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BANGLADESH: THE BANGLADESH AWAMI LEAGUE (AL), INCLUDING ITS STRUCTURE, LEADERS, MEMBERSHIP AND MEMBERSHIP DOCUMENTS, ASSOCIATED ORGANIZATIONS AND FACTIONS, ACTIVITIES; RELATIONSHIP WITH THE OPPOSITION (2017-JANUARY 2020) [BGD200086.E]

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

1. The AL

1.1 Overview

According to the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) country information report on Bangladesh, the AL traces its history to the 1947 partition of India and Pakistan, and emphasises its role in the separation of East Pakistan to become Bangladesh. Its policy platforms include secularism, liberalism, cooperation with India, and rural[-] and agricultural[-]based policies. (Australia 22 Aug. 2019, para. 3.71)

The AL constitution describes the party's fundamental principles as nationalism, democracy, secularism and socialism (AL n.d.).

According to the *Political Handbook of the World 2018-2019*, the AL "and its allies won an overwhelming victory in the election of December 29, 2008, taking 263 seats to 33 for the [Bangladesh Nationalist Party, BNP]-led four-party alliance" (*Political Handbook of the World* 2019, 8). Sources state that in 2011, the AL abolished the caretaker government system [a non-partisan government which oversaw elections (AP 30 June 2011)] through a constitutional amendment (AP 30 June 2011; *Political Handbook of the World* 2019, 8). According to the *Handbook*, "[t]his decision was highly controversial among members of the opposition and resulted in violent protests and the expansion of the opposition from 4 parties to 18" (*Political Handbook of the World* 2019, 8). Sources indicate that the BNP boycotted the 2014 elections, which had a voter turnout of 22 percent (AP 30 Dec. 2018; *Political Handbook of the World* 2019, 8, 11) and in which the AL won a two-thirds majority (*Political Handbook of the World* 2019, 8).

According to sources, the AL won the 30 December 2018 election (AP 31 Dec. 2018; *Political Handbook of the World* 2019, 3), which had a turnout rate of 80 percent (AP 31 Dec. 2018). The *Handbook* indicates that the AL obtained 257 seats (*Political Handbook of the World* 2019, 3), while media sources indicate that the AL coalition obtained 288 seats (AP 31 Dec. 2018; Al Jazeera 3 Jan. 2019). There are of 300 seats in the Parliament (AP 31 Dec. 2018; *Political Handbook of the World* 2019, 24), with an additional "50 indirectly elected seats reserved for women and filled on a proportional basis among represented parties" (*Political Handbook of the World* 2019, 24).

Sources indicate that the AL has led two political party coalitions, the Grand Alliance [an "electoral" alliance (*The Daily Star* 27 Oct. 2018)] (Al Jazeera 3 Jan. 2019; *The Daily Star* 27 Oct. 2018; *Dhaka Tribune* 5 Oct. 2017), and the 14-party alliance [an "ideological" alliance (*The Daily Star* 27 Oct. 2018)] (*The Daily Star* 27 Oct. 2018; *Dhaka Tribune* 5 Oct. 2017). An article by Al Jazeera about the 2018 general election, using information from the Bangladesh Election Commission and the *Daily Star*, indicates that the Grand Alliance partners in 2018 consisted of the following members: AL, Jatiya Party, Worker's Party of Bangladesh, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) - Inu, Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh, Tarikat Federation, Jatiya Party (Manju), and the Ambia-led JSD (Al Jazeera 29 Dec. 2018). As for the 14-party alliance, according to a 2017 article in the *Dhaka Tribune*, a national English-language newspaper in Bangladesh,

[t]he most prominent members ... are the Bangladesh Tariqat Federation, JaSad [Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal] (Inu), Workers' Party [of Bangladesh], Bangladesher Samyabadi Dal (Marxbadi-Leninbadi), Ganatantri Party, Communist Kendro, Gana Azadi League, National Awami Party (NAP-Mojaffor), Jatiya Party (JP-Manju) and the Ganatantrik Majdur Party. (*Dhaka Tribune* 5 Oct. 2017)

1.2 Leadership and Structure

Sheikh Hasina is the AL president and Obaidul Quader is the general secretary (AL 21 Dec. 2019; *Dhaka Tribune* 20 Dec. 2019; *New Age* 21 Dec. 2019). Sources indicate that Sheikh Hasina has been the AL leader since 1981 [or 1980 (DW 21 Dec. 2018)] (Al Jazeera 30 Dec. 2018; Jahan Aug. 2014, 30). The *Handbook* adds, in its list of the AL's leaders, that Sheikh Hasina is both Prime Minister and Party President, and that Abdul Hamid is the President of Bangladesh (*Political Handbook of the World* 2019, 13). The *Daily Star*, an English-language newspaper based in Dhaka, presents Mahbubul Alam Hanif as the joint general secretary (*The Daily Star* 5 Nov. 2019).

