeks before eventually producing them in court.”²

International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) in January 2024 mentioned that: “In the lead-up to the election, the authorities arrested thousands of BNP members and supporters and filed politically-motivated cases against them. From 1 August to 31 December 2023, at least 1,724 opposition leaders and activists, mostly from the BNP, were detained and sentenced to jail terms by courts in Dhaka. According to opposition figures, between 28 October and late December 2023, 23,460 opposition leaders, members, and supporters had been arrested, and 684 cases had been

¹ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) (14 March 2024) Written statement submitted by ODHAKAR (Bangladesh: End Crackdown on Political Opposition and Hindrance to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly)

² Human Rights Watch (11 January 2024) Bangladesh: Repression, Security Force Abuses Discredit Elections

filed against them. There have also been reports of detained opposition activities being tortured and subjected to inhuman and degrading treatments while in prison. At least nine opposition activists have died in prisons while in arbitrary detention since 25 November 2023.”³

The document further points out that: “BNP leaders, members, and supporters have continued to face a crackdown even after the party's decision to boycott the upcoming polls.”⁴

Odhikar (Bangladesh) in January 2024 reported that: “Awami League members have been involved in attacking BNP leaders and activists, as well as vandalizing their residences. Additionally, there have been reports of ruling party members vandalizing and setting fire to BNP's party offices and business establishments owned by BNP supporters”⁵

A report issued by *Human Rights Watch* in November 2023 states that: “Bangladesh authorities are targeting opposition leaders and supporters ahead of the general elections slated for January 7, 2024.”⁶

The same report mentioned that: “Senior government leaders, including Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, have fueled ongoing violence through public statements encouraging attacks on opposition protesters. On November 3, she told her Awami League party supporters that if they catch anyone committing arson to “throw [them] into the same fire. The hand that sets fire to anything will have to be burnt ... tit for tat. If so, they would learn lessons.” Videos and witness reports show disturbing evidence of coordination between the police and the Awami League supporters in threatening and targeting opposition party activists. “People are scared to come out of their homes because the police and Awami League activists are in the street,” said a BNP supporter.”⁷

The *Coalition for Human Rights and Democracy in Bangladesh (CHRD Bangladesh)* in November 2023 reported that: “The Coalition for Human Rights & Democracy in Bangladesh (CHRD Bangladesh) condemns once again the continued brutal treatment of the political opposition, particularly the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and the Jamaat-e-Islam (Jel), by the autocratic regime of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, illegally in power since 2009 by repeated election fraud and by keeping the opposition out of the polling booths.”⁸

The same document points out that: “The current phase of political oppression started on October 28, 2023 when BNP's pre-announced rally, attended by about one million supporters in Dhaka was ruthlessly crushed.” [...] ⁹

In October 2023 *Odhikar (Bangladesh)* reported that: “On 28 July 2023, thousands of the main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) supporters joined sit-in programmes at the entry points of Dhaka demanding the resignation of the government and for a neutral caretaker administration to oversee the upcoming parliamentary elections. The following day, police cleared thousands of protesters and fired rubber bullets and teargas to disperse the crowds blockading the main roads in Dhaka. There were allegations of police and ruling party supporters, who were carrying sticks and rods in the presence of police, attacking protesters. According to the BNP, 600

³ International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) (5 January 2024) Bangladesh: An election in name only

⁴ *ibid*

⁵ *Odhikar (Bangladesh)* (4 January 2024) Bangladesh: Annual Human Rights Report 2023, p.7

⁶ Human Rights Watch (26 November 2024) Bangladesh: Violent Autocratic Crackdown Ahead of Elections, p.2

⁷ *ibid*

⁸ Coalition for Human Rights and Democracy in Bangladesh (CHRD Bangladesh) (11 November 2023) Statement On The Bangladesh Government's Continuing War Against The Opposition

