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Annual Human Rights Report 2024

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Foreword

Since its establishment in 1994 as a human rights organisation, Odhikar has highlighted instances of human rights violations committed by the state. Alongside raising awareness amongst the people, Odhikar has consistently campaigned for internationally recognized civil and political rights, carrying out various activities in an attempt to prevent the state from committing human rights violations. Odhikar stands with victims of human rights violations regardless of political affiliation, and works towards ensuring their safety and establishing justice. Odhikar has often faced state oppression due to its human rights-related activities. This took on an extreme form during the government of Sheikh Hasina and her Awami League (AL) party, from 6 January 2009 to 5 August 2024. To forcefully retain power, the AL government transformed all state, constitutional and self-governed institutions into subservient institutions and used them to further their own political aspirations. Party members were also recruited to the judiciary. Sheikh Hasina's regime destroyed the electoral system of the country and established authoritarian rule. The public's right to vote was taken away, as national parliamentary elections and all local government elections held in 2014¹, 2018² and 2024 were controversial, farcical, and lacked transparency. Hasina's main tactic in the 2024 national parliamentary elections was to nominate Awami League (AL) party members as candidates to create a fake competition. Consequently, elections were held only for major candidates and "dummy candidates" of the Awami League.

Due to the lack of transparency and accountability fostered by the authoritarian regime, widespread corruption prevailed throughout every sector in Bangladesh. It has been alleged that Former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, her younger sister Sheikh Rehana and members of their family, government ministers, members of parliament (MP), and local Awami League leaders and activists, pro-regime public servants, businessmen, intellectuals and journalists looted a significant amount of the country's resources and laundered them overseas.³

Hasina's authoritarian government severely repressed the student population from July to August 5, 2024. The students were protesting the government decision of a quota system that was discriminatory. Pro-regime security forces including the police and Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) were responsible for indiscriminately shooting at and killing many people.

¹ Despite almost all political parties boycotting the tenth National Parliamentary Elections, they were still held unilaterally on 5 January 2014. Not only were the elections farcical (153 members of parliament were elected unopposed before votes had even been counted), but there were also significant accounts of ballot thefts, unlawful occupancy of polling centers, and intimidation of voters.

² On 30 December 2018, the ruling Awami league committed unprecedented illegal acts during the elections, including posting ballots the night before, rigging on behalf of electoral nominees, committing ballot fraud, forcing voters to vote in favor of the ruling party, occupying polling centers, detaining and expelling opposition party agents and intimidating voters. Naya Diganta, 31 December 2018; <http://www.dailynayadiganta.com/more-news/376801>; <http://www.dailynayadiganta.com/last-page/376825/>;

³ Jugantor 24 December 2024, <https://www.jugantor.com/crime/894415>

It has been alleged that Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) leaders and activists were being tortured and killed by the police in 2024. Many opposition party leaders and activities have sought refuge abroad to escape political harassment.⁴ The AL government has often violated its political opponents and dissidents' right to freedom of assembly. During this period, the police and AL leaders and activists have attacked [peaceful demonstrations of opposition parties](#) including the BNP⁵, [students](#), and [general protesters](#).⁶

During the fifteen-and-a-half years since Sheikh Hasina's government came to power in 2009, enforced disappearances have been used as an instrument of state oppression to [quell political dissidents and protests](#) and to forcefully consolidate power, creating a hostile and terrifying environment in the country. This remained the case in 2024, as enforced disappearances were still occurring from 1 January to 5 August.

Despite being involved in human rights violations, illegal activities, and corruption, many members of law enforcement agencies were subjectively exonerated and never brought to justice during this period. Furthermore, there have been many allegations against members of law enforcement agencies of [torturing people to death](#), [maiming citizens by gunfire](#), and allegedly being associated with illegal activities.

People's freedom of speech, thought, conscience and expression were curbed severely during the AL regime. Furthermore, those affiliated with and supporting the AL government launched misinformation and disinformation campaigns against human rights activists and members of the political opposition.⁷

Leaders of Awami League and its affiliated wings attacked and harassed journalists who were carrying out their professional duties.⁸ During the student protests of July-August, journalists have been [killed](#), arrested, [tortured](#), [attacked](#), sued, and harassed. Even after the interim government came to power, journalists continue to be suppressed.

Until 5 August 2024, the draconian Cyber Security Act (CSA) has been used to undermine freedom of speech and expression, freedom of mass media, personal privacy and civil liberties. This Act has been used to suppress unbiased journalism and the voices of human rights defenders. It has also been used by the government to incarcerate many political dissidents.⁹ Despite the ouster of Sheikh Hasina's government on 5 August, many laws adopted during their reign, including the CSA, remain in effect, and there are cases still being filed under these laws. However, the

⁴ Manabzamin 8 May 2024; <https://mzamin.com/news.php?news=108871>

⁵ Manabzamin 30 January 2024; <https://mzamin.com/news.php?news=95555>

⁶ Samakal, 15 March 2024; <https://samakal.com/whole-country/article/227845>

⁷ Prothom Alo, 1 June 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/km3ik8gwtu>

⁸ Prothom Alo, 9 January 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/district/o7u1e3ahpm>

⁹ Prothom Alo, 29 February 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/capital/gr10jsa0zj>

interim government has decided to swiftly withdraw the cases filed under the CSA and release those arrested under trumped-up charges.¹⁰ The Cyber Protection Ordinance, drafted by the interim government as an alternative, reflects the controversial CSA.¹¹

From 1 January to 5 August 2024, homes and businesses owned by Hindu minority communities were attacked, [places of worship](#) and [effigies](#) were vandalised in various regions all over the country. In the Ruma and Thanchi areas of Bandarban District, after an incident where armed miscreants of the Kuki-Chin National Front robbed two banks and kidnapped one of the bank managers, several law enforcement agencies launched a joint campaign against the members of the Bawm ethnic minority community.¹²

According to the police report, there were 1415 complaints lodged regarding attacks on the Hindu community after the ouster of Sheikh Hasina, of which 98.4% were political and 1.59% were communal.¹³ During this period, 88 cases were filed and 70 people were arrested in connection with these cases.¹⁴ Muslim shrines were attacked and vandalised.¹⁵

In 2024, dissidents and human rights activists affiliated with Odhikar were victims of intimidation, threats, harassment and violence¹⁶ for raising voices on human rights issues and for communicating with families of victims.

The political landscape of Bangladesh was changing drastically as the Annual Human Rights Report for 2024 was being prepared. The authoritarian Sheikh Hasina regime fell on 5 August during the mass uprisings, that began with the student-lead quota movement¹⁷, and Sheikh Hasina was forced to flee to India. In her efforts to suppress the student movement, Sheikh Hasina committed various human rights violations, including mass murder. Members of law enforcement agencies and leaders and activists of the now deposed Awami League political party, shot at protesting students indiscriminately. In Ashulia, Dhaka, police killed protesters and set their bodies

¹⁰ Jugantor, 1 October 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/tp-lastpage/859274>

¹¹ Kalbela, 1 January 2025; <https://www.kalbela.com/ajkerpatrika/khobor/152124>

¹² Amnesty International, 22 May 2024; <https://amnesty.ca/urgent-actions/bangladesh-end-crackdown-on-indigenous-bawm-community/>

¹³ Prothom Alo, 11 January 2025; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/mkuwd4zi30>

¹⁴ Manabzamin, 11 December 2024; <https://mzamin.com/news.php?news=139435>

¹⁵ Prothom Alo, 30 September 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/district/8344iugroy>

¹⁶ Rakiutullah, a human rights defender associated with Odhikar and Maheshkhali correspondent of the daily Kalbela, published a report on this issue on 15 February 2024. Due to this reason, the security officer of Sumitomo Corporation representing the Matarbari Coal-fired Power Plant, Major (retd) Moshir Rahman called Rakiutullah on 18 February and beat him after locking him in a room and also threatened to kill him.

¹⁷ This movement began primarily on 17 February 2018. At this time, students protested to reform the quota system that existed in government jobs under the banner of “Bangladesh General Students’ Council.” Afterwards, the government disrupted the student’s serial peaceful rallies by using the police, who attacked the student protesters with sticks, pellet guns, tear gas, and hot water cannons. Members and activists of Chhatra League, Awami League supporters, joined the police to attack protesters, just as they did in 2024. At one point, when the protests spread across the entire student population, the Prime Minister was forced to announce the cancellation of the quota at the National Parliament. Then in 2021, some people identifying as children of freedom fighters filed a writ petition with the High Court Division of the Supreme Court, demanding this circular to be cancelled.

ablaze.¹⁸ Members of law enforcement agencies also carried out mass killings in Jatrabari, a suburb of Dhaka. According to the latest report from the Ministry of Liberation War Affairs, a total of 834¹⁹ people, including children, have been killed as of January 15, 2025. Those who were shot include students, factory workers, transport workers, political activists, rickshaw pullers, and day labourers.²⁰ Many survivors underwent amputation of limbs, lost vision permanently or partially.²¹ According to the police headquarters, 44 members of the police were killed during the protests.²² After former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina fled the country and her cabinet and entire parliament voluntarily disappeared on 5 August 2024, an interim government took oath under the leadership of Nobel Prize Laureate Dr. Muhammad Yunus on 8 August. Since the interim government's taking over of office, there were still plain clothes' operations launched against members of law enforcement, and there have been reports of the latter being involved in different criminal activities²³ including extrajudicial killings.

The interim government formed 11 commissions to reform the institutions of the state.²⁴ Muhammad Yunus government has acceded to the United Nations' 'International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance' and established a five-member Inquiry Commission on Enforced Disappearances. This Commission is mandated to find the whereabouts and information of people who have been disappeared and people involved in the disappearances, to identify organizations and institutions involved and to take proper action against and recommend courses of accountability for them, and to make recommendations for legal reforms to prevent enforced disappearances in the future. In their interim report it mentions that in some cases of enforced disappearance, the victims were shot in the head, and their dead bodies were weighed down with bags full of cement and thrown into rivers. Some bodies were dismembered and thrown onto railway tracks while many bodies were thrown into brick kilns. Victims of enforced disappearances were brutally tortured, often to extract information regarding targeted others. The Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), police, Detective Branch (DB), Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) Unit, Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI), and National Security Intelligence (NSI) were all found to be involved in perpetrating disappearances. The Inquiry Commission has also found evidence that deposed Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina gave orders to commit enforced disappearances.²⁵

¹⁸ Manabzamin 1 September 2024; <https://mzamin.com/news.php?news=125464#gsc.tab=0>

¹⁹ New Age, 16 January 2024; <https://www.newagebd.net/post/country/255515/gazette-of-834-july-uprising-martyrs-published>

²⁰ Jugantor, 28 July 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/tp-city/831002>

²¹ The Daily Star, 19 August 2024; <https://bangla.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news-606761>

²² The Daily Star, 2 August 2024; <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news/police-hq-releases-names-and-details-slain-cops-3680371>

²³ Samakal, 2 January 2025; <https://samakal.com/chittagong/article/273269/>

²⁴ Kalbela, 19 November 2024; <https://www.kalbela.com/ajkerpatrika/lastpage/140479>

²⁵ Prothom Alo, 16 December 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/sx4ny5zfrd>

The process of registering complaints at the International Crimes Tribunal for all human rights violations committed in the past 15 years, as well as regarding the allegations of mass killings during the July-August uprising, has also been initiated.

There have been incidents of political violence after the fall of the Hasina regime. During this period incidents of attack on Awami League leaders and activists, as well as destruction and arson on the homes of some have also been reported. Awami League leaders also attacked BNP activists.²⁶ Clashes took place between activists of the two political parties over local dominance and have led to injuries and death.

After the interim government came to power, workers held rallies and blockaded roads, demanding increased wages, payment of outstanding wages and reopening of factories.²⁷ Law enforcement agencies and members of security forces clashed with workers in several places, and one worker was shot dead by a member of law enforcement.²⁸

Public lynching also occurred in 2024. After the fall of Hasina's government there were many instances of lynching, due to extreme public outrage in relation to the suppression of the last 15 and half years.

There have been accusations of torture of prisoners in jail, including those imprisoned in politically motivated cases.²⁹

Indian interference took on an extreme form during the authoritarian Hasina government. The obvious (and reported) Indian ruling party's influence on the 2014³⁰, 2018³¹, and 2024³² national parliament elections, allowed for Hasina's government to consolidate unbridled authoritarian power.³³ India is now harbouring the deposed Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her cronies who fled across the border. Subsequently, several pro-government Indian media began discrediting the people's uprising of Bangladesh by circulating disinformation regarding attacks on Hindu minorities, which were later proven false through fact-checking mechanisms.³⁴ The spreading of such false information by the Indian media continues to date.

²⁶ Naya Diganta, 5 September 2024; <https://www.dailynayadiganta.com/more-news/861202/>

²⁷ Prothom Alo, 6 October 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/gn2mxikrte>

²⁸ Samakal, 17 September 2024; <https://samakal.com/whole-country/article/256251>

²⁹ Naya Diganta, 29 February 2024; <https://www.dailynayadiganta.com/last-page/817629/>

³⁰ Before conducting the controversial and farcical 2014 National election, almost all political parties of Bangladesh decided to boycott it. At that time, the then Indian Foreign Secretary Sujata Singh visited Bangladesh and succeeded to convince Jatiya Party to join the election. Members of the Jatiya Party are now in the government (Ministers of the current government) and at the same time are the opposition in Parliament, which has made peculiar and inactive parliament. <http://www.dw.com/bn/নির্বাচন-না-হলে-মৌলবাদের-উপ্‌খান-হবে/a-17271479>

³¹ Ananda Bazar, 1 February 2025; <https://www.anandabazar.com/national/sheikh-hasina-said-various-pending-issues-between-india-and-bangladesh-1.805857>

³² Prothom Alo, 16 March 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/politics/1w0z1a73m5>

³³ Manabzamin, 18 May 2024; <https://mzamin.com/news.php?news=110355>

³⁴ Naya Diganta, 16 September 2024; <https://www.dailynayadiganta.com/first-page/864407/>

The Indian Border Security Force (BSF) continued its human rights violations on Bangladeshi citizens in 2024. The BSF killed many Bangladeshis, including children, [teenagers](#) and [members of the Border Guard Bangladesh](#) (BGB) throughout the year.

During the Awami League regime, the country's dysfunctional and subjugated justice system routinely protected the leaders and activists of the Awami League, due to the political loyalty of the hand-picked judiciary. The Chief Justice, Justice Obaidul Hassan resigned on 10 August 2024 in the wake of demands for him and other judges to step down, from lawyers, students and others taking part in the mass protest movement.³⁵

Due to the lack of accountability in the criminal justice system and the biasness of law enforcement towards the repressive regime, incidents of gender-based crimes were pushed to beyond the sidelines. Incidents of domestic violence and rape hardly saw the inside of a court room and laws lacked implementation. Violence against women spiked in 2024 under the Awami League regime. This violence continued even after the interim government came to power. The apathy towards gender-based violence and justice for women and children is an issue in Bangladesh that seriously needs to be taken to task.