Australia's DFAT describes the structure of the AL as follows:

At the top of the party is the Central Committee, known as the Presidium. There are 15 members of the Presidium, including the Prime Minister. The Presidium is part of an 81-person Central Working Party and is supported by an advisory committee of technical advisers. Each district and sub-district (*upazila*) has its own committee. Some also join Political Auxiliary Organisations and rise through the ranks. (Australia 22 Aug. 2019, para. 3.72, italics in original)

According to a working paper written by Rounaq Jahan and published by the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) and Chr. Michelsen Institute (CMI) [1], which explores the functioning of political parties in Bangladesh, the AL has seven organizational bodies at the national level:

1. Council: It is the largest forum in the party with a membership of 6,000 councillors, representing every city AL and every 25,000 people per district. It adopts policies for party objectives and elects the president and the general secretary, among other responsibilities;
2. National Committee: It consists of 166 members who are elected or nominated. One of its tasks is to coordinate between the council and subordinate bodies;
3. Central Executive Committee/Central Committee/Central Working Committee (CEC/CC/CCW): It brings together 73 members, consisting of top party representatives. It prepares accounts and approves appointments or dismissals of staff by the general secretary, among other activities;
4. Presidium: It reunites 15 members drawn from the CEC/CC/CWC and includes the president and the general secretary of the party. It is the highest decision-making body and one of its tasks is to take decisions on party programmes and issues;
5. Central Advisory Council: It consists of 41 nominated members. It is "designed as the think tank of the party. It reviews the work of the party and how this relates to the political, economic and social issues facing the country," among other tasks;
6. Parliamentary Board: It consists of 11 members, including the president, the general secretary of the party and the leader of the parliamentary party. It is mainly responsible for functions related to elections;
7. Parliamentary Party: It includes all of the elected MPs and functions on advice of the CEC/CC/CWC (Jahan Aug. 2014, 15-19).

The same source also describes that at the sub-national level, the party has organizational bodies which includes:

committees at zila/district, upazila/thana, union, ward, metropolitan city, metropolitan thana, metropolitan ward, metropolitan unit, municipal committee ('A' category and other), municipal ward and village levels. The party constitution stipulates that the members of the zila/district, upazila, metropolitan city executive committee, metropolitan thana committees are to be elected through triennial councils but no specific election/selection procedure has been spelled out regarding the election/selection of other sub-national committees. (Jahan Aug. 2014, 28)

1.3 Membership and Documents

According to Australia's DFAT,

[t]he party holds membership campaigns every year through which people can apply for membership. Applicants are required to pay a fee of about 20 taka [C\$0.31]. Once people have joined it takes two years for them to be admitted as full members. People are involved at different levels, including in village politics or in auxiliary committees. There is no official distinction between levels of supporters, but people are commonly involved in different wings of the party and focus on different jurisdictions, such as the village or district level. (Australia 22 Aug. 2019, para. 3.73)

The working paper by Rounaq Jahan states that "[a] person who is at least 18 years of age, a Bangladeshi citizen, not against the independence, sovereignty and integrity of the country and not involved in any anti-social or anti-people activities can become a member [...] by filling a membership form and paying a subscription fee" (Jahan Aug. 2014, 33). Information on membership documents could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

1.4 Affiliated Organizations

According to Australia's DFAT,

[b]oth the AL and BNP (and other Bangladeshi political parties) have large auxiliary organisations, including wings for students, volunteers, youth, and professionals (such as doctors, lawyers or labourers). These organisations might be known by other names, such as 'fronts', 'wings', 'associates' or 'leagues'. While the exact size of these organisations is unknown, they are large: local sources estimate that the AL's student wing, the Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), alone has ten million people. The sheer size of the auxiliary organisations means that, in practice, the central leadership of the relevant political party exercises only a limited amount of control over their activities, and the auxiliary organisations maintain a high degree of autonomy. (Australia 22 Aug. 2019, para. 3.89)

Sources indicate that the AL has the following associated bodies:

