

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	207
Land:	Bangladesh
Kilde:	Minority Rights Group International
Titel:	State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples 2014 – Bangladesh
Udgivet:	3. juli 2014
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	9. januar 2015



State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples 2014 - Bangladesh

Publisher [Minority Rights Group International](#)

Publication Date 3 July 2014

Cite as Minority Rights Group International, *State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples 2014 - Bangladesh*, 3 July 2014, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/53ba8e002c.html> [accessed 1 September 2014]

Disclaimer This is not a UNHCR publication. UNHCR is not responsible for, nor does it necessarily endorse, its content. Any views expressed are solely those of the author or publisher and do not necessarily reflect those of UNHCR, the United Nations or its Member States.

The year 2013 saw continuing attacks against the Hindu minority, aggravated by upcoming elections in 2014 and the proceedings of the Bangladesh International Crimes Tribunal (ICT). The ICT was formed in 2009 by the ruling Awami League to try those accused of atrocities committed during Bangladesh's war for independence from Pakistan in 1971. Many of the victims and witnesses are from the minority Hindu community. The subsequent proceedings have been highly politicized, as many of those tried are former or current members of the opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) or their coalition partner, Jamaat-e-Islami. Verdicts reached throughout the first half of the year resulted in widespread protests, both in support of and against the rulings. In December, a key figure in Jamaat-e-Islami, Abdul Quader Mollah, was executed as a result of an ICT ruling against him for crimes against humanity. Ex-minister of the BNP Abdul Alim received a life sentence from the ICT in October for two acts of genocide, including speeches inciting violence against Hindus.

The proceedings of the ICT, which could potentially bring justice for atrocities committed against Bangladesh's minorities, have been criticized by the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers and the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial executions for its non-compliance with due process. Retributive attacks against minorities have plagued the ICT's proceedings, with Hindu community members claiming that mob attacks by Jamaat-e-Islami party supporters in early 2013 resulted in damage to more than 50 temples and the destruction of over 1,500 houses. The run-up to the country's parliamentary elections in January 2014 also placed Bangladesh's minorities under threat.

Massive street protests triggered violence from some protesters and a heavy-handed response from security forces, while opposition party members and supporters were arbitrarily arrested and detained. Minority Hindus feared attacks as they are widely thought to be traditional supporters of the ruling Awami League. Post-election violence against minorities surged, with Dalit Hindu villages burned and looted by opposition supporters. Attacks on Hindu and other marginalized communities, such as indigenous Garo, were reported to have affected around 5,000 families.

In April, Bangladesh was reviewed for the second cycle of the UN's Universal Periodic Review (UPR). The recommendations included ensuring the security of religious minorities, protecting indigenous communities and improving the conditions of Dalits. During the UPR session, the Bangladesh Minister of Foreign Affairs confirmed that an anti-discrimination law, including

discrimination on the basis of caste, is currently being drafted. A UPR recommendation protecting the rights of the Rohingya was also accepted by Bangladesh. The Rohingya are a persecuted minority in Burma; many have sought refuge in Bangladesh, but are often unrecognized as refugees by the Bangladesh government. In November, however, the government announced a national Rohingya strategy to take account of all the undocumented members of the Muslim minority residing in Bangladesh. While some subsist with limited humanitarian access in refugee camps near the border with Burma, the majority are located in urban areas in informal settlements with little or no assistance. Details of the strategy were not made public, prompting concerns that Bangladesh authorities would continue to withhold legal protection.

The Special Rapporteur on violence against women made an official visit to the country in May. In her concluding press statement, Rashida Manjoo made note of the rights of women from indigenous groups in Chittagong and Rangamati, and the violence suffered by indigenous women, particularly as a result of gaps in implementation of the 1997 Peace Accord and continued militarization in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT). The CHT is home to the indigenous Jumma or Pahari peoples, and the Peace Accord legally established their customary rights, including rights to land, traditional governance structures and demilitarization. In addition, the Land Commission Act of 2001 was intended to solve disputes between Bengali settlers and indigenous peoples dispossessed from their lands through the creation of a Land Commission. To date, however, it has not resolved a single case. In 2013, a CHT Land Disputes Resolution Commission Act (Amendment) Bill was drafted in order to remedy contradictory provisions in the Land Act. The cabinet approved the amendment in June, but the end of the year did not see a parliamentary adoption of the bill. Bengali settlers continued to protest the proposed amendment. Meanwhile, attacks and land grabbing continued in the CHT: in August, arson attacks by settlers in the Taindong area of Matiranga sub-district resulted in 12 persons injured, 34 burned houses, two damaged Buddhist temples, 259 looted homes and 2,000 families fleeing across the border. Locals say the Bangladesh authorities did not do enough to prevent the attacks or stop them once they had started.

While limits are placed on hate speech in Bangladesh's penal code and other legislation, there is no clear definition of how it should be classified, providing the government with a broad scope of interpretation. Provisions in the Information Communication Technology Act, for instance, were used in 2013 to silence bloggers who were critical of the government, accusing them of posting inflammatory statements against Islam and 'hurting religious sentiments'. Four bloggers were arrested in April after the creation of an anti-blasphemy committee the previous month to monitor online activity critical of Islam. One of the bloggers, Subrata Adhikari Shuvo, is from the Hindu community and had posted blogs critical of the mainstream media's reporting on attacks on religious minorities. All four members of the group were described by police as 'known atheists'. Calls for the creation of a blasphemy law were rejected by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in April, as she reasoned that existing laws were adequate to punish those who insult religion.

Copyright notice: © Minority Rights Group International. All rights reserved.

Search Refworld

by keyword
and / or country
All countries

[Advanced Search](#) | [Search Tips](#)

Countries

- [Bangladesh](#)

Topics

- [Indigenous persons](#)
- [Minorities](#)