⁹ *ibid*

supporters were injured by police rubber bullets and attacks by the ruling party supporters. Police filed at least 13 cases against 628 named BNP leaders and activists and many unnamed persons, following attacks and clashes between BNP supporters and law enforcers, who teamed up with ruling party activists. However, Awami League supporters, who were seen attacking opposition members with sticks, rods and hammers, were neither arrested nor charged.”¹⁰

In September 2023 *Voice of America News* states that: “Hundreds of thousands of leaders, activists and supporters of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), the country's largest opposition party, have faced "fictitious" charges of violence, party leaders allege.”¹¹

The document further mentioned that: “BNP leaders allege their political rallies are being attacked by the police and armed Awami League activists, and that their leaders and supporters are being set up on spurious charges of violence and sabotage.”¹²

References

Coalition for Human Rights and Democracy in Bangladesh (CHRD Bangladesh) (11 November 2023) *Statement On The Bangladesh Government's Continuing War Against The Opposition*
<https://www.ein.org.uk/members/country-report/statement-bangladesh-governments-continuing-war-against-opposition>

(Accessed on 21 March 2024)

This is a subscription data base

Human Rights Watch (26 November 2024) *Bangladesh: Violent Autocratic Crackdown Ahead of Elections*

<https://www.ein.org.uk/members/country-report/bangladesh-violent-autocratic-crackdown-ahead-elections>

(Accessed on 21 March 2024)

This is a subscription data base

Human Rights Watch (11 January 2024) *Bangladesh: Repression, Security Force Abuses Discredit Elections*

<https://www.ein.org.uk/members/country-report/bangladesh-repression-security-force-abuses-discredit-elections>

(Accessed on 21 March 2024)

This is a subscription data base

International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) (5 January 2024) *Bangladesh: An election in name only*

<https://www.ein.org.uk/members/country-report/bangladesh-election-name-only>

(Accessed on 21 March 2024)

This is a subscription data base

¹⁰ Odhikar (Bangladesh) (10 October 2023) Three-Month Human Rights Monitoring Report on Bangladesh: July – September 2023

¹¹ Voice of America News (26 September 2023) Bangladeshi Police Accused of Filing False Cases as Election Nears

¹² *ibid*

Odhikar (Bangladesh) (4 January 2024) *Bangladesh: Annual Human Rights Report 2023, p.7*
<https://www.ein.org.uk/members/country-report/bangladesh-annual-human-rights-report-2023>
(Accessed on 21 March 2024)
This is a subscription data base

Odhikar (Bangladesh) (10 October 2023) *Three-Month Human Rights Monitoring Report on Bangladesh: July – September 2023*
<https://www.ein.org.uk/members/country-report/three-month-human-rights-monitoring-report-bangladesh-reporting-period-july>
(Accessed on 21 March 2024)
This is a subscription data base

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) (14 March 2024) *Written statement submitted by ODHAKAR (Bangladesh: End Crackdown on Political Opposition and Hindrance to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly)*
<https://www.ein.org.uk/members/country-report/written-statement-submitted-odhakar-bangladesh-end-crackdown-political>
(Accessed on 21 March 2024)
This is a subscription data base

Voice of America News (26 September 2023) *Bangladeshi Police Accused of Filing False Cases as Election Nears*
<https://www.ein.org.uk/members/country-report/bangladeshi-police-accused-filing-false-cases-election-nears>
(Accessed on 21 March 2024)
This is a subscription data base

Sources Consulted:

Amnesty International
BBC News
Electronic Immigration Network
European Country of Origin Information Network
Freedom House
Google
Human Rights Watch
Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada
Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
International Crisis Group
Lexis Nexis
Minority Rights Group International
New Humanitarian
Online Newspapers
Refugee Documentation Centre Query Database
Reliefweb
United Kingdom Home Office
United States Department of State
UNHCR Refworld

Contact Information

Refugee Documentation Centre
Legal Aid Board
48/49 North Brunswick Street
Dublin 7
Ireland

Email: research@legalaidboard.ie