From April to December 2024, there were extreme battles between Myanmar's military junta and armed rebel groups. During this period, Rohingya homes were set on fire. Around 25 thousand Rohingya entered Bangladesh to save their lives.³⁶ Chakma and Barua families also entered Bangladesh.³⁷ While fleeing Myanmar, a boat carrying Rohingya people into Bangladesh capsized in Cox's Bazar's Teknaf, and 10 dead bodies, including women and children, were found.³⁸

Despite the constant harassment and barriers placed by the state, Odhikar kept a close watch on human rights violations committed in Bangladesh. Odhikar's 2024 Annual Human Rights Report has been divided into three sections. The first section (A) covers relevant information from 1 January to 5 August 2024, during the authoritarian Awami League regime of Sheikh Hasina. The second section (B) contains relevant information from 9 August to 31 December, spanning the interim government's rule. The third section (C) contains information regarding human rights violations from 1 July to 30 September spanning both Sheikh Hasina and the interim government's rule.

It should be noted that Bangladesh did not have a government in place between 5-8 August 2024.

³⁵ BSS News: Chief Justice Obaidul Hassan Resigns. 10 August 2024; <https://www.bssnews.net/news-flash/203245>

³⁶ Naya Dignata, 1 October 2024; <https://www.dailynayadiganta.com/first-page/19654245>

³⁷ Jugantor, 19 November 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/country-news/880597>

³⁸ Prothom Alo, 6 August 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/district/yc83zwdh2q>

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Statistics: January - December 2024

		Awami League Govt								No Government Exists	Interim Government					
Type of Human Rights Violation		January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August (1-5)	August (6-8)	August (9-31)	September	October	November	December	Total
Extrajudicial killings	Tortured to death	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	5	1	1	0	11
	Shot to death	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	5
	Beaten to death	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
	Total	1	1	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	9	1	1	1	18
Massacre		-	-	-	-	-	-	1581 ³⁹ / 834 ⁴⁰		-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enforced Disappearances		0	0	2	4	4	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	20
Death in Jail		15	15	11	6	6	8	2	0	0	4	5	4	3	4	83
Death Penalty (Sentenced to death)		36	43	32	27	37	30	28	0	0	18	10	38	8	0	307
Human rights violations by Indian BSF	Bangladeshis Killed	2	0	4	3	2	2	1	0	0	1	2	2	0	5	24
	Bangladeshis Injured	0	1	5	5	3	2	5	2	0	2	0	1	2	1	29
	Total	2	1	9	8	5	4	6	2	0	3	2	3	2	6	53
Attack on journalists	Killed	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
	Injured	29	14	8	15	14	4	25	8	0	5	2	3	5	3	135
	Assaulted	2	2	2	7	6	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	27
	Attacked	0	0	6	3	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	15
	Threatened	9	2	9	1	1	2	1	0	0	3	0	0	1	2	31
	Total	40	18	25	26	22	6	34	9	0	8	2	6	10	7	213
Public lynching		6	4	8	4	5	1	1	36	0	14	17	12	3	10	121
Political Violence	Killed	22	15	8	8	18	20	14	94	4	33	19	19	10	9	293
	Injuries	1555	385	202	198	897	789	2219	734	9	467	843	459	256	453	9466

* Odhikar documentation (Except for the information regarding massacre, all other information has been documented by Odhikar. The sources were national dailies and information collected from human rights defenders.)

³⁹ Prothom Alo, 28 September 2024; <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/pm7kcgunmb>

⁴⁰ New age, 16 January 2025; <https://www.newagebd.net/post/country/255515/>

(A) Reporting Period: 1 January to 5 August 2024

Politicization of State Institutions

1. For over 15 years, the deposed authoritarian government of Sheikh Hasina and her Awami League party, created and maintained an extremely hostile and oppressive regime. Several state, constitutional and self-governed institutions, including the Election Commission, Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) and National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), were used for implementing the government's partisan political agenda. The appointment of loyal party members, in total disregard for competency, seniority and qualification, also brought the judicial system under the regime's control and weakened the institution immensely.

The Election Commission and the Farcical, One-Party 12th National Parliamentary Elections

2. The government of Sheikh Hasina destroyed the electoral system of the country; completely violating the Constitution⁴¹ and international law⁴². The public's right to vote was destroyed, as national parliamentary elections and all local government elections held in 2014, 2018 and 2024 were controversial, farcical, and lacked transparency. The election commissions at that time, hand-picked by the regime, aided the government in systematically denying the people their right to vote.
3. To achieve their goals of overwhelming the 12th National Parliament Elections, held on 7 January 2024, the government carried out attacks and repressive tactics against opposition political leaders and activists, especially the BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami. Many political opponents, including the major opposition party BNP, had demanded the Awami League government's resignation, dissolution of parliament, and elections held under a non-partisan caretaker government. The AL stood its ground and most political parties, including the BNP, leftist, and Islamic parties boycotted the elections. Prior to the so-called election, the government sponsored the creation of a new party (known as King's Party) and used the Election Commission to register it and participate in the elections. It also created a fake 'competition' by putting up its own party (Awami League) leaders as individual candidates, officially

⁴¹ According to Article 11 of the Constitution of Bangladesh, "the Republic shall be a democracy in which fundamental human rights and freedoms and respect for the dignity and worth of the human person shall be guaranteed and in which effective participation by the people through their elected representatives in administration at all levels shall be ensured."

⁴² Article 25 (B) of the ICCPR says "To vote and to be elected at genuine periodic elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret ballot, guaranteeing the free expression of the will of the electors." Bangladesh ratified the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Such type of one-sided and controversial elections are contrary to ICCPR.

called ‘dummy candidates’.⁴³ Although the Awami League kept the elections contained within their own party members, there were internal clashes within the party across the country as the elections ensued. Most voters in the country [boycotted the unilateral election](#) as they did in 2018.

4. After the election there were several incidents of violence all over the country.⁴⁴ There were instances of using handmade explosives, [local weapons and firearms](#), followed by rioting and arson attacks on homes belonging to members of the intra-party factions⁴⁵.

Widespread Corruption and the Anti-Corruption Commission

5. Having retained power for over 15 years through controversial and farcical elections, the authoritarian regime established a reign of widespread corruption in all institutional layers of Bangladesh in an atmosphere of no transparency or accountability. There are allegations against former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, her younger sister Sheikh Rehana, and their family members, of illegally amassing and siphoning off large sums of money from the country. After the interim government came to power in early August 2024, the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) investigated complaints against Sheikh Hasina and her family members regarding the looting of Taka 800 billion, through various forms of corruption involving nine mega projects, including the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant, and against Sheikh Hasina and her son Sajib Wazed Joy of siphoning off US\$300 million (around Taka 36 billion)⁴⁶. The ACC found this information from the United States Department of Justice⁴⁷. In just the preliminary investigations, they were able to collect significant evidence against Sheikh Hasina, her son Sajib Wazed Joy, Sheikh Rehana and her daughter, Tulip Siddiqi (a British MP from the Labour Party). The allegations of corruption have primarily been proven to be true.⁴⁸ There have also been accusations against [Awami League leaders and activists](#), former members of parliament, former ministers and Awami League supporters, of illegally amassing huge amounts of wealth⁴⁹. It has been alleged that a large portion of this money was illegally smuggled abroad⁵⁰. For example, former Awami League member of parliament and Land Minister of Hasina’s cabinet, Saifuzzaman Chowdhury purchased over 350 properties in

⁴³ Manabzamin, 27 November 2023; <https://mzamin.com/news.php?news=85494>

⁴⁴ Jugantor, 8 January 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/tp-firstpage/760546>

⁴⁵ Prothom Alo, 14 January 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/district/zwjxqjzw9o>

⁴⁶ Jugantor, 24 December 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/crime/894415>

⁴⁷ Samakal, 23 December 2024; <https://samakal.com/bangladesh/article/271731/>

⁴⁸ Jugantor, 24 December 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/crime/894415>

⁴⁹ Samakal, 25 November 2024; <https://samakal.com/bangladesh/article/266926/>

⁵⁰ Jugantor, 21 February 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/tp-firstpage/776680>

the United Kingdom with 200 million British pounds (equivalent to 27.7 billion Bangladeshi Taka)⁵¹. The former Land Minister reportedly also acquired properties in Malaysia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and the United States of America (USA) with laundered money⁵².

6. Allegedly, oligarchs and supporters of the Sheikh Hasina regime used corruption to cripple banks and other financial institutions, causing many of them to become bankrupt⁵³. Businessmen who were close allies of the Awami League regime committed massive loan frauds and stole public money from the state-owned Janata Bank⁵⁴. In the private sector, former Awami League Land Minister Saifuzzaman Chowdhury embezzled money from the United Commercial Bank (UCB)⁵⁵.
7. Although widespread corruption prevailed in the country, the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) was not allowed to operate as an independent and unbiased institution⁵⁶. The Awami League government appointed loyalists at the topmost positions to render the institution ineffective. In some cases, as a show of efficiency, there were pretentious campaigns launched against corrupt Awami League MPs, influential politicians and bureaucrats, but the findings from these investigations were never brought to light. Many investigations regarding corruption remain in files at the ACC⁵⁷. Despite cases being filed; the ACC took no measures to hold the alleged perpetrators to account⁵⁸. After Sheikh Hasina's ouster, the ACC has been reconstituted, following the forced-resignation of its Chairman Md. Moinuddin Abdullah, Commissioners Asiya Khaton and Zahurul Haque on 29 October⁵⁹. The ACC has already begun investigating allegations of financial irregularity and abuse of power against its ex-Commissioner Zahurul Haque⁶⁰.

National Human Rights Commission

8. The Sheikh Hasina government appointed Awami League loyalists to the National Human Rights Commission, Bangladesh (NHRC,B), who had no track record of law or human rights-related activities in their career⁶¹.

⁵¹ Bloomberg, 18 February 2024; <https://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/2024-bangladesh-land-minister-uk-property/>

⁵² Al Jazeera, 20 September 2024; <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/9/20/how-a-bangladesh-minister-spent-more-than-500m-on-luxury-property>

⁵³ Prothom Alo, 7 May 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/business/bank/r9pxwzvq2n>

⁵⁴ Prothom Alo, 12 December 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/business/bank/5n8qienev>

⁵⁵ Jugantor, 12 December 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/tp-firstpage/889739>

⁵⁶ According section 3(2) of the Anti-Corruption Commission Act, 2016, the Commission should be an independent and impartial commission.

⁵⁷ Jugantor, 21 February 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/tp-firstpage/776678>

⁵⁸ Samakal, 23 February 2024; <https://samakal.com/bangladesh/article/224314>

⁵⁹ The Daily Star, 30 October 2024; <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news/acc-chairman-2-commissioners-quit-their-jobs-3739556>

⁶⁰ Prothom Alo, 2 November 2024; <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/2wusr7y4rl>

⁶¹ Section 6(2) of the National Human Rights Commission Act, 2009, "The Chairman and the Members of the Commission shall, subject to the provisions of this section, be appointed from amongst the persons who have

Consequently, the NHRC,B acted as a subservient entity of the former government. Despite there being extensive curbing of freedom of expression and numerous gross human rights violations, such as enforced disappearances, torture and extrajudicial killings during the authoritarian regime, there was no investigation by the NHRC,B and the victims of such violations received no reparations from it either. Despite the unprecedented forms of human rights violations being committed during the July-August 2024 student-led mass uprising, the NHRC,B cemented its loyalty to the former regime by remaining silent. On 8 December 2022, the government appointed former bureaucrat Dr. Kamal Uddin Ahmed (who served as Home Secretary under the Awami League government) as Chairman, another bureaucrat Selim Reza (a former Secretary) as full-time member, and five others as members to the Commission⁶². In several discussions, the NHRC,B Chairman Kamal Uddin Ahmed was heard repeatedly praised the Sheikh Hasina government for its alleged role in improving human rights⁶³. This same NHRC,B leadership changed tune after the student-led mass uprisings and the fall of the government, and made an attempt to be vocal about human rights violations. In the face of severe criticism, all members of the NHRC,B including Chairman Kamal Uddin Ahmed, were forced to resign on 7 November⁶⁴. As of January 2025, while this report was being finalized, the interim government has yet to appoint anyone to the NHRC, B and no initiatives have yet been taken to reform the law (which needs some serious amendment) and make it an effective institution⁶⁵.

Oppression of Political Opposition and Disruption of Meetings and Assemblies

9. From 1 January to 5 August 2024, the authoritarian Sheikh Hasina government implemented severe repression on opposition party leaders and activists, students, dissenters and workers. Prior to every (farcical) election, the Sheikh Hasina-led Awami League government filed trumped-up cases against opposition political party members and arrested thousands of leaders and activists to prevent them from protesting in public. It is alleged that during those periods, police tortured and killed many BNP leaders and activists. After the elections, the opposition party members who had received anticipatory bail from the High Court and thus had not been arrested, continued to appear

remarkable contribution in the field of legal or judicial activities, human rights, education, social service or human development.”

⁶² Prothom Alo, 9 December 2022; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/4cdbrwqbnv>

⁶³ Samakal, 6 May 2023; <https://samakal.com/world-australia/article/2305171200>

⁶⁴ The Daily Star, 7 November 2024; <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news/nhrc-chairman-5-members-quit-3747351>

⁶⁵ New Age, 9 August 2024; <https://www.newagebd.net/post/opinion/242118/ensuring-rights-in-new-bangladesh>

in the lower courts⁶⁶. Although most cases were of bailable offences, the Magistrate Courts and Sessions Courts (lower criminal courts) refused to grant bail to the petitioners and ordered them to be sent to prison⁶⁷. Even after being granted bail, detained opposition activists and leaders, as well as the dissidents, faced multiple barriers set up by the government lawyers and the judiciary, to get released from prison. Members of Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI), National Security Intelligence (NSI) and Special Branch (SB) of the Police continued surveillance at the prisons and created obstacles during the release of opposition party members who had managed to secure bail from Courts⁶⁸. On 23 April, former President of the Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal's Central Committee Saiful Islam Nirob was picked up by the law-enforcement agencies as soon as he came out of the main gates of Dhaka Central Jail having received bail from court. He was again shown arrested in another case and sent back to jail. Prior to this incident, on 20 March, Nirob received bail and was shown arrested again in a pending case once he reached the prison gates⁶⁹. Finally, after 16 months of arbitrary detention, Nirob was released⁷⁰. The police filed 454 politically motivated cases against Saiful Islam Nirob. In seven of those cases, the Courts sentenced Nirob to a total of 21 years of imprisonment⁷¹. The process of re-arrest after bail was a very common tactic used by the regime.

10. Alongside the police, the Awami League leaders and activists also launched attacks on opposition party members⁷². There have been allegations against the police for arresting, torturing and harassing opposition party members and their families, and when the targeted people could not be found in their homes, the Awami League leaders and activists launched attacks on family members⁷³. For example, the wife of an opposition party activist was arrested because her husband could not be found⁷⁴. The police coerced "confessional statements" by torturing opposition party members and showing them as arrested in newly registered trumped-up cases while the High Court had already granted bail to them in cases previously registered against them⁷⁵. There were instances where the Police arrested opposition leaders and activists from the court premises when they came to appear before the Subordinate Courts after having received bail from the High Court⁷⁶. The then

⁶⁶ The Courts of Magistrates and the Courts of Sessions are officially referred to 'Subordinate Courts' or 'lower courts' in Bangladesh.