- Bangladesh Chhatra League (Australia 22 Aug. 2019, para. 3.89; *The Daily Star* 5 Nov. 2019; *Dhaka Tribune* 22 June 2017), the student wing (Australia 22 Aug. 2019, para. 3.89);
- Jubo [Juba] League (*The Daily Star* 5 Nov. 2019; *Dhaka Tribune* 22 June 2017) or Awami Jubo League, the youth wing (Australia 22 Aug. 2019, para. 3.91);
- Bangladesh Mahila [Mohila] Awami League (Australia 22 Aug. 2019, para. 3.91; *The Daily Star* 5 Nov. 2019; *Dhaka Tribune* 22 June 2017), the women's wing (Australia 22 Aug. 2019, para. 3.91);
- Awami Swechhashebok League (Australia 22 Aug. 2019, para. 3.91; *Dhaka Tribune* 22 June 2017) or Swechchhasebak League [volunteers' wing (Australia 22 Aug. 2019, para. 3.91)] (*The Daily Star* 5 Nov. 2019);
- Bangladesh Krishok [Krishak] League (Australia 22 Aug. 2019, para. 3.91; *The Daily Star* 5 Nov. 2019; *Dhaka Tribune* 22 June 2017), the farmers' wing (Australia 22 Aug. 2019, para. 3.91);
- Jatiyo [Jatiya] Sramik League (Australia 22 Aug. 2019, para. 3.91; *The Daily Star* 5 Nov. 2019; *Dhaka Tribune* 22 June 2017), the workers' / labour wing (Australia 22 Aug. 2019, para. 3.91);
- Awami Ainjibee [Ainjibi] Parishad (Australia 22 Aug. 2019, para. 3.91; *The Daily Star* 5 Nov. 2019; *Dhaka Tribune* 22 June 2017), the lawyers' wing (Australia 22 Aug. 2019, para. 3.91);
- Jubo [Juba] Mahila [Mohila] League (*The Daily Star* 5 Nov. 2019; *Dhaka Tribune* 22 June 2017; *The Independent* 7 July 2019);
- Bangladesh Tanti League (*The Daily Star* 5 Nov. 2019; *Dhaka Tribune* 22 June 2017; *The Independent* 7 July 2019);
- Swadhinata Chikitsok Parishad (*Dhaka Tribune* 22 June 2017); and
- Mohila Sramik League (*Dhaka Tribune* 22 June 2017).

The Australian DFAT report adds that the party also has "overseas wings for the Bangladeshi diaspora, which exist in some major cities in Australia as well as other countries" (Australia 22 Aug. 2019, para. 3.73).

Sources indicate that there are many unrecognized organizations that use names associated with the AL, such as "Awami," "League," "Bangabandhu," (*The Daily Star* 5 Nov. 2019; *Dhaka Tribune* 22 June 2017), or "Muktijodhha," with estimates of "over 200" organizations using AL-related names (*The Daily Star* 5 Nov. 2019). The *Daily Star* indicates that "[m]ost of these platforms in their official documents mention the AL headquarters at 23 Bangabandhu Avenue as their official address, but none of the offices could be found there" (*The Daily Star* 5 Nov. 2019). Sources indicate that these groups can exploit connections with party leaders and use the influence gained by name usage for receiving government contracts (*The Daily Star* 5 Nov. 2019; *Dhaka Tribune* 22 June 2017), or "extort[ing] money, grab[bing] property, deal[ing] drugs and ... other crimes"

(*Dhaka Tribune* 22 June 2017). An article in the *Daily Star* cites the AL Joint Secretary General as indicating that the AL has communicated with the Dhaka Metropolitan Police and the Home Ministry about these organizations, but that "they have again become active recently" (*The Daily Star* 5 Nov. 2019).

1.4.1 Factions and Intra-Party Violence

According to Australia's DFAT,

auxiliary organisations support the political parties through fundraising and election-related activities. However, they also play a major role in inter-and intra-party violence. DFAT assesses as credible allegations that members of student wings are sometimes party activists rather than genuine students, and that auxiliary organisations engage in criminal activities on occasion, including violence and extortion. Student elections, like other elections, can turn violent and be characterised by inter-party and intra-party violence in a pattern similar to civic elections. The BCL has effectively controlled public university campuses since 2009, preventing members of other parties' student wings from undertaking activities and even from sitting examinations. In rural areas, AL members and activists have reportedly extorted business owners affiliated with the BNP, threatening them with violence if they do not comply with demands for money. (Australia 22 Aug. 2019, para. 3.90)

Australia's DFAT also states that

[i]ntra-party violence has become far more common than inter-party violence, particularly between AL factions and individuals. ... [T]he high frequency and intense nature of AL intra-party violence can be attributed to the party's control over state institutions in recent times. This domination has led to competition between rival AL factions and individuals for pre-selection as electoral candidates, and therefore access to, and influence on, processes and outcomes of lucrative contracts, tenders and appointments to senior party positions.

