

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	521
Land:	Bangladesh
Kilde:	Human Rights Watch (HRW)
Titel:	World Report 2025 – Bangladesh
Udgivet:	16. januar 2025
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	23. januar 2025

World Report 2025 - Bangladesh

An interim government headed by Nobel Prize laureate Mohammed Yunus promised accountability and reform after the increasingly authoritarian administration of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was removed in August by protesters.

In July, violence [erupted](#) after Hasina's Awami League party supporters and police attacked students peacefully protesting a politicized quota scheme for government jobs. Security forces used excessive force, including tear gas, stun grenades, and rubber and live bullets, to disperse protesters. But protests continued, and on August 5, Hasina stepped down and fled the country.

The Yunus government released thousands of people who were detained during the protests and invited the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to send a [fact-finding team](#) to investigate abuses during the protests and their root causes. In August, the interim government established a commission of inquiry into all enforced disappearances and acceded to the UN Convention on Enforced Disappearances. In September, the interim government [established six commissions](#) to reform the judiciary, the electoral system, public administration, the police, the Anti-Corruption Commission, and the constitution before promised free and fair elections. It later established four other commissions to make policy recommendations on media, health, labor rights, and women's rights.

The government decided to use the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT), a domestic special court previously used to prosecute crimes against humanity committed during Bangladesh's 1971 war of independence, to prosecute human rights abuses during the July uprising. The ICT has been fraught with violations of fair trial standards, and while the interim government invited amendments to the Act that established the court to bring it in line with international standards, it still lacks some due process protections, and includes the death penalty, in violation of international human rights law.

Abuses by Government Forces

Ahead of elections in January, security forces [arrested tens of thousands](#) of opposition members and supporters. The primary [opposition parties eventually boycotted the polls](#) and Hasina returned to a fourth consecutive term in office. The United States, United Kingdom and the UN said the [election process was not inclusive](#), while China, Russia, and India congratulated Hasina.

Protests that started in July over job quotas quickly spread with [demands for an end to Hasina's repressive rule](#). The authorities [imposed a nationwide internet shutdown](#), restricting access to information, and enforced a [curfew](#) with a "shoot-on-sight" order.

[Nearly 1,000 people](#), including over 100 children, were reportedly killed in the violence in July and in [reprisal](#) violence after Hasina's ouster.

Despite the end of Hasina's rule, since August security forces in some cases returned to patterns of abuse that were familiar under her administration. These include arbitrarily arresting Awami League officials and supporters, as well as journalists seen to have been favorable to the previous government and filing criminal complaints against large numbers of "unknown" people.

Attacks on Ethnic and Religious Minorities

Following Hasina's resignation, rioters attacked her supporters, including [Hindus](#), [Ahmadi Muslims](#), and ethnic minorities, resulting in violence that [killed](#) over 200 people. Criminals and

opposition supporters attacked shops, homes and places of worship. Many Muslims protected minorities and criticized the attacks.

In September, [violence broke out in the Chittagong Hill Tracts](#). Believing that members of the Indigenous Jumma community had killed a Bengali settler, mobs attacked the ethnic minorities, and burned their properties. When Jumma youth protested, the military used live ammunition to disperse the gathering. At least four people were killed in the violence. Independent international human rights monitors and journalists continue to be denied access to the area.

Enforced Disappearances and Torture

Although the Hasina administration had repeatedly denied enforced disappearances by security forces, three victims— [Michael Chakma](#), [Mir Ahmad Bin Quasem](#), and [Abdullahil Amaan Azmi](#) – were released days after her departure. They said they were held in solitary confinement but could hear the screams as other detainees were tortured.

Odhikar, a prominent Bangladeshi human rights organization, [estimates](#) that over 700 people were forcibly disappeared under the Hasina government. While some were later released, produced in court, or said to have died during shootouts with security forces, [nearly 100 people remain missing](#).

Allegations of torture continued to surface, including from [students taken into custody](#) during the protests. Historically, allegations of torture in Bangladesh have rarely been investigated or prosecuted.

Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

While Bangladesh has made economic progress, the recent protests reflected frustration over [uneven distribution of resources](#). The unemployment rate of young people aged 15-24 [remains the highest in the region](#), and 42 percent among young women. Bangladesh has the biggest gender gap in youth unemployment globally. [Cost of living](#), including food, reached its highest point in a decade, with little reprieve for those with low incomes.

Freedom of Press and Expression

The Hasina administration targeted human rights activists, journalists, and political dissidents through arbitrary arrests and surveillance.

The Cyber Security Act (CSA), enacted in 2023, [retains many of the abusive elements](#) of its predecessor, the Digital Security Act, granting wide authority to officials to criminalize and jail political critics.

The interim government has committed to protecting free speech and welcomed criticism. However, as of October, authorities had filed cases against at least 129 journalists and scrapped nearly 200 press accreditations, underscoring the point that without systemic reform, the abusive practices will remain the same regardless of the change of government. In September, [courts ordered police to investigate](#) a man accused under the CSA for insulting Yunus and the Quran in a Facebook video.

Women's and Girls' Rights

Despite the pivotal role that women played in the July uprising, they have not been adequately represented in the cabinet of the interim government. As set out in UN Security Council resolution

1325, women are entitled to full, equal, meaningful, and safe participation in all discussions about the country's future, including guiding the government's approach to transitional justice, legal reform, and institution-building.

Sexual and gender-based violence are widespread and women and girls in Bangladesh have little recourse to seek protection or access justice for these crimes.

A report released by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics found that [rates of child marriage](#) were on the rise, with 42 percent of girls in the country married before the age of 18, and 8 percent before age 15.

Rohingya Refugees

There are nearly one million Rohingya refugees living in Bangladesh. In September, Yunus [reiterated](#) his support for a mechanism that would hold the junta in Myanmar accountable for the abuses it has perpetrated against the Rohingya, adding that the international community must help to [create conditions](#) under which the Rohingya can return safely to Myanmar. The authorities have repeatedly stated that the country is unable to [accept more refugees](#).

An increase in violence in Myanmar mid-year drove another 18,000 Rohingya refugees to seek asylum in Bangladesh, but security forces have pushed back thousands. [Unregistered refugees risk hunger](#), and do not seek necessary healthcare out of fear that they will be returned. Bangladesh is bound by the customary international law prohibition on refoulement, and under the UN Convention Against Torture, to not forcibly return anyone to a place where they would face a real risk of persecution, torture, or other ill-treatment.

Rohingya refugees in camps face precarious living conditions, including due to violence by armed groups and gangs in the camps. There is no criminal justice system available to refugees. Security forces have [failed to address](#) a culture of impunity surrounding sexual violence, where [women](#) and girls as well as [LGBT](#) refugees are often victims of attacks.

A [fire](#) at a refugee camp in January and [heavy monsoon rains](#) in July exacerbated the humanitarian crisis.

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Same-sex conduct is [criminalized](#) in Bangladesh with penalties from ten years to life in prison. There are no legal protections against discrimination on the basis of sexuality. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people and advocates have reported increased threats of violence.

Labor Rights

In January, garment factory workers, most of whom are women, [blocked](#) a highway to protest the failure of their employers to increase their wages according to a new government compensation scheme, but were dispersed by police firing tear gas.

In September, a garment worker was shot dead and at least 20 others were injured in violent clashes between workers demanding better wages and the police. The interim government [committed to reviewing](#) the minimum wage and to support workers amid the rising cost of living.

In September, an [explosion](#) on the oil tanker MT Suvarna Swarajya killed at least six workers, underscoring the failure of shipping companies to take [adequate safety measures](#) to protect their

employees. The shipbreaking industry in Bangladesh is dangerous and underregulated, as many companies use loopholes to circumvent international labor and environmental regulations.

The authorities have yet to amend the labor laws to protect workers' freedom of association and collective bargaining in line with International Labour Organization (ILO)'s conventions and recommendations. The authorities also have not ratified the [ILO Violence and Harassment Convention \(C190\)](#), which requires comprehensive protections to end violence and harassment, including gender-based violence, at work.