⁶⁷ Naya Diganta, 25 April 2024; <https://www.dailynayadiganta.com/city/830340/>, Manabzamin, 25 April 2024; <https://mzamin.com/news.php?news=107049>

⁶⁸ New Age, 13 March 2024; <https://www.newagebd.net/article/227819/>

⁶⁹ Manabzamin, 30 April 2024; <https://mzamin.com/news.php?news=107754>

⁷⁰ Jugantor, 22 June 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/tp-news/818982>

⁷¹ Manabzamin, 30 April 2024; <https://mzamin.com/news.php?news=107754>

⁷² Naya Diganta, 15 May 2024; <https://www.dailynayadiganta.com/city/835059/>

⁷³ Jugantor, 20 January 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/tp-second-edition/765182>

⁷⁴ Prothom Alo, 4 March 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/1fmn9hdmqi>

⁷⁵ Naya Diganta, 8 February 2024; <https://www.dailynayadiganta.com/more-news/812438/>

⁷⁶ Naya Ddiganta, 22 April 2024; <https://www.dailynayadiganta.com/politics/829710/>

ruling party leaders and activists monitored their political counterparts, held them and handed them over to the police⁷⁷.

11. When opposition party leaders and activists traveled together or visited restaurants for meals, they were arrested on charges of having 'secret meetings to plan sabotage' against the government⁷⁸. Such arrests deprived the members of the political opposition of the right to personal liberty and freedoms of assembly and association.
12. On 7 January 2024, prior to the (farical) National Parliamentary Elections, 1800 opposition party members were sentenced to imprisonment⁷⁹. Even after the elections this trend continued⁸⁰. Many opposition party members sought refuge abroad, fearing political persecution. This may have contributed to Bangladesh's ranking as sixth in the global list of countries whose citizens migrate the most. 12% of Bangladeshis were found to have drowned in the Mediterranean Sea while illegally crossing it to settle in Europe in the first three months of 2024⁸¹. According to the latest statistics of the European Border and Coast Guard agency Frontex, there were over 25000 documented cases of illegal entries to Europe through the Mediterranean Sea in the first six months of 2024, while Bangladesh is at the top of the list with 5644 entries⁸². In their applications, asylum seekers cited various forms of harassment, including arrest, torture and lawsuits, for their involvement in opposition party politics under the former authoritarian regime⁸³.
13. Until 5 August 2024, the Awami League government violated the right to freedom of assembly of opposition parties and dissidents. Police permission was made compulsory prior to an assembly or rally, which contradicts Article 37 of the Constitution and Article 21 of the ICCPR. During this time peaceful protests and rallies of many [political opposition parties](#) including the BNP⁸⁴, of [general students](#), and of protesters from various organizations, were attacked by the police in connivance with the Awami League leaders and activists⁸⁵.

Criminal Offenses and Violence of the Ruling Awami League

14. **From 1 January to 5 August 2024, at least 199 people were killed and 6,979 injured in political violence.**

⁷⁷ Naya Diganta, 25 April 2024; <https://www.dailynayadiganta.com/politics/830487/>

⁷⁸ Naya Diganta, 20 April 2024; <https://www.dailynayadiganta.com/city/829114/>

⁷⁹ Prothom Alo, 30 May 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/politics/5lmvvaqy6n>

⁸⁰ Prothom Alo, 6 February 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/k04856iz8z>

⁸¹ Manabzamin, 8 May 2024; <https://mzamin.com/news.php?news=108871>

⁸² Dhaka Tribune, 30 July 2024; <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/353080/>

⁸³ Manabzamin, 8 April 2024; <https://mzamin.com/news.php?news=105131>

⁸⁴ Naya Diganta, 20 February 2024; <https://www.dailynayadiganta.com/more-news/815443/>

⁸⁵ Samakal, 15 March 2024; <https://samakal.com/whole-country/article/227845/>, Manabzamin, 30 January 2024; <https://mzamin.com/news.php?news=95555>

15. Having consolidated power through yet another sham election in January 2024, the Awami League members and activists became more lawless. There are several allegations of violence against Awami League, Chhatra League (BCL)⁸⁶, and Jubo League⁸⁷ members, as well as against other affiliates. There are also allegations of these miscreants having supplied weapons to unleash violent attacks on dissidents⁸⁸.
16. Despite being involved in extreme violence and murder, most Awami League leaders and activists enjoyed blanket impunity⁸⁹. The Awami League organised children and youth into “youth gangs” and used them to perpetrate various [illegal activities](#) including killings, extortion, illegally occupying land, robbery, and sexual harassment⁹⁰.
17. The Awami League leaders became members of parliament through systematically rigged elections and therefore felt no sense of responsibility towards the public. There were many allegations of criminal offenses against MPs, including their involvement in smuggling and the drug trade. However, the culture of impunity enabled them to stay untouched by the criminal justice system⁹¹.
18. The Awami League and its member organizations allegedly maintained private torture cells to carry out extortion and terrorist activities⁹². They allegedly grabbed land of [civil servants](#) and [ordinary citizens](#), maimed people and even evicted a farmer from his home for not voting in favor of their party’s candidate in the 12th National Parliamentary Elections⁹³. During this period, various allegations, including of [gold smuggling](#), [drug peddling](#), [smuggling arms](#), [tender bidding](#), [money looting](#), [extortion](#), [forceful occupation of other’s properties](#), [destruction of the environment by cutting hills](#) and [oppression against students](#) were found against leaders and activists of Awami League and its affiliated organisations⁹⁴. The police refused to accept most cases filed against the perpetrators belonging to the Awami League and its affiliated entities⁹⁵.

⁸⁶ Student wing of the Awami League

⁸⁷ Youth wing of the Awami League

⁸⁸ Jugantor, 19 February 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/tp-second-edition/776117>

⁸⁹ Naya Diganta, 2 April 2024; <https://www.dailynayadiganta.com/last-page/825887/>

⁹⁰ Jugantor, 19 April 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/index.php/tp-last-page/796054/>

⁹¹ Prothom Alo, 3 June 2024; <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/politics/7k0gkco7xy>

⁹² Prothom Alo, 15 January 2024;

<https://epaper.prothomalo.com/Home/ShareArticle?OrgId=151651f9b68&eid=1&imageview=0&epedate=15/01/2024&sedId=1>, Jugantor, 20 February 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/tp-first-page/776355/>

⁹³ Jugantor, 28 February 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/tp-bangla-face/779166/>

⁹⁴ Naya Diganta, 21 April 2024; <https://www.dailynayadiganta.com/last-page/829343/>

⁹⁵ Samakal, 11 June 2024; <https://samakal.com/whole-country/article/241694>



A Swechchasebak (Volunteer) League leader carrying a gun and intimidating villagers over a land dispute in Gazipur. Photo: Jugantor, 21 April 2024.

19. In 2024, members of the Chhatra League enjoyed impunity for unleashing violence across the country including in educational institutions⁹⁶. Authorities in educational institutions took no action against the accused Chhatra League leaders and activists in these cases⁹⁷. There has been infighting and clashes amongst Chhatra League leaders over dominance in many places, including at educational institutions⁹⁸.



Activists seen in masks and helmets carrying machetes and sticks during clashes between various groups of Chhatra League in Chittagong University. Photo: Samakal, 17 February 2024

⁹⁶ Samakal, 17 February 2024; <https://epaper.samakal.com/nogor-edition/2024-02-17/1/5921>

⁹⁷ Prothom Alo, 19 February 2024;

<https://epaper.prothomalo.com/Home/ShareArticle?OrgId=1923607c823&eid=1&imageview=0&epedate=19/02/2024&sedId=1>

⁹⁸ Samakal, 16 February 2024; <https://samakal.com/bangladesh/article/223286>



*Chhatra League activist Naeem Arafat holding a machete in front of Shahjalal Hall at Chittagong University.
Photo: Prothom Alo, 19 February 2024.*

The (former) government’s persecution and human rights violations against students during the July-August mass uprisings

20. The authoritarian Sheikh Hasina regime fell on 5 August 2024 during the mass uprising that began with the student-lead ‘anti-quota’ movement⁹⁹, and Sheikh Hasina was forced to flee to India. During the movement, the country’s security forces and the law-enforcement agencies, including the police and RAB, indiscriminately fired bullets at unarmed protesters, killing many to quell the protests.
21. On 1 July, various universities across the country, including Dhaka University, organised student rallies, demanding the reinstatement of the circular that cancelled the (controversial) job quota system. On 15 July the then government, in efforts to suppress the peaceful protests, let loose members of its various wings, such as [Chhatra League](#), [Jubo League](#), and Swechchasebak League¹⁰⁰. These ruling party organizations joined the law enforcement agencies and security forces to attack the student protesters. On 16 July, a police Sub-Inspector named Yunus Ali shot and killed Abu Sayeed, a student at Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur¹⁰¹. After Abu Sayeed’s death, students

⁹⁹ This movement began primarily on 17 February 2018. At this time, students protested to reform the quota system that existed in government jobs under the banner of “Bangladesh General Students’ Council.” Afterwards, the government disrupted the student’s serial peaceful rallies by using the police, who attacked the student protesters with sticks, pellet guns, tear gas, and hot water cannons. Members and activists of Chhatra League, Awami League supporters, joined the police to attack protesters, just as they did in 2024. At one point, when the protests spread across the entire student population, the Prime Minister was forced to announce the cancellation of the quota at the National Parliament. Then in 2021, some people identifying as children of freedom fighters filed a writ petition with the High Court Division of the Supreme Court, demanding this circular to be cancelled.

¹⁰⁰ Volunteer wing of the Awami League.

¹⁰¹ Samakal, 25 July 2024; <https://samakal.com/whole-country/article/247614>

across the country took to the streets. The police, members of the Chhatra League and Jubo League continued unrelenting attacks on the students. The government also used the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB), and specialized forces such as SWAT, against the protesters¹⁰². The perpetrating forces were seen using Armoured Personal Carriers (APC) with UN insignia to quell the protests¹⁰³. As brute force was increasingly used against the protesters, mainly students and young people, members of the general population started joining the movement, including workers and even rickshaw pullers¹⁰⁴. Members of law enforcement agencies and ruling party leaders and activists shot indiscriminately at the protesting masses.



Students gather at Shahbag intersection in Dhaka on July 11, breaking police barricades and demanding quota reforms. Photo: Samakal, 12 July 2024.



Chhatra League members attacking students protesting against the quota system in government jobs, at Dhaka University. Photo: Jugantor, 16 July 2024.

¹⁰² Samakal, 19 July 2024; <https://epaper.samakal.com/nogor-edition/2024-07-19/1/6379>

¹⁰³ DW News, 23 July 2024; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TMF9dWjg8P0>, BBC News Bangla, 25 July 2024; <https://www.bbc.com/bengali/articles/c0w42xq6w6lo>

¹⁰⁴ Prothom Alo, 3 August 2024; <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/5f2383k13v>



Three Chhatra League members with guns, seen firing at protesting students during clashes at Dhaka University. Photo: Prothom Alo: 16 July 2024.



Abu Sayeed and his autopsy report. Photo: SomoyTVNews, 24 September 2024.

22. At different points during the July-August revolution, the government shut off internet services in the country and continued their mass killing spree. Members of law enforcement agencies shot at student protesters from helicopters¹⁰⁵. Police were seen throwing the bullet-riddled body of Yeamin, a student protester, from an APC across a road divider¹⁰⁶. Several students died from gunshot wounds on their way to hospitals as the police and leaders and activists of the Awami League blocked the way¹⁰⁷. From 19 July onwards, 105 children were killed by indiscriminate firing of law enforcement agencies, including 11-year-old Samir, 4-year-old Abdul Ahad, 6-year-old Riya Gop and 15-year-old Md. Rasel. In Dhaka's Ashulia, police killed protesters, loaded their dead bodies onto a vehicle, and set it on fire¹⁰⁸.

¹⁰⁵ Jugantor, 22 July 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/tp-bangla-face/833728>

¹⁰⁶ Prothom Alo, 15 August 2024; <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/egizjx6216>

¹⁰⁷ Prothom Alo, 12 August 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/912lftqs3i>

¹⁰⁸ Manabzamin, 1 September 2024; <https://mzamin.com/news.php?news=125464#gsc.tab=0>



Bullet-ridden body of Nafiz being carried away on a rickshaw. He was still holding onto a rod at the time. This photograph, published in the newspapers, helped Nafiz's parents to locate his body at the hospital morgue. Photo: Prothom Alo, 12 August 2024.



Police treating bullet-ridden Yeamin's body with utter disrespect. Photo: Prothom Alo, 15 August 2024.



Abdul Ahad (left) and Riya Gop (right), shot dead by indiscriminate firing by law enforcement agencies. Photo: Prothom Alo, 26 and 25 July 2024.

23. According to statistics provided by the Ministry of Liberation War Affairs, 834 people were killed¹⁰⁹. It is estimated that the actual numbers of fatalities are much higher. Among the bullet-ridden include students, factory workers and day labourers. At least 550 people have lost their vision¹¹⁰. Many survivors underwent amputation of limbs due to severe gunshot injuries that lacked appropriate or timely treatment¹¹¹. According to the police headquarters, 44 members of the police were killed during the protests¹¹².

Extrajudicial killings

24. From 1 January to 30 June 2024, six people were victims of extrajudicial killings. Among them, four died due to torture, one was shot, and one was beaten to death. Of the four who died from torture, three were killed by the police and one by the RAB. The police shot one person and beat another to death. According to the draft list created by the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement and the National Citizens' Committee, 1,581 people were killed in the July-August 2024 student and mass movement¹¹³. According to the latest report from the Ministry of Liberation War Affairs, as of 15 January 2025, a total of 834 people, including children, have been killed¹¹⁴.

Torture, Degrading Treatment and Death in Custody

25. Over the period of 15 years, Sheikh Hasina's government used law enforcement agencies to help her retain power and persecute leaders and activists of political opponents and dissidents, including the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), the main opposition party. Members of law enforcement were guaranteed impunity for committing human rights violations, abusing their power, and for various acts of corruption. Although the Torture and Custodial Deaths (Prevention) Act was passed in 2013, only a very small fraction of the torture and degrading behaviour towards civilians came to light during that time, due to fear of reprisals and the severe censorship imposed on media. Prior to the unilateral 12th National Parliamentary Elections, held on 7 January 2024, planned attacks were carried out on BNP's public rally on 28 October 2023. The members of law enforcement agencies launched a mass arrest campaign and continued to harass and persecute leaders and activists of the opposition¹¹⁵.