...

[i]ntra-party violence reportedly occurs regularly, including in the lead-up to the 2018 election and around sub-national elections and student organisation elections. Such violence is usually about disputes over candidate pre-selection or internal disputes between business people. While often described as 'factional' violence, the factions may be personality or patronage-based rather than ideologically based. The rate of intra-party violence in the lead-up to the 2018 election was reportedly lower than in previous years. The party has strong disciplinary policies to deal with rogue candidates, and has used these policies on occasion to expel such candidates from the party. People involved in political disputes may be both the victims and perpetrators of violence. (Australia 22 Aug. 2019, para. 3.75, 3.94)

The Bangladeshi human rights organization Odhikar reports that there were 281 intra party clashes within the AL in 2018, resulting in 53 deaths and 3,225 persons injured, and that there were 314 clashes in 2017, causing 66 deaths and 3,327 persons injured (Odhikar [2019]). Another Bangladeshi human rights organization, Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK), cited in a *Dhaka Tribune* article, indicates that between 2013 and 2017, there were 845 incidents of intra-party violence within the AL, resulting in 146 deaths and 10,145 persons injured (*Dhaka Tribune* 21 Nov. 2017).

1.4.2 Factions and Community Violence

The working paper by Rounaq Jahan states that the Chhatra League and Jubo League "have earned a negative image for the party as their members frequently indulge in violent contestations to grab business tenders and extort money or to establish authority in various educational institutions" (Jahan Aug. 2014, 29). Sources indicate that the Chhatra League was allegedly implicated in October 2019 in the murder of a university student who had criticized the government in a post on social media (Al Jazeera 7 Oct. 2019; BBC 13 Nov. 2019; *The Economist* 2 Nov. 2019). According to the US Department of State's *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2018*, in 2018, alleged Chhatra League activists attacked students in Dhanmondi

with batons, rocks, and pistols in an effort to quell road safety protests. The action resulted in a reported 150 injuries. Multiple news outlets reported police did not try to prevent or restrain the attackers. Police detained dozens of students and supporters publicly supporting the road safety protestors. (US 13 Mar. 2019, 21)

Similarly, the Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) reports that in 2018, the AL "engaged" the Chhatra League to "unleash violence" against demonstrators, and that a protest against quota system in public employment by University of Dhaka students had Chhatra League members attack protestors in a "joint crackdown" with police (AHRC 11 Apr. 2018).

2. Relationship with the Opposition

According to Australia's DFAT, AL's relationship with the BNP is

characterised by a longstanding political and dynastic rivalry, which has increased over time. Both parties derive their legitimacy from their claim to be the true heirs of Bangladeshi nationalism: the AL led the independence movement before and during the 1971 civil war, while the BNP holds as its institutional basis the ideology of Bangladeshi nationalism. The rivalry between the two parties is also deeply personal at the highest levels: the AL's leader, Sheikh Hasina, is the daughter of the 'Father of the Nation' Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the BNP's leader, Khaleda Zia, is the widow of the party's founder, former General and President Ziaur Rahman. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Ziaur Rahman were both assassinated in office, and their respective parties view them as martyrs. (Australia 22 Aug. 2019, para. 3.62)

2.1 Treatment of the Opposition

Australia's DFAT states that

[s]ince it came to power in 2008, the AL has considerably restricted the activities of opposition political parties, particularly the BNP and [Jamaat-e-Islami, JI] These restrictions have included:

- using police and other security forces to arrest thousands of opposition political party members and supporters, often in conjunction with political demonstrations;
- using police and other security forces to prevent opposition parties from holding meetings and demonstrations; and
- pressuring opposition candidates to withdraw from local and municipal elections, including through preventing them from submitting election nominations.