¹⁰⁹ New Age, 16 January 2025; <https://www.newagebd.net/post/country/255515/gazette-of-834-july-uprising-martyrs-published>

¹¹⁰ The Daily Star, 19 August 2025; <https://bangla.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news-606761>

¹¹¹ Jugantor, 28 July 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/tp-city/831002>

¹¹² Daily Star, 18 August 2024; <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news/police-hq-releases-names-and-details-slain-cops-3680371>

¹¹³ Prothom Alo, 28 September 2024; <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/pm7kcgunmb>

¹¹⁴ New Age, 16 January 2025; <https://www.newagebd.net/post/country/255515/gazette-of-834-july-uprising-martyrs-published>

¹¹⁵ Bangla Outlook, 29 February 2024; <https://www.banglaoutlook.org/interview/2024/02/28/231524>

26. Law enforcement agencies are accused of [torturing people to death](#), shooting and [maiming civilians](#), and filing fabricated cases against victims who lost their eyesight due to police violence. The police threatened and intimidated victims to force them to withdraw cases filed against police officers¹¹⁶. In one incident the police tortured the wife and children of an accused whom the law-enforcers failed to trace, and seized money and gold from the family¹¹⁷. Extortion from the [public transportation sector](#), [committing robbery](#), [threatening innocent people with crossfires to extort money](#) and fabricating criminal cases had been the norm of law-enforcement¹¹⁸. Amassing disproportionate amounts of wealth at home and abroad through [corrupt practices](#), trapping innocent civilians with the use of drugs, torture and bribery are other examples of police corruption¹¹⁹.
27. The then Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina continued rewarding perpetrators belonging to law enforcement agencies for using brute force against political opponents, critics of the government and dissidents. On 27 February 2024, 400 members of the police force were awarded the Bangladesh Police Medal (BPM) and the Presidential Police Medal (PPM)¹²⁰. 80 members of the police were rewarded for foiling public rallies of the opposition party, repressing the dissidents, and quelling the protests of factory workers who were demanding realistic wages amidst high inflation and a safer workplace, especially for the female workers¹²¹.

Enforced Disappearances

28. From January to July 2024, there have been allegations that members of law enforcement agencies disappeared 20 people. Among them, the Detective Branch (DB) of police allegedly disappeared nine individuals, the police five, members of other law enforcement agencies in plain clothes have disappeared three, the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) two, and RAB and DB jointly allegedly disappeared one person. Among these victims, one person has not been returned.
29. During the fifteen-and-a-half years of Sheikh Hasina's authoritarian rule, enforced disappearances have been used as an institutionalised instrument of the state to silence and eliminate political dissidents¹²². Disappearances were deliberately used to consolidate unbridled power by creating a hostile and terrifying environment in Bangladesh. Victims who returned after being disappeared later stated that they were held in secret detention facilities. The

¹¹⁶ Report sent in by a human rights defender affiliated with Odhikar, based in Khulna.

¹¹⁷ Samakal, 12 May 2024; <https://samakal.com/whole-country/article/236883>

¹¹⁸ Jugantor, 5 March 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/tp-city/781208>

¹¹⁹ Prothom Alo, 25 May 2024;

<https://epaper.prothomalo.com/Home/ShareArticle?OrgId=255de448872&eid=1&imageview=0&epedate=25/05/2024&sedId=1>

¹²⁰ Prothom Alo, 28 February 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/3x1c0x4bjz>

¹²¹ New Age, 28 February 2024; <https://www.newagebd.net/article/226541/>

¹²² Samakal, 28 April 2024; <https://epaper.samakal.com/nogor-edition/2024-04-28/13/7356>

perpetrators used torture to coerce prescribed ‘confessional statements’ accusing leaders and activists of the opposition party¹²³. Many men faced enforced disappearances under suspicion of being ‘Islamic terrorists,’¹²⁴ for expressing their critical opinion about the Sheikh Hasina government and the aggressive interferences by the Indian government in the affairs of Bangladesh, in public domain including social media¹²⁵.

30. The Awami League government consistently denied, at home and at international platforms including the United Nations, that enforced disappearances were being committed by the law enforcement agencies and security forces of Bangladesh. Such denials were routinely made despite plenty of evidence having been available. There was a pattern of increased enforced disappearances prior to the national parliamentary elections in 2014, 2018 and 2024, which targeted members of political opposition parties and dissidents .
31. On 5 August, as Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina fled to India, the families of victims of enforced disappearances took to the streets in front of the DGFI¹²⁶ headquarters to demand the return of their loved ones who still remained disappeared and presumably held at “Aynaghar” (House of Mirrors), a code name given to the secret detention centers that were officially known as Joint Interrogation Cells. On 6 August 2024, Mir Ahmad Bin Quasem Arman, a lawyer of the Supreme Court, and former Brigadier General Abdullahil Aman Azmi, reappeared after eight years of being disappeared. Both were abducted in 2016¹²⁷. Another victim named Atiqur Rahman Rasel was released after one month and six days of disappearance¹²⁸. Michael Chakma, a leader of United People’s Democratic Front (UPDF) of Chittagong Hill Tracts, was released on 7 August after enduring five years of disappearance¹²⁹.



Barrister Mir Ahmad bin Quasem Arman, Former Brigadier General Abdullahil Aman Azmi, UPDF Leader Michael Chakma (left to right). Photos: Prothom Alo, 6 August 2024; Banijjo Protidin, 8 August 2024; Photo: Prothom Alo, 7 August 2024.

¹²³ Report sent in by a human rights defender affiliated with Odhikar, based in Cox’s Bazar

¹²⁴ Report sent in by a human rights defender affiliated with Odhikar, based in Chattogram

¹²⁵ Information collected by Odhikar

¹²⁶ Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI) is the intelligence wing of the Bangladesh Armed Forces.

¹²⁷ Prothom Alo, 6 August 2024; <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/axj3uuswcp>

¹²⁸ Daily Observer, 11 August 2024; <https://www.observerd.com/news/484681>

¹²⁹ Prothom Alo, 7 August 2024; <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/czennpwfpd>

Freedom of Expression and Media

32. From 1 January to 5 August 2024, during the Awami League regime, five journalists were killed while performing their professional duties. Additionally, 117 were injured, 21 were harassed, 12 were attacked, and 25 faced threats.
33. Until the fall of Sheikh Hasina's authoritarian government on 5 August 2024, freedoms of speech, thought, conscience and expression were significantly and routinely curbed. Bangladesh ranked 128th out of 161 countries in Article-19's "Global Freedom of Expression Report 2024"¹³⁰. New York-based digital space rights organization "Access Now" observed that every case of shutting off internet services in Bangladesh was an act of suppressing dissent¹³¹. Apart from curbing freedom of expression of political opponents and dissidents, the people and entities affiliated with the Awami League created fake accounts on social media to spread disinformation regarding members of the opposition¹³². At different points of the movement in July-August, internet services were shut off at the government's instructions¹³³.
34. Censorship was imposed on newspapers as well as the mainstream and social media under the authoritarian regime. Journalists faced reprisals for carrying out their professional responsibilities. Freedom of the press could not be exercised as journalists had to work under the most dangerous circumstances¹³⁴. Most Bangladeshi news media outlets were owned, managed, and controlled by people affiliated with the Awami League regime. During the July-August revolution many subservient journalists endorsed the government's brutal campaigns to curb the protests and encouraged the regime to continue using 'force' against the protesters. Journalists were found advising the government to stay in power by using force, encouraged killings and torture, and some even participated actively in the attacks against students¹³⁵.
35. Journalists were subjected to [multiple forms of reprisals](#) including intimidation, threats, [harassments](#), and physical attacks, by the police, public servants and ruling party activists. [Trumped-up lawsuits](#) were filed against journalists to detain them arbitrarily for exposing corruption. The Bangladesh Police Service Association (BPSA), led by loyalist police officers of the former regime, issued public statements protesting media reports on the corruption perpetrated by high-ranking police officers. The police statement appeared to

¹³⁰ Naya Diganta, 22 May 2024; <https://www.dailynayadiganta.com/city/836850/>

¹³¹ Samakal, 16 May 2024; <https://samakal.com/technology/article/237453/>, Access Now, 15 May 2024; <https://www.accessnow.org/internet-shutdowns-2023/>

¹³² Prothom Alo, 1 June 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/km3ik8gwtu>

¹³³ Prothom Alo, 28 July 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/0l53ciu95t>

¹³⁴ Prothom Alo, 9 January 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/district/o7u1e3ahpm>

¹³⁵ The Daily Star, 24 August 2024; <https://banqla.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news-608396>

be threatening journalists who published reports on corruption and scandals¹³⁶.

36. During the July-August student mass uprising the police killed journalists while they were on duty. The journalists who were murdered during the uprising are: Hasan Mehedi, a journalist of News Portal; Shakil Hossain, a reporter of Bhorer Awaz newspaper; [Abu Taher Md. Turab](#), Sylhet correspondent of the Daily Nayadiganta; [Tahir Zaman Priyo](#), a freelance journalist; and [Pradip Kumar Bhoumik](#), journalist of a Sirajganj district based daily newspaper. All were shot dead by the police.



A group of criminals beat up journalist Manik Hossain and broke his leg in Puibeel Village of Vangura Upazila in Pabna. Photo: Daily Star, 17 April 2024.



Mahmud Ullah, General Secretary of Chakaria Press Club, undergoing treatment in the hospital for allegedly being beaten up by supporters of former Member of Parliament of Cox's Bazar Zafar Alam. Photo: The Business Standard, 1 May 2024.

¹³⁶ Manabzamin, 23 June 2024; <https://mzamin.com/news.php?news=115330>

Repressive Cyber Security Act

37. The draconian Cyber Security Act (CSA) was one of the tools used to curb freedom of speech and expression, freedom of mass media, personal privacy and civil liberties, until 5 August. The authoritarian Awami League government used this Act to imprison dissidents for a long time. The country's judiciary, including the High Court, rejected the petitions for bail from those who faced detention under the CSA¹³⁷. The Sheikh Hasina government used the Digital Security Act (DSA) against opposition politicians, critics of the government and journalists, prior to adopting the CSA. The Awami League affiliates registered 78% of the cases under the DSA and CSA¹³⁸. The widely criticized Digital Security Act was repealed in 2018, and the government replaced it with the Cyber Security Act in September 2023 with the same trends of curbing freedom of mass media and violating human rights. On 18 February, seven people, including France-based writer and activist Pinaki Bhattacharya, faced charges at Sylhet's Cyber Tribunal under the CSA for allegedly distorting the then Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's picture. The complaint was registered for spreading propaganda, making derogatory remarks, and publishing distorted photos and videos of Sheikh Hasina. The charges were brought by Abdur Rahman, vice president of Muktiyuddho Mancha's Sylhet district branch¹³⁹. [Journalists](#), [cultural workers](#), [Chhatra Shibir leaders](#), [civilians](#) and [expatriates](#) were charged under the CSA for making Facebook posts regarding former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, her father, former President Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and their family members. A Jubo League leader in Barisal named [Haider Ali](#) was arrested for posting a caricature of Sheikh Hasina, and in Mymensingh a Hindu man named [Sreejon Das](#) was arrested for making derogatory remarks regarding 'mosque donations.' While new cases under the CSA continued to rise, the cases filed under the DSA were not withdrawn despite the law being repealed¹⁴⁰. The Cyber Tribunals continued [sentencing](#) the defendants in trumped-up cases under the DSA.

Human Rights Violations against Religious and Ethnic Minorities

Persecution of members of the Hindu minority community

38. The issue of the rights of the minorities, especially the Hindu community, has been used and abused by the Awami League government. The Awami League claimed to be the 'saviors of the Hindus' while there are countless allegations

¹³⁷ Prothom Alo, 29 February 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/capital/gr10jsa0zi>

¹³⁸ Prothom Alo, 30 April 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/kmbwx5s7r>

¹³⁹ Bangla Outlook, 19 February 2024; <https://en.banglaoutlook.org/analysis/494>

¹⁴⁰ Jugantor, 14 February 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/tp-second-edition/774287>

against their party leaders of harassing members of the Hindu community in various ways, including land-grabbing¹⁴¹. The perpetrators were never brought to justice due to a systemic politicization of the incidents¹⁴². Between 1 January to 5 August, there were several incidents of attacks on members of the Hindu faith across the country. Hindu homes and places of business were attacked, places of worship were desecrated¹⁴³ and idols were demolished¹⁴⁴. Former IGP during the Hasina regime, Benazir Ahmed, abused his powers to grab Hindu owned farmlands to build a luxury resort.¹⁴⁵ During the 7 January 2024 controversial National Parliamentary Elections there were many incidents of attacks against members of religious minority communities, resulting in one death and the injury of 37 people¹⁴⁶.

39. On 10 June, Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) launched a campaign to build a new modern grocery market at the Mironzilla Sweeper Colony in Dhaka's Bangshal area, which houses around 700 families comprising a total of 6000 people belonging to the Harijan community, who mostly work as public cleaning staff of the city. Many members of the Harijan community were evicted with no alternative residence being provided. On 13 June, based on a writ petition, the High Court division of the Supreme Court stayed the eviction of the Colony for a month and ordered the government not to evict the people. On 10 July, supporters of Md. Awwal Hossain, counselor of Ward number 33 of DSCC and Awami League leader, allegedly launched attacks on Harijan community members¹⁴⁷. The residents of the sweeper colony are Hindu by faith and generations have been living in the area for over a century¹⁴⁸.

Human Rights Violations of Ethnic Minorities

40. In Bandarban's Ruma and Thanchi areas, armed miscreants of the Kuki-Chin National Front (KNF) reportedly robbed two banks and kidnapped one of the bank managers on 2-3 April 2024. The robbers looted arms and ammunition. These bank robberies took place while the authorities were negotiating with the KNF, which was identified as an insurgent group by the Sheikh Hasina government, since the group demanded an autonomous territory of the Bawm community in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. After the bank robbery several law enforcement agencies launched a joint operation against the members of the

¹⁴¹ Samakal, 16 September 2024; <https://samakal.com/capital/article/256133>

¹⁴² Samakal, 1 October 2024; <https://samakal.com/bangladesh/article/258396>

¹⁴³ The Daily Star, 23 March 2024; <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/crime-justice/news/kali-temple-its-idol-damaged-kaharol-3573286>

¹⁴⁴ Prothom Alo, 10 April 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/district/0xchfq2mu5>

¹⁴⁵ The Daily Star, 12 June 2024; <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/crime-justice/news/fear-forced-hindus-sell-their-land-ex-igp-benazir-3632516>

¹⁴⁶ Prothom Alo, 3 February 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/rfrn0j6w9t>

¹⁴⁷ Prothom Alo, 10 July 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/capital/85ylf2syc3>

¹⁴⁸ The Business Standard, 24 June 2024; <https://www.tbsnews.net/bangladesh/harijan-story-children-god-forsaken-forever-883521>

Bawm ethnic minority community. Between 5 and 8 April, as people from the Hills celebrated the New Year festival and returned to their villages for Eid holidays, three Bawm students were detained under ‘suspicions’ of being involved with the bank robbery. That day, 54 members of the Bawm community, male, female and children, were arrested en masse¹⁴⁹.

Barriers to Human Rights Related Activities and State Oppression of Human Rights Defenders

41. Dissidents and human rights activists affiliated with Odhikar were victims of intimidation, threats, harassment and violence¹⁵⁰ during Hasina’s authoritarian regime, for raising human rights issues with the United Nations’ human rights mechanisms and for supporting the families of victims. For almost a decade under the Awami League regime, Dr. Muhammad Yunus¹⁵¹ was subjected to judicial harassment and character assassination. The government registered 174 cases accusing Dr. Yunus of money laundering and corruption. On 1 January 2024, a Dhaka court sentenced Dr. Yunus to six months imprisonment for violating labour laws¹⁵². Influential people affiliated with the Awami League government forcibly occupied eight institutions including Grameen Telecom, which was under Dr. Yunus’s ownership¹⁵³. After the fall of Sheikh Hasina’s government, the High Court Division of the Supreme Court canceled six cases against Dr. Yunus. The Appellate Division dismissed the appeals of the state attorneys and upheld the High Court’s order on the cancellation of the cases. The Appellate Division held that there are no legal weaknesses in the High Court’s judgment and order, and that there is no need for legal intervention in those cases¹⁵⁴.
42. Odhikar’s central team and human rights defenders affiliated with the organization all over the country actively participated in the student-led mass uprisings of July-August. On the evening of 29 July, Md. Rashedul Islam, a human rights defender in Rajshahi affiliated with Odhikar, was picked up and brutally tortured by the Detective Branch (DB) of Police for being associated with the movement. On 30 July DB police transferred Rashedul to Motihar Police Station and produced him before a court on a trumped-up case under

¹⁴⁹ The Daily Star, 30 April 2024; <https://ban gla.thedaily star.net/news/ban gladesh/news-578566>

¹⁵⁰ A Malaysian company called Techlin had signed a contract to rent the land of some poor local people for the Matarbari Coal-fired Power Plant project in Maheshkhali Upazila under Cox’s Bazar District. Even after the expiry of the contract, they remained in occupation of the said land. Rakiutullah, a human rights defender associated with Odhikar and Maheshkhali correspondent of the daily Kalbela, published a report on this issue on 15 February 2024. Due to this reason, the security officer of Sumitomo Corporation representing the Matarbari Coal-fired Power Plant, Major (retd.) Moshir Rahman called Rakiutullah on 18 February and locked him in a room, beating and threatening to kill him.

¹⁵¹ Founder of Grameen Bank, Nobel Peace Prize laureate and currently the Chief Adviser to the Interim Government created on 08 August 2024.

¹⁵² Prothom Alo, 2 January 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/ban gladesh/rmulny6aqc>

¹⁵³ Prothom Alo, 15 February 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/ban gladesh/6eky8jcjoa>

¹⁵⁴ Prothom Alo, 11 January 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/ban gladesh/2psivui k3z>

the Explosive Substances Act. Rashedul was released from prison on 7 August.¹⁵⁵

43. On 22 August 2024, Justice Abdur Rob, from the High Court Division of the Supreme Court, canceled the sentence (of two years' imprisonment and fine) against Odhikar's former Secretary Adilur Rahman Khan and Director Nasir Uddin Elan. The case was filed in the Cyber Tribunal, Dhaka, under Section 57 of the Information and Communication Technology Act. On the same date, the NGO Affairs Bureau reinstated Odhikar's registration, which was previously cancelled under the Sheikh Hasina regime. On 14 September 2023, Justice Zulfikar Hayat of Cyber Tribunal sentenced Odhikar's Secretary and Director to two years' imprisonment and fined Taka 10,000 each, and on 5 June 2022, the NGO Affairs Bureau declined the application for renewal of Odhikar's registration. The trial of the two men at the Cyber Tribunal, Dhaka continued for ten years, coupled with character assassination, defamation and fake news campaigns by print and electronic media sympathetic and supportive of the repressive Awami League regime and Sheikh Hasina.

¹⁵⁵ Report sent in by a human rights defender affiliated with Odhikar, based in Rajshahi.

(B) Interim Government

Reporting Period: 9 August to 31 December 2024

44. Former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina fled Bangladesh on 5 August, faced by a student-led mass uprising. On 8 August, an interim government took oath under the leadership of Nobel Laureate Dr. Muhammad Yunus. From 5-8 August the country had no government. The police, law-enforcement agencies, and public administrative officials fled from their respective offices, fearful of the repercussions from perpetrating and ordering acts of violence and brutality on the people, aided by the loyalists of Sheikh Hasina. In the age of smart phones and social media, there is ample documentary evidence of this brutality. The absence of a government in the Capital and the fearful retreat of law-enforcement agencies and public officials at the local level, created an unprecedented administrative and law-enforcement vacuum across the country. Under such circumstances there were incidents of lawlessness, looting and arson attacks reported across the country.

The Interim Government and Reforms

45. Sheikh Hasina's regime transformed governmental institutions to such an extent over the last 15 years, that they were incapable of rendering services to the public in general. Politicization and personal loyalty made all institutions of the state subservient. As a result, there was no professionalism and no options to hold public servants accountable for abuse of power and human rights violations. The interim government has formed 11 commissions to investigate and put forth concrete recommendations on how to make these institutions efficient and effective again. These commissions are the Electoral Reform Commission, Police Reform Commission, Judiciary Reform Commission, Anti-Corruption Commission Reform Commission, Public Administration Reform Commission, Constitutional Reform Commission¹⁵⁶, Mass Media Reform Commission, Health Affairs Reform Commission, Labour Reform Commission, Women's Affairs Reform Commission, and Local Government Reform Commission¹⁵⁷. The interim government has declared that it will hold discussions with major stakeholders including political parties, once the reform commissions submit their reports to the Chief Adviser¹⁵⁸.

Enforced Disappearances

46. **There have been no complaints of enforced disappearances received or published from 9 August to 31 December 2024**

¹⁵⁶ Jugantor, 11 September 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/national/851113>

¹⁵⁷ Kalbela, 19 November 2024; <https://www.kalbela.com/ajkerpatrika/lastpage/140479>

¹⁵⁸ Kalbela, 19 November 2024; <https://www.kalbela.com/ajkerpatrika/lastpage/140479>

47. The interim government acceded to the United Nations ‘International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance’ on 29 August 2024. Odhikar had been working for 14 years campaigning for this Convention to be acceded to by Bangladesh.
48. On 27 August 2024, a notice was issued by the interim government to form a five-member Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances. This Commission is tasked: to locate the disappeared victims, identify the individuals involved in the disappearances, identify the entities involved, and make recommendations for ensuring accountability and to initiate legal reforms to prevent enforced disappearances in the future¹⁵⁹.
49. On 14 December the Inquiry Commission for Enforced Disappearances submitted a preliminary report to Chief Adviser Dr. Yunus, called “Unfolding the Truth.” The report states that so far, there have been 1676 complaints received against RAB, DGFI, DB, CTTC, CID, police and other government organisations. The Commission had already verified 758 complaints. Of these 758, 73% of victims have returned. The remaining 27% (204 people) were still missing¹⁶⁰. People were found to have been picked up and detained for periods between 48 hours to a few weeks or months, while at least two remained disappeared for 8 years, in secret detention centers operated by the security forces, intelligence units, law-enforcement agencies, and the police. In several cases of enforced disappearance, the victims were shot in the head, and their dead bodies were weighed down with bags full of cement and thrown into the river. Some bodies were dismembered and thrown onto railway tracks to make the deaths look like rail line accidents¹⁶¹. The victims of enforced disappearance were systematically tortured often to extract information regarding people targeted by the government. Politically influential persons and those affiliated with the opposition were disappeared and tortured. The Commission has found that former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was involved directly in giving orders to disappear and eliminate the victims¹⁶². Many high-ranking officials, including former Defense Advisor Major General (Retd.) Tarique Ahmed Siddique, former Director General of National Telecommunication Monitoring Center (NTMC) Major General Ziaul Ahsan, former head of Police Special Branch Md. Monirul Islam and Dhaka Metropolitan Police’s Additional Commissioner (DB) Md. Harun-or-Rashid, were directly involved in enforced disappearances¹⁶³.
50. On 29 August 2023, Md. Rahmatullah, an electrician, was picked up from his home in Dhaka’s Dhamrai by a group of people identifying themselves as

¹⁵⁹ A public notice regarding the formation of the commission states that the government has formed an inquiry commission to search for persons were disappeared by members of law enforcement agencies from 1 January 2010 to 5 August 2024.

¹⁶⁰ Prothom Alo, 15 December 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/d9utyb42b4>

¹⁶¹ Prothom Alo, 16 December 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/sx4ny5zfrd>

¹⁶² Prothom Alo, 15 December 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/d9utyb42b4>

¹⁶³ Prothom Alo, 14 December 2024; <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/iicx351ea2>

RAB. Amongst the abductors there were men wearing RAB uniform. Rahmatullah has remained disappeared since then. Odhikar verified the alleged case of Rahmatullah's disappearance and submitted its report to the United Nations and many international human rights organisations¹⁶⁴. On 22 December 2024, Rahmatullah returned to his family after 16 months. He informed Odhikar that his eyes were kept blindfolded while he was disappeared. After nine months, Rahmatullah was taken to India through the Jessore border and left there. The Indian police arrested and charged him for illegally trespassing into the country. An Indian Court sentenced him to 6 months imprisonment and a fine of Rupees 1000. The Indian authorities pushed Rahmatullah back into Bangladesh from the Gomostapur border in Chapainawabganj District. The Gomostapur police handed Rahmatullah over to his family¹⁶⁵.

51. There are reasons to believe that many victims of enforced disappearance are still trapped in India. It can be recalled that on 5 November 2012, Sukharanjan Bali, a defence witness of Maulana Delawar Hossain Saidi, was disappeared by Detective Branch police from the International Crimes Tribunal premises. He was disappeared as he had refused to bend under the government pressure to give false testimony. Later, Sukharanjan was found in Kolkata's Dum Dum Central Jail. Salah Uddin Ahmed, a former state minister and senior BNP leader, was disappeared from Dhaka on 10 March 2015. After 62 days of disappearance he was found in Shillong, Meghalaya State of India. Salah Uddin was also jailed in India for illegally trespassing into the country.

International Crimes Tribunal

52. After Hasina's ouster, the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) of Bangladesh began investigating the crimes of human rights violations and allegations of mass killings during the authoritarian regime. At the time of writing this report there have been 180 complaints filed with the ICT. One of the most important allegations lodged with the ICT has been the massacre of 57 army officers at Pikhana¹⁶⁶. There were 180 complaints of various crimes submitted to the ICT Chief Prosecutor's Office from 8 September to 4 December 2024. After reviewing 153 complaints, it was revealed that 73% of them involved the mass killings committed during the July-August 2024 mass uprising, while 23% of the complaints were regarding enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings committed during the 15-year Awami League government. Former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is accused in 94 out of 153 complaints registered. Hasina's son Sajib Wazed Joy, daughter Saima Wazed, her sister Sheikh Rehana, Rehana's daughter and British MP Tulip Siddiq and

¹⁶⁴ Samakal, 23 May 2024; <https://samakal.com/bangladesh/article/238519>

¹⁶⁵ Information collected by Odhikar.

¹⁶⁶ Samakal, 19 December 2024; <https://samakal.com/bangladesh/article/271179>

son Radwan Mujib Siddiq are also accused in the complaints. The former Awami League government created the International Crimes Tribunal to prosecute 'crimes against humanity' committed during Bangladesh's war of independence in 1971¹⁶⁷ and it is today being used to investigate and try crimes amounting to 'crimes against humanity' perpetrated by the Awami League regime.

Extrajudicial Killings, Torture and Lack of Accountability

53. **From 9 August to 31 December 2024, it has been reported that 12 individuals were victims of extrajudicial killings by law enforcement agencies. Among them, seven were tortured to death, four were shot, and one was beaten, pushed off a bridge, and drowned. Of the 12 victims, six were tortured by joint forces, and one died due to police torture. Three people were shot by joint forces, and one was shot by the police. Additionally, one person was beaten, pushed off a bridge, and drowned by the police.**
54. There are allegations against the 'Joint Forces,' comprising of the security forces and law enforcement agencies, of conducting [operations in plainclothes](#) and for being involved in torture and extrajudicial killings.
55. On 8 September, a man named Elahi Sikder died in custody. He was arrested on 3 September on charges of attacking members of the army. The doctor at Gopalganj General Hospital, Jibitesh Biswas, reported that the lower part of Elahi Sikder's body had multiple injuries¹⁶⁸.
56. On 10 September, members of Joint Forces in Gaibandha arrested Mosharof Hossain Sweet, Saghata Awami League President and Saghata Union Parishad Chairman, and his associates Shafiqul Islam, Shahadat Hossain Polash, Riyajul Islam Rocky and Sohrab Hossain Apel. Of those arrested, Shafiqul Islam died while undergoing treatment at Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital, Bogura, and Sohrab Hossain Apel died while undergoing treatment at Gaibandha General Hospital. Relatives of Shafiqul and Apel alleged that both men had died due to brutal torture while in the custody of Joint Forces¹⁶⁹.

Political Violence

57. **From 9 August to 31 December 2024, at least 90 people were killed and 2478 injured in political violence. It is to be noted that between 6 and 8 August, when there was no government in the country, at least four people were killed and nine injured in political violence.**
58. After the fall of Hasina's government, there have been allegations against leaders and activists of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) of attacking

¹⁶⁷ Prothom Alo, 21 December 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/48avcm2mrg>

¹⁶⁸ The Daily Star, 9 September 2024; <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/crime-justice/news/man-dies-jail-custody-3697841>

¹⁶⁹ Samakal, 10 September 2024; <https://samakal.com/whole-country/article/255301>

Awami League leaders and activists, looting and breaking into their homes, and committing arson. Leaders and activists of BNP are allegedly taking illegal control over markets, fish bazars, shrimp markets¹⁷⁰, public land¹⁷¹, sand extraction sites and other establishments that were being controlled by Awami League leaders, as part of an extortion-based political economy.¹⁷² Leaders and activists of the BNP and its affiliated organisations were also accused of attacking and looting homes of general people and businessmen¹⁷³ for refusing to pay bribes, as part of the shifting control over the system of extortion¹⁷⁴. The president of Narsingdi District Chhatra Dal¹⁷⁵ is accused of attacking the chambers of the President of the Bar Association of the district¹⁷⁶. The Jubo Dal and Jubo League leaders were accused of jointly attacking and looting the office of Jugantor's (Bangla language newspaper) Chattogram correspondent, Abed Amiri¹⁷⁷. Leaders and activists of the Jubo Dal and Krishak Dal¹⁷⁸ attacked a victory day celebration of the Citizen's Committee in Barisal¹⁷⁹. There have been complaints of the [forceful taking of control of sand extraction sites](#) across the country and [clubs established on public lands](#) jointly by BNP and Awami League leaders, for their own mutual interest. There were reports of members of the [BNP and Jamaat clashing](#) with each other. The central BNP leadership has expelled many members over allegations of being involved in unlawful activities¹⁸⁰.



Grassroots leaders and activists of the party have accused BNP National Executive Committee's Industry and Commerce Affairs Co-Secretary and former MP, Aminul Islam of attacking and grabbing land in Nachole, Chapainawabganj. The allegation was made from a human chain in front of the Chapainawabganj Press Club. Photo: Jugantor 14 November 2024

¹⁷⁰ Samakal, 13 November 2024; <https://samakal.com/whole-country/article/264987>

¹⁷¹ Jugantor, 14 November 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/country-news/878616>

¹⁷² Samakal, 14 November 2024; <https://samakal.com/whole-country/article/265096>

¹⁷³ Prothom Alo, 9 October 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/district/lij1xnzrz6>

¹⁷⁴ Prothom Alo, 22 August 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/district/n0y099xl4y>, Prothom Alo, 28 August 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/district/n961ze2so>

¹⁷⁵ Chhatra Dal is the student wing of the BNP.

¹⁷⁶ Prothom Alo, 2 October 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/district/6vxzjiaab2>

¹⁷⁷ Jugantor, 10 October 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/country-news/863497>

¹⁷⁸ Farmer's Wing of the BNP

¹⁷⁹ Prothom Alo, 16 December 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/district/eiaxktqtp2>

¹⁸⁰ Manabzamin, 3 September 2024; <https://mzamin.com/news.php?news=125766#qsc.tab=0>



Young man with a weapon. Photo: Samakal, 16 October 2024.