... Many, including former BNP Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, have faced legal sanction[s], including sedition charges. In October 2017, authorities issued two further arrest warrants for Khaleda Zia, who was at the time travelling outside Bangladesh and who has spent extended periods in custody. (Australia 22 Aug. 2019, para. 3.67-3.68)

Sources indicate that BNP leader Khaleda Zia was sentenced to a five-year [or ten-year (*Political Handbook of the World* 2019, 17)] prison term on corruption charges in February 2018 (Al Jazeera 4 Apr. 2018; *Jane's Country Risk Daily Report* 9 Feb. 2018; *Political Handbook of the World* 2019, 17). Sources indicate that Zia's son [vice-chairman of the BNP (*Jane's Country Risk Daily Report* 9 Feb. 2018)] was also sentenced to 10 years in prison (Al Jazeera 4 Apr. 2018; *Jane's Country Risk Daily Report* 9 Feb. 2018). An article by Deutsche Welle (DW) states that

[f]iling cases against members of the opposition is a common practice in Bangladesh. On many occasions, courts dismiss cases for lack of legal merit. BNP leaders have claimed that the lawsuits against their leader Khaleda were "intentionally designed" to harass and undermine her political career, a claim denied by Hasina's Awami League. (DW 18 Oct. 2019)

According to the US *Country Reports 2018*,

[p]olice routinely detained opposition activists in their homes, in public places, or when commuting to and from their respective parties' events. On September 10, multiple newspapers reported police in Dhaka apprehended dozens of BNP supporters as they were returning home after participating in a peaceful human chain in front of the National Press Club to demand the release of incarcerated party chair Khaleda Zia.

...

[p]olitical affiliation often appeared to be a factor in claims of arrest and prosecution of members of opposition parties, including through spurious charges under the pretext of responding to national security threats. The opposition BNP maintained thousands of its members were arrested arbitrarily throughout the year. (US 13 Mar. 2019, 10, 13)

According to an article in the *Dhaka Tribune*,

[t]he BNP claimed the government filed at least 4,098 cases against nearly 300,000 BNP members and arrested at least 4,300 activists before the 11th election alone.

Before the election, BNP sent a list of 1,046 "false cases" against its members to the Prime Minister's Office, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina promised to see the issue of false cases before election. But no progress was made. (*Dhaka Tribune* 30 Dec. 2019)

US *Country Reports 2018* further states that

[t]hroughout the year the BNP was hindered by the government from hosting assemblies and rallies. ...

[T]he BNP claimed it received verbal permission to conduct a rally on its founding anniversary on September 1 in Dhaka and to conduct a human chain in front of the National Press Club on September 10. Law enforcement officials, however, apprehended hundreds of participants in the two BNP events. The BNP reported law enforcement detained 304 leaders and activists in the first three days of September and approximately 200 leaders and activists during the party's human chain later in the month. The assistant inspector general of police headquarters denied reports of raids to detain opposition activists.

The incumbent Awami League (AL) and its allies were allowed to hold rallies at Suhrawardy Udyan and other venues of their choice throughout the year. (US 13 Mar. 2019, 20)

The same source also reports that opposition members "were sometimes prevented from moving around the country or faced harassment and detention when attempting to do so" and that "[s]ome senior opposition officials reported extensive delays renewing their passports; others reported harassment and delays at the airport when departing the country" (US 13 Mar. 2019, 22-23). Australia's DFAT similarly reports that "[a]uthorities have also prevented opposition figures from leaving the country" (Australia 22 Aug. 2019, para. 3.68).

2.1.1 Treatment of the Opposition and Civil Society Actors by State Institutions

According to the US *Country Reports 2018*,

[m]edia reports asserted that the [Directorate General of Forces Intelligence, DGFI] and, to a lesser degree, the [National Security Intelligence, NSI] engaged in politically motivated violations of human rights. This included violations against suspected terrorists, members of opposition parties, civil society, and others.

Civilian authorities maintained effective control over the military and other security forces. ...

Security forces continued to commit abuses with impunity. Plaintiffs were reluctant to accuse police in criminal cases due to lengthy trial procedures and fear of retribution. Reluctance to bring charges against police also perpetuated a climate of impunity. Officers with political ties to the ruling party occupied many of the key positions in the law enforcement agencies. (US 13 Mar. 2019, 8)

According to Australia's DFAT, the Bangladeshi military is "a highly politicised organisation," and that "[f]ollowing a failed coup attempt in 2012, the AL reportedly purged the military of government critics, opposition party supporters, and officers with close contacts in the Pakistani military" (Australia 22 Aug. 2019, para. 5.3).