In a clash between supporters of the Awami League and BNP over control of a club in the Bhaguira area of Pabna, several individuals were injured and received treatment at the Upazila Health Complex. Photo: Prothom Alo, 13 October 2024.

59. The interim government's campaigns to seize firearms and other weapons that the Awami League leaders and activists used for killing protesters and opposition BNP activists during the mass movement of July-August, have been unsuccessful¹⁸¹. On 13 September, Awami League activists attacked a motorcade of S M Zilani, President of Swechchasebak Dal¹⁸², while he went to visit his parents' grave in Tungipara, Gopalganj. Shawkat Ali Didar, Sports

¹⁸¹ Prothom Alo, 7 September 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/district/4adrmovms>

¹⁸² Volunteer wing of the BNP

Affairs Secretary of Swechchasebak Dal central committee, was killed and 50 people were injured¹⁸³. On 8 October, Jamilur Rahman Khan Apel, a BNP leader, was injured in a violent attack at Gazipur by Basan Station Sramik League¹⁸⁴ President Abdus Sobhan and his men¹⁸⁵. On 22 December, Awami League leaders and activists attacked a BNP office at Kalaroa in Satkhira district leaving 10 members of the BNP and its associated organisations injured¹⁸⁶.

60. There was an increase in the registering of cases in police stations across the country since the fall of the Sheikh Hasina regime. Local BNP leaders were allegedly involved in implicating numerous people, while trying to harass their political opponents by filing cases against them. Deceased Awami League members have also been charged in these cases¹⁸⁷. Two cases were filed in relation to an incident of murder, while the victim's family was not informed about such cases being registered on their behalf¹⁸⁸. Due to internal conflicts within the party, local leaders of the BNP and the Awami League have sued each other and their own party members. There have also been allegations of extorting money by threatening to file lawsuits¹⁸⁹.
61. Several people were killed due to the BNP's internal party conflicts and disputes over territorial dominance. These incidents include: the murder of Emdadul Haq Aklu, a BNP leader, in Moqtarpur Union of Kaliganj, Gazipur on 6 August¹⁹⁰; the murder of Ziarul Sheikh and Miran Sheikh - both were BNP leader Murad Sheikh's brothers - in Lohagora, Narail, on 11 September¹⁹¹; the murder of a young man named Emon in Bayezid, Chattogram on 12 October¹⁹²; the death of Jalal Uddin, a BNP activist, in Pabna on 15 November¹⁹³; and the death of Alam Miya, Sramik Dal¹⁹⁴ leader, in Paanchdona, Narsingi on 24 December¹⁹⁵.

Freedom of News Media

62. According to the information collected by Odhikar, between August to December 2024, 18 journalists were injured while performing their professional duties, six were harassed, six faced threats, and three newspaper offices were attacked.

¹⁸³ Jugantor, 14 September 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/tp-firstpage/852053>

¹⁸⁴ Worker's wing of the Awami League

¹⁸⁵ Jugantor, 9 October 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/country-news/863171>

¹⁸⁶ Samakal, 22 December 2024; <https://samakal.com/index.php/whole-country/article/271652>

¹⁸⁷ Samakal, 4 September 2024; <https://samakal.com/whole-country/article/254308>

¹⁸⁸ Samakal, 26 December 2024; <https://samakal.com/bangladesh/article/272184>

¹⁸⁹ Samakal, 4 September 2024; <https://samakal.com/bangladesh/article/254244>, Nayadiganta, 2 September 2024; <https://www.dailynayadiganta.com/last-page/860395/>, Samakal, 8 September 2024;

<https://samakal.com/bangladesh/article/254879>

¹⁹⁰ Nayadiganta, 7 September 2024; <https://www.dailynayadiganta.com/city/861744/>

¹⁹¹ Samakal, 12 September 2024; <https://epaper.samakal.com/nogor-edition/2024-09-12/7/3691>

¹⁹² Jugantor, 12 October 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/country-news/864317>

¹⁹³ Samakal, 16 November 2024; <https://samakal.com/whole-country/article/265495>

¹⁹⁴ Worker's wing of the BNP.

¹⁹⁵ Manabzamin, 26 December 2024; <https://mzamin.com/news.php?news=141395#gsc.tab=0>

63. Complaints have been lodged against 52 individuals, including former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, at the International Crimes Tribunal in connection with the mass killings in July-August. At least 32 senior journalists have been accused of inciting and encouraging the mass killings¹⁹⁶. On 14 September, the Editor's Council said in a statement, that the onslaught of murder cases filed against journalists goes against the interim government's commitment to independent journalism. The statement further reads that if journalists have committed any crimes based on specific allegations, legal action can be taken against them following appropriate procedures.¹⁹⁷ Persecution through unverified lawsuits against journalists have continued during the interim government's tenure. It may be noted that most owners and directors of Bangladesh's print and electronic news media were loyal associates of the former authoritarian regime and despite the fall of the Sheikh Hasina government, they have not apologised for their actions which were tantamount to inciting brutal violence, perpetrated against the people.
64. Narayanganj Press Club's vice president and Manabzamin's staff reporter Billal Hossain Robin was accused in a case related to the death of a fishmonger named Milon in Siddhirganj, Narayanganj, during the mass uprising¹⁹⁸. On 15 September, two factions clashed over the chairman of Raipara Union Parishad in Dohar, Dhaka. When he went to collect news about the issue, Kazi Zubayer (editor of the local weekly Asia Barta) was threatened by several men, including Amir Shikdar, president of the Raipara Union BNP. Zubayer was later attacked and badly injured.¹⁹⁹ On 29 October, a group of men ransacked Narayanganj Press Club. It was found that the attackers were supporters of advocate Sakhawat Hossain, Narayanganj's BNP convener²⁰⁰. On 11 December, journalists were attacked inside Sreepur Press Club by a group led by Tipu Sultan, joint secretary of Sreepur District BNP, for gathering information about extortion. Sreepur correspondent of the daily Jugantor Abdul Malek, along with other journalists were injured in the attack.²⁰¹

Repressive Cyber Security Act

65. The Cyber Security Act (CSA) and other repressive laws enacted by the Sheikh Hasina regime still remain in effect. On 30 September, a press release from the interim government's Law Ministry stated that the government had decided to

¹⁹⁶ Manabzamin, 29 August 2024; <https://mzamin.com/news.php?news=125049#gsc.tab=0>

¹⁹⁷ Prothom Alo, 14 September 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/5tnig3z6vj>

¹⁹⁸ Bhorer Kagoj, 21 August 2024; <https://www.bhorerkagoj.com/media/730940>, Manabzamin 20 August 2024; <https://mzamin.com/news.php?news=123602#gsc.tab=0>

¹⁹⁹ Prothom Alo, 16 September 2024;

<https://epaper.prothomalo.com/Home/ShareArticle?OrgId=169a2018090&eid=1&imageview=0&epedate=16/09/2024&sedId=1>, Jugantor, 15 September 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/country-news/852853>

²⁰⁰ Manabzamin, 30 October 2024; <https://mzamin.com/news.php?news=123602#gsc.tab=0>

²⁰¹ Jugantor, 12 December 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/country-news/890065>

- withdraw all cases filed under the CSA as soon as possible. The government announced that those arrested in CSA cases would be released immediately²⁰².
66. Regrettably, new cases are being filed under the CSA, despite the interim government's pledge to repeal the law. A case was filed under the CSA against Master Awlad Hossain, Chhatak Subdistrict Krishak League President, in Sunamganj, for inappropriate remarks about BNP chairman Tareq Rahman²⁰³.
67. The interim government promulgated a Cyber Security Ordinance as an alternative to the Cyber Security Act. However, the Ordinance contains the controversial provisions of the CSA. On matters of freedom of speech, expression, freedom of assembly and freedom of mass media, the Ordinance prioritizes controlling and maintaining surveillance. Several sections of the Ordinance, including Sections 8, 25, 26 and 36, are quite flawed and have the potential to be abused. Due to the lack of specificity in definition and vague language, many of the provisions may be misinterpreted. For example, in the proposed Ordinance, Section 8 states that information published on digital media can be removed or blocked if it poses a cybersecurity risk. This power has been given to the Director General of the Cyber Security agency, through whom the BTRC can be requested to block relevant information. The power given to the Director General and the police by the Ordinance is comparable with that of the CSA. If the Ordinance becomes law, there will be massive risks of it being misused²⁰⁴. Bangladesh has experienced such misuse of law and information darkness during the mass movement. It will not be easily forgotten.

Assaults on Accused People at Court Premises

68. On 5 August, everyone affiliated with the Awami League, including senior leaders and activists of its allies from 14 other political parties, pro-regime journalists, intellectuals, judges, police officers, and cultural activists fled, to save themselves from public outrage. Several were found and arrested and were brought to the Courts, triggering public chaos. Former Justice of the Appellate Division, [Shamsuddin Chowdhury Manik](#), former Social Welfare Minister [Dipu Moni](#), former Information Minister [Hasanul Haq Inu](#), former Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister [Rashed Khan Menon](#) and former Forest, Environment and Climate Affairs Minister [Saber Hossain Chowdhury](#) were physically assaulted by lawyers affiliated with the BNP and by ordinary people at the court premises when they were produced before the Court in Dhaka. Many Awami League and Chhatra League leaders were physically assaulted by outraged people around the country.

²⁰² Jugantor, 1 October 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/tp-lastpage/859274>

²⁰³ Jugantor, 23 September 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/country-news/856180>

²⁰⁴ Kalbela, 1 January 2025; <https://www.kalbela.com/ajkerpatrika/khobor/152124>

Conditions of Ready-Made Garments Industry Workers

69. A large number of the ready-made garment (RMG) factories were owned by leaders and supporters of the Awami League. This was quite evident from the fact that after Sheikh Hasina's government fell, many factory owners fled the country or stopped paying their workers. Consequently, major dissatisfaction was created among the RMG workers²⁰⁵. Workers blockaded roads and held rallies demanding increased wages, payment of outstanding wages and the reopening of factories. A female factory worker named Rokeya Begum was killed in violent clashes amidst two groups of workers²⁰⁶.
70. Faced with widespread discontent, the interim government decided to review the minimum wage of the RMG sector workers²⁰⁷. After negotiations between the government workers' representatives and factory owners, factory owners were forced to accept the 18-point demands of workers²⁰⁸. On 30 September, violent clashes broke out between RMG workers and members of law enforcement agencies and security forces at Ashulia, on the outskirts of Dhaka. A worker named Kawsar Hossain Khan (27) was shot and killed in the clash²⁰⁹. Such clashes occurred between the groups in many places due to workers' discontent²¹⁰. Lawsuits were filed against workers and many were arrested. Several factories had unexpected layoffs and were closed until further notice²¹¹.



A protest march by workers of Nemonk Design Limited garment factory in Chashara, Narayanganj, on 6 October 2024. The workers demonstrated against unpaid wages, layoffs, and mistreatment. Photo: Prothom Alo, October 6, 2024.

²⁰⁵ Jugantor, 12 September 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/tp-firstpage/851202>

²⁰⁶ Samakal, 17 September 2024; <https://samakal.com/whole-country/article/256251>

²⁰⁷ Prothom Alo, 12 September 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/business/industry/w63ulms1gs>

²⁰⁸ Prothom Alo, 25 September 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/zjw1ynbubf>

²⁰⁹ Jugantor, 1 October 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/tp-firstpage/859270>

²¹⁰ Prothom Alo, 6 October 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/qn2mxikrte>

²¹¹ Manabzamin, 7 October 2024; <https://m.mzamin.com/news.php?news=130578#gsc.tab=0>

71. On 23 October, workers gathered at Generation Next Fashion Limited at Ashulia to demand their overdue wages. Clashes between workers and police turned violent when the workers threw bricks at neighbouring factories. Three female garments workers were shot, and many others were injured in that incident²¹². Of them, Champa Khatun died while undergoing treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital²¹³. Joint Forces arrested seven people, including three women, from different RMG factories in Gazipur for inciting factory workers to protest and for attacking factories²¹⁴.

Demolition of Shrines and Attacks on Religious Dissidents

72. During the time period of this section of the report, shrines were vandalised and attacked. On 25 August, Aynal Shah's shrine in Sonmandi Union, Sonargaon, Narayanganj, and on 29 August, Ali Pagla's shrine in Kazipur, Sirajganj, were vandalised. On 3 September, Ismail Pagla's shrine in Sirajganj Sadar Upazila was vandalised, and on 6 September, miscreants carried out arson attacks and vandalized Dewanbag shrine in Narayanganj.²¹⁵ On 29 September, miscreants carried out arson attacks and acts of vandalism during the annual event at Rashidiya Darbar Sharif, Kumarkhali, Kushtia. That night, miscreants attacked the home of Sufi Kazi Zaber Ahmed in Savar and attempted to vandalise a shrine. Around 20 people were injured in the attack. On 30 September, miscreants torched and vandalised Lalon Anand Dham in Bhanga, Faridpur. Lalon Fakir's pictures, some valuable books, and periodicals were burned in the incident. Several musical instruments were also set ablaze. A statue of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar was also vandalised²¹⁶.

²¹² Jugantor, 23 October 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/country-news/869012>

²¹³ Manabzamin, 27 October 2024; <https://mzamin.com/news.php?news=133337#gsc.tab=0>

²¹⁴ Prothom Alo, 5 October 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/district/iekqus2cne>

²¹⁵ BBC News Bangla, 7 September 2024; <https://www.bbc.com/bengali/articles/ckq2xygly1no>

²¹⁶ Prothom Alo 30 September 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/district/8344iugroy>

(C) Other Human Rights Violations from 1 January to 31 December 2024

The Death Penalty and Human Rights

73. In 2024, a total of 307 individuals were sentenced to death by lower courts.

74. The country's existing criminal laws provide for the death penalty. Despite the provisions for alternative sentencing, the death penalty is widely used by trial courts. In many cases of flawed trials, courts have sentenced individuals with the death penalty relying on so-called confessional statements coerced through custodial torture. On 30 January, a bench comprising of Justices Mostofa Zaman Islam and Md. Atabullah of the High Court Division of the Supreme Court, issued a ruling asking the government as to why imposing the 'death penalty' as punishment without general principles, will not conflict with the Articles 7, 27, 31, 32 and 35 of the Constitution and why no principles will be formulated for imposing the death penalty²¹⁷.

75. Due to prolonged delays in hearing of appeals, those sentenced to death continue to spend their life in condemned cells. A woman named Sharifa Begum has been in a condemned cell since 1998. Her sentencing has yet to be decided by the appellate court, while she has been spending 24 years in jail. According to information provided by jail authorities, no female inmate has ever remained in a condemned cell for this long in jail history. Like Sharifa, a man named Abdus Samad has been imprisoned in a condemned cell for the last 24 years²¹⁸. It is irrational, as well as a serious violation of human rights, to keep death row inmates in condemned cells until their final appeals are decided. On 3 September 2022, three prisoners held in condemned cells at Chattogram Prison filed a writ challenging the lawfulness of keeping death row inmates in condemned cells before a case had finally been settled. After the writ had been heard²¹⁹ on 13 May 2024, a bench comprising of Justices Sheikh Hasan Arif and Md. Bazlur Rahman of the High Court Division of the Supreme Court, issued a Rule that a person sentenced to death shall not be held in a condemned cell or solitary confinement until all judicial and administrative procedures are completed. The High Court ordered that those who had been held in condemned cells or solitary confinement before the death sentence had been finalized would gradually be transferred to normal cells. The observation of the said Bench was that prisoners on death row should be treated like any other prisoners and be allowed to apply for bail. Where appropriate, the High Court should grant bail to the applicants in

²¹⁷ Jugantor, 31 January 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/tp-news/769174>

²¹⁸ Desh Rupantor, 1 July 2024; <https://www.deshrupantor.com/519875/>

²¹⁹ Jugantor, 14 May 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/tp-firstpage/804829>

accordance with Section 426 of the Code of Criminal Procedure²²⁰. The High Court Bench's Rule, issued on 15 May, was stayed until 25 August 2024, by the Supreme Court's Chamber Judge M. Enayetur Rahim, who publicly claimed to be a 'politician under oath' while speaking at an event at the Supreme Court²²¹. The High Court Division's Rule still remains suspended until the date of this report's publication. The lawyer who filed the writ told Odhikar that a civil petition for leave to appeal has been filed against the suspended ruling, which awaits hearing.

Public Lynching

76. In 2024, 121 people were killed by Public lynching.

77. Cases of public lynching persisted in 2024. The disrespect to right to life, insensitivity and inefficacy of state and constitutional institutions has created an environment lacking accountability while fostering impunity. This has influenced a trend of taking the law into one's own hands and mob violence. Since the Hasina government was overthrown, there have been many cases of public lynchings due to massive public outrage over the 15-year, repressive Awami League regime.

78. On 18 April, two construction workers namely Ashraful and Ashadul, who were brothers, were killed in a public lynching by members of the Hindu community. It was alleged that Shah Asaduzzaman, a leader of the deposed ruling party Awami League, incited some people in Madhukhali, Faridpur, to set fire to a temple²²² that resulted in the death of the two brothers.

79. While the student protests were still underway on 4 August, demonstrators in Narsingdi's Madhabdi lynched and killed six men affiliated with the Awami League. The victims include Delowar Hossain Shahin, Awami League leader and Chardighaldi Union Parishad Chairman²²³. In Rangpur, angry students beat Haradhon Ray, an Awami League leader, to death²²⁴. Abdullah Al Masud, a disabled former Chhatra League leader at Rajshahi University²²⁵ and Tofazzal, a mentally unstable man suspected of being a thief at Dhaka University, were beaten to death.²²⁶

Prisons and Human Rights

80. In 2024, 83 individuals died in prison.

²²⁰ Jugantor, 14 May 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/tp-firstpage/804829>

²²¹ Prothom Alo, 15 May 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/w2qsw9rvmo>

²²² Manabzamin, 19 April 2024; <https://mzamin.com/news.php?news=106198#gsc.tab=0>, Manabzamin, 22 April 2024; <https://mzamin.com/news.php?news=106599#gsc.tab=0>

²²³ Manabzamin, 5 August 2024; <https://mzamin.com/news.php?news=121406>,

²²⁴ Prothom Alo, 20 October 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/district/8ehhyge1d>

²²⁵ Prothom Alo, 8 September 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/district/dkayzqg8zz>

²²⁶ Jugantor, 20 September 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/tp-firstpage/854400>

81. Bangladesh's prisons continue to remain overcrowded. The authoritarian Sheikh Hasina regime imprisoned many people in order to suppress the political opposition. When the quota reform movement began, the number of inmates increased significantly. The inmates in overcrowded prisons faced a shortage of food, living space, bathrooms, showers, and access to medical care²²⁷. There have been allegations of severe corruption, irregularities and drug dealing in prisons involving inmates and the prison officials²²⁸. Ordinary prisoners and political prisoners alleged that they were tortured and persecuted in the country's prisons during the Sheikh Hasina regime²²⁹. Several BNP leaders died as prisoners associated with opposition parties were deprived of access to medical care. On 2 January, Kamal Hossain, a BNP leader, died in Bagerhat District Jail²³⁰. On 28 January, Abdus Sattar, a BNP leader, died in Satkhira Jail²³¹ while on 8 February, Monoarul Islam, a BNP leader of Gongachora subdistrict, died in Rangpur Central Jail²³².
82. Alongside prisons, there have been allegations of torture on children detained in Child Development Centers²³³. On 14 February a teenager named Maruf Ahmed (16) was allegedly tortured to death while imprisoned at Gazipur's Tongi Child Development Center²³⁴.
83. On 8 August, prisoners set Jamalpur Jail ablaze, took the jailer hostage, and tried to escape. On 9 August, when prisoners attempted to escape Chattogram Central Jail, many of them were injured by the prison guards' gunfire.²³⁵

Neighbour India

Human Rights Violations Committed by Indian Border Security Force

84. In 2024, the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) killed 24 Bangladeshis and injured 29 others. Among the 24 killed, 21 were shot, and three were tortured to death, as reported. Of the 29 injured, 26 were shot, two were tortured, and one was injured by a grenade thrown by the BSF.
85. The Indian Border Security Force (BSF) continues committing atrocities towards Bangladeshi citizens. In 2024, the BSF members killed many Bangladeshi citizens including children, teenagers, and Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) soldiers²³⁶.

²²⁷ Manabzamin, 19 February 2024; <https://mzamin.com/news.php?news=98348>

²²⁸ Jugantor, 12 March 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/tp-lastpage/783722>

²²⁹ Naya Diganta, 29 February 2024; <https://www.dailynayadiganta.com/last-page/817629/>

²³⁰ New Age, 4 January 2024; <https://www.newagebd.net/article/221926/9th-bnp-activist-dies-in-prison>

²³¹ Jugantor, 6 February 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/tp-firstpage/771237>

²³² Naya Diganta, 8 February 2024; <https://www.dailynayadiganta.com/rangpur/812567/>

²³³ Juvenile custody homes.

²³⁴ Samakal, 16 February 2024; <https://epaper.samakal.com/nogor-edition/2024-02-16/2/5615>

²³⁵ New Age, 9 August 2024; <https://www.newagebd.net/post/country/242082/6-inmates-killed-in-jamalpur-jail-shooting>

²³⁶ Jugantor, 15 May 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/to-city/805207>

86. On 22 January 2024, the Indian BSF shot to death Md. Raisuddin, a soldier of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB), at the Benapole border in Jessore²³⁷. India has only expressed its sorrow over the incident and has not reprimanded the BSF members responsible. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh under the Sheikh Hasina government never protested against the incidents of killing of Bangladeshi nationals, including the murder of the BGB soldier²³⁸.
87. BSF members shot and killed a vast number of people, including Bangladeshi citizens, at the border this year. The victims were: [Rabiul Islam Tukul](#) at the Patgram border in Lalmonirhat District on 28 January; [farmer Saddam](#) at the Shikoriya border in Kulaura, Moulvibazar District on 17 March; [Al Amin](#) (32) at the Porsha border in Naogaon District on 26 March; [Liton Mia](#) (19) at the Durgapur border in Aditmari, Lalmonirhat District on 26 March; [Muruli Chandra](#) at the Burirhat border in Lalmonirhat District on 29 March; [Saiful Islam](#) at the Rokonpur border in Chapainawabganj District on 2 April; [Hasan Mia](#) at the Kasbah border in Brahmanbaria on 22 April, [Abul Kalam](#) at the Patgram border in Lalmonirhat District on 26 April; [Abdul Jalil \(24\) and Yasin Ali \(23\)](#) at the Tetuliya border in Panchagarh District on 8 May; [Anwar Hossain](#) (50) at the Burichang border of Cumilla District on 9 June; [Nurul Islam](#) at the Kaliganj border in Lalmonirhat District on 26 June; [Raju Mia](#) at the Nagarbhita BOP border in Baliyadangi Subdistrict, Thakurgaon District on 5 July, [Abdullah](#) at the Shibganj border in Chapainawabganj District on 11 August; a 14-year-old teenager named [Swarna Das](#) at the Lalarchak border in Moulvibazar District on 2 September; a 15-year-old teenager named [Jayanta Kumar Singh](#) at the Baliyadangi border in Thakurgaon District on 8 September; [Kamal Hossain](#) at the Joshpur Border Outpost (BOP) in Cumilla's Sadar South Upazila on 7 October; a medicine trader [Rezaul Karim](#) at the Dhobaura border in Mymensingh on 24 October; [Anwar Hossain](#) (40) at the Mominpara border in Panchagarh's Sadar Upazila on 6 December; [Sabu Hossain \(35\), Jahangir Morol \(36\), and Sakibul Hasan \(20\)](#) near the Ichhamati River under Sharsha and Benapole port in Jashore on 18 December; and a tea worker named [Gopal Byakti](#) at Borolekha border in Moulvibazar district on 22 December.
88. On 17 February, Bangladeshi citizen Jahangir Alam went fishing in the Mahananda River at the Poladanga border, in Bholahat, Chapainawabganj district, where he was shot and critically injured by members of the BSF²³⁹. On 12 May, some female Bangladeshi citizens went to gather straw near the no-man's-land at Kurigram's Phulbari border. The BSF chased them onto Bangladeshi soil, from where they fired bullets at them²⁴⁰. On 8 July, Kiron, a

²³⁷ Prothom Alo, 24 January 2024;

<https://epaper.prothomalo.com/Home/ShareArticle?OrgId=241aedd62bf&eid=1&imageview=0&epedate=24/01/2024&sedId=1>

²³⁸ Samakal, 1 February 2024; <https://samakal.com/bangladesh/article/220848>

²³⁹ Prothom Alo, 17 February 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/district/g2lry1t9y3>

²⁴⁰ Naya Diganta, 15 May 2024; <https://www.dailynayadiganta.com/first-page/835085/>

Bangladeshi citizen, was tortured and left at the Banglabandha border at Tetuliya, Panchagarh District.²⁴¹

89. Torture and killings of Bangladeshi citizens by BSF members continued even after the fall of Sheikh Hasina's pro-Indian, authoritarian regime. The interim government has protested these killings.²⁴²

Indian government's Aggressive Policy

90. Successive Indian ruling parties' aggression on Bangladesh reached its worst level during the authoritarian Sheikh Hasina regime, fueled by the blatant, unabashed show of slavish devotion towards the Indian government from the Awami League government. The Indian ruling party influenced and supported the controversial and farcical National Parliamentary elections of 2014²⁴³, 2018²⁴⁴, and 2024²⁴⁵. The Indian ruling party is largely responsible for wiping out Bangladesh's electoral system. It and the Awami League consistently did whatever was necessary to establish and maintain an authoritarian regime under Sheikh Hasina, including the commission of large-scale human rights violations in Bangladesh²⁴⁶.
91. Despite facing widespread criticism in Bangladesh, the Awami League government signed a controversial Power Purchase Agreement with Adani Group, known to have close ties to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi²⁴⁷. It is alleged that Sheikh Hasina's government made many secret deals with Delhi that were against the interests of Bangladesh. Hasina's government granted India access to Bangladesh's two major seaports in Chattogram and Mongla²⁴⁸. Despite public protests, India established a coal-fueled energy plant in Rampal, in Bagerhat District of Bangladesh. The power plant apparently threatens the Sundarbans and neighbouring wildlife. In contrast, India has denied Bangladesh its rightful share of water of the international rivers during the dry season, in violation of international law. The Indian government refused to sign the Teesta Water Sharing Treaty with Bangladesh denying the latter's necessity of water for irrigation. Since India commissioned the Farakka barrage, the Padma River basin is facing desertification - an

²⁴¹ Prothom Alo, 8 July 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/district/879hai940z>

²⁴² Jugantor, 6 September 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/tp-city/847835>

²⁴³ Before the controversial and fraudulent elections of January 5, 2014, almost all political parties in Bangladesh decided to boycott the elections. Sujata Singh, the then Foreign Secretary of the Indian government, visited Bangladesh and succeeded in convincing the Jatiya Party to partake in elections, even though they had decided to boycott. Members of the Jatiya Party became ministers in the authoritarian Hasina government, and at the same time were also members of the opposition party in the National Assembly. <https://www.dw.com/bn/নির্বাচন-না-হলে-মৌলবাদের-উত্থান-হবে/a-17271479>

²⁴⁴ Ananda Bazar, 26 May 2018; <https://www.anandabazar.com/india/sheikh-hasina-said-various-pending-issues-between-india-and-bangladesh-1.805857>

²⁴⁵ Prothom Alo, 16 March 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/politics/1w0z1a73m5>

²⁴⁶ Manabzamin, 18 May 2024; <https://mzamin.com/news.php?news=110355>

²⁴⁷ Naya Diganta, 4 February 2024; <https://www.dailynayadiganta.com/first-page/811449/>

²⁴⁸ Samakal, 1 February 2024; <https://samakal.com/international/article/220770>

impact of unilateral withdrawal of water by India. By opening the sluice gates of the Farakka and Gajoldoba dams during the monsoon season, the Indian government creates artificial floods in Bangladesh and yet again violates international law.

92. Former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina traveled to India on 21 and 22 June 2024 where the two countries signed many deals and memorandums of understanding. Sheikh Hasina and Narendra Modi discussed the possibility of a railway that could pass through Bangladesh to commute from one part of India to the other, risking Bangladesh's national security and sovereignty. The proposed railway was expected to begin operations in July²⁴⁹. Furthermore, Hasina and Narendra Modi initiated the plans for Akahura-Agartala cross-border railways, Khulna-Mongla port railways for transportation of Indian goods for India's financial and geopolitical interests. The Hasina-Modi agreements contained the plan of establishing Maitri Super Thermal Power Plant Unit-2 from which Bangladesh was expected to purchase energy. These plans were manifestations of kneeling, subservient foreign policy²⁵⁰.
93. The ordinary people of Bangladesh protested against the unwanted role played by India in Bangladesh's internal and diplomatic affairs, and organised "India out, India boycott" programmes²⁵¹. The people of Bangladesh cherish and respect the hard-won independence of the country from the economic, linguistic and political suppression of the then Pakistani government. Unlike the Awami League government, they do not want any semblance of a repeat from the Indian regime.
94. Facing increasing public ire, Sheikh Hasina fled to India on 5 August. Subsequently, several pro-government news media in India began discrediting the mass movement by circulating disinformation regarding attacks on Hindu minorities in Bangladesh²⁵². There are complaints against the Indian establishment for fanning the campaigns to destabilise Bangladesh²⁵³. Independent fact-checkers have confirmed the Indian media campaign were based on fake-news²⁵⁴. Such fake and disruptive news and information continue to be published to date and used and spread by those keen on destabilizing and discrediting the efforts of the interim government, who are faced with the immense task of cleaning up over fifteen years of misrule and corruption.