According to a UK Home Office *Country Policy and Information Note* on Bangladesh, which cites a 2017 article from *Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment*,

[a]lthough the judiciary is formally separated from the executive, successive governments have used the judiciary for political gains. The practice of appointing political loyalists as judges to the Supreme Court has continued under the current government. This was further entrenched in 2014, when parliament was empowered with the authority to remove judges. (UK Jan. 2018, para. 7.1.1)

According to an article in the *Daily Star*, citing a study on the 2018 election by Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB), which found many irregularities,

[b]allot papers stamping took place the night before the elections in 33 constituencies, stamping ballots openly after occupying booths in 30 seats on the election day and non-availability of ballot papers in 22 constituencies.

The TIB study found ballot boxes filled-up prior to the beginning of polling in 20 constituencies; voters forced to cast vote for a particular symbol in 26 constituencies, people barred from going to centres in 26 seats, voters driven away from polling centres in 21 seats and beating up supporters of opponents in 11 constituencies.

The survey found casting of fake votes in 41 seats, silence of the administration and law enforcing agencies in 42 seats and obstructing and driving out polling agents in 29 seats. (*The Daily Star* 24 Jan. 2019)

According to the US *Country Reports 2018*, the "[m]edia, civil society, and human rights organizations accused the government of conducting enforced disappearances ... against civil society and opposition party members" (US 13 Mar. 2019, 7). The same source also states that

[t]he government became increasingly active in monitoring social media sites and other electronic communications in an effort to intimidate the public. The government formed a monitoring cell to "detect rumors" on social media. State Minister for Posts, Telecommunications, and Information Technology Tarana Halim said content that threatens communal harmony, disrupts state security, or embarrasses the state would be considered rumors and sent to the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission.

...

In September parliament passed the Digital Security Act (DSA), claiming it was intended to reduce cybercrimes. Human rights groups, journalists, media outlets, and political opposition parties denounced the DSA as intended to suppress freedom and criminalize free speech. The DSA provides for sentences of up to 10 years imprisonment for spreading "propaganda" against the Bangladesh Liberation War, the national anthem, or the national flag. Human rights organizations criticized the DSA as restricting freedom of expression.

...

Media outlets deemed critical of the government and the AL were subjected to government intimidation and cuts in advertising revenue, and they practiced some self-censorship to avoid adverse responses from the government.

...

In some cases the government allegedly used the [Anti-Corruption Commission, ACC] as a political tool, including having the ACC launch or threaten inquiries into the activities of some businesspeople, newspaper owners, opposition political activists, and civil society members for criticizing the government.

...

Even civil society members affiliated with the ruling party reported receiving threats of arrest from the security forces for public criticism of government policies. (US 13 Mar. 2019, 14, 17, 28, 29, 30)

Freedom House lists seven journalists, activists and opposition figures who were arrested under the DSA between September 2018 and May 2019 (Freedom House 2019, Sec. C3).

2.2 Treatment by the Opposition

Information on the treatment of members and supporters of the AL by opposition parties could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

Note

[1] The Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) is a civil society initiative in Bangladesh that seeks to address developmental policy issues and undertake research in areas including "development governance, policies and institutions" (Jahan Aug. 2014, iii). The Chr. Michelsen Institute (CMI) is a Norwegian "independent development research institute [...] [that] works to generate and communicate research-based knowledge in the areas of fighting poverty, advancing human rights, reducing conflict and promoting sustainable social development" (Jahan Aug. 2014, iii). Rounaq Jahan is a Distinguished Fellow at the CPD and was a Senior Research Scholar and Adjunct Professor of International Affairs at the School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University (Cornell University n.d.).

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ADDITIONAL SOURCES CONSULTED

Oral sources: Academics (8) with research experience in Bangladeshi political parties; Ain o Salish Kendra; Awami League UK; Bangladesh Awami League; consultants (2) with research experience in Bangladeshi political parties; Odhikar; senior researcher at an NGO who has worked on Bangladesh; Sweden Awami League.

Internet sites, including: Ain o Salish Kendra; Amnesty International; Anadolu Agency; Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED); Asian Legal Resource Centre; *Asia Times*; Bangladesh Awami Jubo League; Bertelsmann Stiftung – Transformation Index; BRAC University – BRAC Institute of Governance and Development; Commonwealth Secretariat; Council on Foreign Relations; Democracy International; *The Diplomat*; East Asia Forum; ecoi.net; *Europa World Year Book*; EU – European Asylum Support Office; Fédération internationale pour les droits humains; *Forbes*; Human Rights Watch; International Crisis Group; Organisation mondiale contre la torture; *Prothom Alo*; Reuters; Transparency International; UN – Refworld; Voice of America; *The Wall Street Journal*; *The Washington Post*.