²⁴⁹ Naya Diganta, 23 June 2024; <https://www.dailynayadiganta.com/first-page/844294/>

²⁵⁰ Jugantor, 27 December 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/national/896016>

²⁵¹ Manabzamin, 2 February 2024; <https://mzamin.com/news.php?news=95965>

²⁵² Naya Diganta, 16 September 2024; <https://www.dailynayadiganta.com/first-page/864407/>

²⁵³ Naya Diganta, 2 September 2024; <https://www.dailynayadiganta.com/first-page/860408/>

²⁵⁴ Samakal, 19 August 2024; <https://samakal.com/bangladesh/article/251520> BBC, 18 August 2024; <https://www.bbc.com/bengali/articles/c5y8qdex205o>

Allegations of attacks on the Hindu community post- 05 August

95. After Hasina's government was deposed on 5 August, there were reports of attacks on the Hindu community²⁵⁵. It was found that out of the 1415 complaints received regarding attacks and vandalism against the religious minority, 98.4% were due to political reasons and 1.59% were due to communal reasons²⁵⁶. After 5 August, there were videos circulating on social media sites that portrayed torture and arson against the Hindu community in Bangladesh. The fact-finding divisions of [BBC](#) and the [Deutsche Welle](#) did not find any truth to these allegations and exposed the manipulation and distortion. Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council claimed that nine people were killed in cases of persecution against minorities. Fact-checkers did not find any communal motive in the nine cases. The Council's list includes the name of Ripon Shil, who was killed by law enforcement agencies during the student-led mass uprising. Another person of the nine died due to cardiac arrest while he was the target of extortion, and six died in clashes over land disputes and due to prior enmity. The reason of one person's death still remains unverified²⁵⁷.
96. It is alleged that the deposed Awami League leaders and activists are staging 'communal attacks' secretly in places. Central leaders of Awami League are allegedly involved in orchestrating attacks on the Hindu community²⁵⁸. For instance, villagers in Thakurgaon District caught an Awami League activist named Samiul attempting to flee after carrying out an arson attack at the residence of Mohen Chandra and videotaping the incident on his mobile phone²⁵⁹. On 6 October, the police arrested a Jubo League activist named Bacchu Alamgir on charges of destroying idols of Durga at Palpara temple in Sujanagar District²⁶⁰. Bacchu Alamgir admitted his guilt before the magistrate, having made a statement under section 164 of the Code of Criminal Procedure²⁶¹. On 18 August, a Hindu man named Nepal Chandra Ghosh was caught by villagers in Purbadhala, Netrokona, while attempting to set fire to a temple.²⁶²

²⁵⁵ BBC News Bangla 18 August 2024; <https://www.bbc.com/bengali/articles/c5y8qdex2050>;
<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cx2n8pzK7qzo>

²⁵⁶ Prothom Alo, 11 January; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/mkuwd4zi30>

²⁵⁷ Samakal, 12 December, <https://samakal.com/bangladesh/article/269972>

²⁵⁸ Naya Diganta 12 August 2024; <https://www.dailynayadiganta.com/first-page/854993/>

²⁵⁹ Naya Diganta 16 August 2024; <https://www.dailynayadiganta.com/last-page/855987/>

²⁶⁰ The Daily Star, 7 October 2024; <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/hate-crime/news/jubo-league-activist-held-vandalising-durga-puja-idols-3722161>, Samakal, 7 October, 2024; <https://samakal.com/whole-country/article/259398>

²⁶¹ Section 154 of the Code of Criminal Procedure reads: 'Every information relating to the commission of a cognizable offence if given orally to an officer in charge of a police-station, shall be reduced to writing by him or under his direction, and be read over to the informant; and every such information, whether given in writing or reduced to writing as aforesaid, shall be signed by the person giving it, and the substance thereof shall be entered in a book to be kept by such officer in such form as the Government may prescribe in this behalf.'

²⁶² Naya Diganta 19 August 2024; <https://www.dailynayadiganta.com/first-page/856761/>

Violence Against Women

97. In 2024 acts of violence against women reached a highly disturbing level. Until the removal of the Sheikh Hasina government, the then ruling party members continued to enjoy impunity in most acts of violence against women under a subjugated justice system; and victims were denied justice. Violence against women has continued during the interim government's time as well.

Rape

98. There have been many cases of rape reported in 2024. The main reasons behind the victims being deprived of justice include the dysfunctional judiciary, subjective law enforcement guaranteeing impunity to the perpetrators of their choice, and a [lack of cooperation from the police to the victims](#), subservience of the judiciary to the former ruling AL party. Before Hasina's government was deposed on 5 August, several rape allegations were put forth against Awami League leaders and activists²⁶³. Charges were made against Awami League leaders, [Sramik League leaders](#), and [AL-nominated district chairmen](#) of committing rape²⁶⁴. For instance, on 5 February, an Awami League leader and some other men broke into a home in Subarnachar, Noakhali District, and forcibly gang raped a mother (30) and female child (12).²⁶⁵
99. Victims of rape and gang rape have been [killed](#) and some [committed suicide](#) in the absence of justice and amidst social stigmatization. One victim took her own life after she was beaten and threatened by her rapist after he was released from prison on bail.²⁶⁶ There are also allegations of rape made against the [police](#). Former ruling party leaders threatened rape victims not to file cases²⁶⁷. One housewife fled with her husband and children after an Awami League leader attempted to rape her²⁶⁸.
100. Cases of rape persisted even during the interim government's time. There have been allegations of gang raping and rapes of women and children. During this time, one BNP leader also tried to cover up an instance of rape through arbitration²⁶⁹, which is nothing short of intimidation of the victim.

Sexual Harassment

101. The definition of stalking and sexual harassment, passed by the court, has not been included in the law²⁷⁰. There have been many cases of stalking and sexual

²⁶³ Samakal, 31 March 2024; <https://samakal.com/whole-country/article/230384>

²⁶⁴ Manabzamin, 4 March 2024; <https://mzamin.com/news.php?news=100178#gsc.tab=0>

²⁶⁵ Daily Observer, 6 February 2024; <https://www.observerbd.com/news/458839>

²⁶⁶ Samakal, 26 May 2024; <https://samakal.com/bangladesh/article/239005>

²⁶⁷ Jugantor, 5 April 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/country-news/792761>

²⁶⁸ Manabzamin, 28 June 2024; <https://mzamin.com/news.php?news=116062#gsc.tab=0>

²⁶⁹ Samakal, 1 October 2024; <https://samakal.com/whole-country/article/258483>

²⁷⁰ Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association Vs. Bangladesh, <https://www.blast.org.bd/content/judgement/BNWLA-VS-Bangladesh2.pdf>

harassment in 2024. There have been several allegations of sexual harassment against members of organisations affiliated with the Awami League²⁷¹. There have also been allegations of sexual harassment against teachers at educational institutions²⁷². The complaints of sexual harassment at educational institutions were ignored and the relevant administration refrained from taking action against the perpetrators during Hasina's regime.

102. Mahmudur Rahman Jonny, an assistant professor at the Public Health and Informatics Department of Jahangirnagar University and former president of the university's (now banned) Chhatra League, was accused of several cases of sexual harassment. The University's former Vice Chancellor suspended the probe against the accused²⁷³. There have also been reports of attacks and killings of those protesting the acts of sexual harassment²⁷⁴.

Dowry Violence

103. Violence against women in relation to dowry demands by their husbands and in-laws persisted in 2024. Even though giving and receiving dowry is a punishable offense according to the Dowry Prohibition Act 2018 and the Prevention of Women and Children Repression Act 2000, the culture of extorting dowry is still significantly predominant in society. The victims of dowry related violence are often denied justice. Inhumane incidents such as [beating](#), [burning](#), [asphyxiating](#) and [slashing the veins](#), claims numerous lives of women. There are even allegations against [member of law enforcement](#) and [judge](#) of committing violence against their wives for dowry-related reasons. A leader of the currently banned Chhatra League was accused of murdering his wife because she refused to pay dowry²⁷⁵.

Acid Violence

104. Although trials are meant to be conducted within 90 business days after a case of acid violence is registered under the Acid Control Act 2002, some cases have been awaiting trial for years. Consequently, victims are being denied justice. Most victims of acid-related violence in 2024 were women²⁷⁶ and children²⁷⁷. On 5 July in Kendua, Netrokona District, Hafsa Aktar's ex-husband Humayun Kabir Baki threw acid on her because she had divorced him.²⁷⁸ On 30 December, Housewife Mili Aktar died at a hospital after undergoing ten months of treatment for burns she sustained in an acid attack,

²⁷¹ Manabzamin, 19 March 2024; <https://mzamin.com/news.php?news=102285#gsc.tab=0>

²⁷² Jugantor 12 February 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/-paper-first-page/773324>

²⁷³ Samakal, 7 February 2024; <https://samakal.com/dhaka/article/221724>

²⁷⁴ Prothom Alo, 9 February 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/district/0gad257duc>

²⁷⁵ Naya Diganta, 8 January 2024; <https://www.dailynayadiganta.com/dhaka/804839/>

²⁷⁶ Jugantor, 19 April 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/tp-news/796118>

²⁷⁷ Jugantor, 28 January 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/tp-news/768044>

²⁷⁸ Jugantor 7 July 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/tp-city/825110>

in Matlab North Sub-district, Chandpur District. On 25 February, Safiqul Islam, accompanied by his friend Jahid, threw acid on her because she rejected his proposal²⁷⁹.

Human Rights Violations against the Rohingya Community

105. In 2024, fierce battles began between the military junta and armed rebels in Myanmar, which continued in December. Rohingya homes were burnt down. Thousands of Rohingya sought refuge on the banks of the Naf River, Myanmar, seeking a way to Bangladesh to save their lives. Members of Bangladesh law enforcement agencies increased border control to prevent the migration of Rohingya into Bangladesh. According to Saiyedullah, a Rohingya youth who fled, both the Myanmar military and the Arakan army were responsible for attacks against Rohingya people in Rakhine²⁸⁰. As clashes between the military junta and armed rebels in Myanmar's Maungdaw took place from 25 June, Rohingya women, men and children fled their homes to cross the Naf River. They tried to enter Bangladesh by boat, only to be asked to return by members of the BGB²⁸¹. It has been reported that the Rohingya have been forced to enlist in the Myanmar military to fight against the Arakan army²⁸². Meanwhile, 25,000 Rohingya have crossed the border and entered Bangladesh²⁸³. According to Rohingya sources, many people have left Maungdaw town and neighbouring villages. Many have died in crossfire²⁸⁴. There are allegations against BGB personnel of forcing the survivors to pay 50,000 to 100,000 Taka for 'permission' to enter Bangladesh²⁸⁵. On 6 August, a boat of Rohingya people escaping Myanmar capsized at Teknaf, Cox's Bazar, while entering Bangladesh. Later, 10 bodies, including women and children, were found.²⁸⁶ Apart from the Rohingya, on 18 November, local authorities detained 56 members of the Chakma and Barua community who had entered Bangladesh through the Baishfari border in Naikhhongchari, Bandarban District²⁸⁷. On 28 October, 506 Rohingya from different refugee camps in Ukhiya-Teknaf, Cox's Bazar, were sent to Noakhali District's Bhasan Char²⁸⁸. Miscreants sometimes take advantage of the insufficient security measures. There was a report of miscreants breaking into a home at a Rohingya camp

²⁷⁹ Prothom Alo, 30 December 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/district/diwl8g35p>

²⁸⁰ Naya Diganta 24 May 2024; <https://www.dailynayadiganta.com/first-page/837357/>

²⁸¹ Naya Diganta 28 June 2024; <https://www.dailynayadiganta.com/first-page/845554/>

²⁸² Prothom Alo, 15 May 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/world/asia/iqva97j34p>

²⁸³ Naya Diganta 1 October 2024; <https://www.dailynayadiganta.com/first-page/19654245/>

²⁸⁴ Manabzamin 11 September 2024; <https://mzamin.com/news.php?news=126891>

²⁸⁵ Naya Diganta 9 September 2024; <https://www.dailynayadiganta.com/first-page/862323/>

²⁸⁶ Prothom Alo 6 August 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/district/yc83zwdh2q>

²⁸⁷ Jugantor, 19 November 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/country-news/880597>

²⁸⁸ Prothom, Alo 29 October 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/district/70upiqm5z>

located in Ukhiya, Cox's Bazar on 21 October. Three members of the same family were shot dead in that incident²⁸⁹.



*Fifty-six members of the Chakma and Barua families have fled Myanmar and infiltrated through the Ghumdhum-Baishphari border in Naiksyangchhari upazila of Bandarban, Bangladesh. Photo: Jugantor
19 November 2024*

²⁸⁹ Samakal, 21 October 2024; <https://samakal.com/whole-country/article/261433>

Recommendations:

1. Members of law enforcement agencies who were involved in mass killings, extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, torture, and inhumane or degrading treatment must face trial.
2. The Torture and Custodial Death (Prevention) Act 2013 must be implemented and directives/preventive measures from the High Court and Appellate Division in the matter of [BLAST vs Bangladesh](#) must be comprehensively implemented to stop torture in all circumstances, including under the guise of remand. The government must accede to the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture.
3. Enforced disappearance should be immediately criminalized in accordance with the UN Convention to Protect All Persons from Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, which Bangladesh is now a party to. The perpetrators of enforced disappearances, regardless of their professional or political portfolio in the armed forces or the government, must face trial. The victims of enforced disappearances who have not yet been found must be located and returned to their families, or details of their fate must be made public. The victims of enforced disappearances who have already returned, must be provided reparations.
4. The National Human Rights Commission Act must be reformed in accordance with the Paris Principles to enable the Commission to function effectively and independently against all kinds of human rights violations.
5. Investigations must be conducted into allegations of indiscipline, negligence, corruption and human rights violations by prison officials regardless of their ranks, and actions must be taken against them. Torture, harassment, and all kinds of human rights violations against prisoners must be put to an immediate stop. There seems to be a need for a Prison Reform Commission.
6. Freedom of expression and freedom of press must be ensured at all levels. All cases of harassment against professional, independent journalists and human rights defenders must be withdrawn, and investigations must be conducted into the incidents of attacks and bring the perpetrators to justice.
7. All restrictive laws, including The Special Powers Act 1974, Information and Communications Technology Act 2006, Anti-Terrorism Act 2009, Cyber Security Act 2023, and the draconian provisions of the Cyber Security Ordinance 2024 must be repealed immediately.
8. Perpetrators should be arrested and stand trial to end violence against women and children. Arbitration for acts of violence against women does not guarantee justice and is not a judicial solution; the criminal justice system should be reformed for women to afford justice. Public awareness on the legal consequences of committing the acts of violence against women and children should be an integral part of ending the crimes against women and girl children. The definition of stalking and sexual harassment, both of which

have been included in judicial decisions²⁹⁰, must be included in the relevant law, through amendment, to ensure justice and good practice and to prevent future violations.

9. Human rights violations perpetrated against Bangladeshi citizens by Indian BSF, including torture and killings at borders, must end. The perpetrators of torture and murder must face trial. For this to happen, the government of Bangladesh must pressure the Indian ruling authorities to probe cases of torture and killings through a joint probe commission comprising of expert investigators of both countries for permanently ending the problem related to atrocities at Bangladesh border. India's attempts to control, its hegemony and aggression towards Bangladesh must end.
10. The Commissions created by the Interim Government must submit concrete, sustainable and viable recommendations that must be implemented before the next elections take place.

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Notes:

1. Odhikar seeks to uphold the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of the people.
2. Odhikar documents and records violations of human rights and receives information from its network of human rights defenders and monitors media reports.
3. Odhikar conducts detailed fact-finding investigations into some of the most significant violations, with assistance from trained local human rights defenders.
4. Odhikar is consistent in its human rights reporting and is committed to remain so.

²⁹⁰ Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association Vs. Government of Bangladesh, 2011 BLD (HCD) 31