

# **BAL Regime (2009-2013): Five Years of Human Rights Violation**

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# Five Years of Human Rights Violation

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## Executive Summary

*The five year tenure (2009-2013) of the current Awami League led government has been marked by innumerable incidents of human rights violations and suppression of the mass people. The widespread of killing, enforced disappearance, attacks on minorities and violence on women have stirred concern all over the country. Hundreds of activists of BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami and other opposition parties were arrested without credible charges during the period. The judiciary and the administration are being used to persecute people not belonging to the ruling party. Regrettably, the government is still continuing the practice of violating human rights in line with the last five years.*

## Introduction

The state of human rights in Bangladesh has become a matter of great sorrow as the Govt. is now on its tyrannical stand even against performing all the democratic rights of people. Many opposition activists have been heinous victim of the envy of ruling Govt. Opposition parties have been victim of brutal attack of police and ruthless suppressing behavior of law-enforcing agencies. Repeated attacks, tortures in custody, filing malicious cases and attacking opposition leaders with little credible charge are some of the most serious allegations brought against the current government. In the last 5 years, the series of violations of human rights have reached to an alarming level. From activists of the opposition party to the members of the minority, none are safe from the government. People from all spheres of life have been victim of attack by ruling party members or persecution by state agencies. This report focuses on some of the major violations of human rights during the period between 2009 and 2013 on a chronological basis.

# Hindrance on Political Activities

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Democratic practices was in serious jeopardy during the time and the political parties were generally not allowed to hold any peaceful protest or procession against the tyrannical behavior of the Govt. The Govt. has filled up the jails with political prisoners. The jails are already holding 3 times more than their capacities, leading to unrest among the detainees. The prisoners include central leaders of BNP and Jamaat-E-Islami and activists numbering to more than 50,000. Almost each and every program of the opposition was obstructed with law-enforcing agencies and the activists or participants of those programs were maltreated by serious brutality. Some instances are below-

## 2009

### **Imposition of Strict Conditions for the Registration of Political Parties**

The government has imposed strict conditions for the registration of political parties. The Cabinet has approved the process of registration for political parties with rigid conditions, which was passed in Parliament as the Representation of People Order (Amendment) Act 2009. According to this new Act, each and every potential political party should have 200 voter-members in each Upazila in order to get registered as a political party.

The registration of political parties may be a positive approach if the Government's intention is to ensure the fundamental rights of the citizens as enshrined in Article 37 of the Constitution of Bangladesh. Internal democratic processes of the political parties should be strengthened and transparency should also be reflected in financial matters through this registration process.

### **Banning of the Hizb-ut-Tahrir, Bangladesh**

The Government has banned all activities of the Hizb-ut-Tahrir, Bangladesh. The news of the banning was conveyed through a press note on October 22, 2009, which was signed by the Joint Secretary (Political) of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Dr. Md. Kamal Uddin. The press note stated that the government had banned the organization named Hizb-ut-Tahrir, Bangladesh from October 10 because it posed as a threat to the security of the public in general. Ironically, the

issue of public security was used in the past by the Home Ministry to prevent Sheikh Hasina from returning to Bangladesh. Also, the same excuse was used to install a pseudo civilian Government, in reality a military Government, through the events of 1/11.

The Hizb-ut-Tahrir in its various written statements and meetings has conveyed its dissent over terrorist activities and had been expressing its views under the fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution of Bangladesh. Under the international, regional and domestic sphere of politics, if the State and the Government bar expressing ones thoughts and opinions, it will lead to instability and intolerance in the society, which may be difficult for a weak State and Government like Bangladesh to handle.

## 2011

### Arrest from Independence Day Rally

On 26<sup>th</sup> March 2011, the Independence Day of Bangladesh, members of Bangladesh Islami Chhatra Shibir gathered in Kakrail nightingale intersection of the capital for joining the colorful



rally arranged as a part of their countrywide programs to celebrate the glorious day of national independence. But suddenly the police attacked the peaceful gathering of the students and used stick and tear cells on them. Many students were injured by this unexpected assault without any fault on their part.<sup>1</sup> But soon the activists of Shibir reorganized themselves to continue with their scheduled program of Independence Day. Thousands of Shibir activists started the procession

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.dailysangram.com/print.php?news\\_id=50667](http://www.dailysangram.com/print.php?news_id=50667)

with banners and national flags at 9 pm. The festive rally passed along Kakrail and then they gathered at Shantinagar where student leaders addressed the members of Shibir.<sup>2</sup>

But as soon as the speech of Shibir President Fakhruddin Manik finished, a team of police led by OC (operation) of Ramna PS Shibli Noman attacked the gatherings of students once again from behind without any inducement.<sup>3</sup> This time police was more violent and fired rounds of tear cell and rubber bullets on the students. The police also beat everyone in the spot indiscriminately with sticks and kicked them to disperse the assembly. Panicked students and passersby started to run in different directions and many took shelter in various shops. But police entered even there and kept beating the activists of Shibir mercilessly. Journalists and Passersby were not spared by the police of torture.<sup>4</sup>

Soon more two platoons of riot police joined the attack on Shibir members. They searched every shop from Shantinagar to Shantibag looking for Shibir activists.<sup>5</sup> More than hundred activists of Shibir were severely injured by this sudden attack and they were admitted into different hospitals. Police arrested 17 persons including 16 members of Bangladesh Islami Chhatra Shibir who were injured by the attack on the charges of vandalism and restraining the police from duty.<sup>6</sup> Police also seized 4 motorbikes from the rally.

### ***Case 1 - Attack on Jamaat Program***

On 22<sup>nd</sup> November, Police unnecessarily attacked on a reception program organized by *Jamaat-e-Islami* at *Chouddagram upazila* of *Comilla*.<sup>7</sup> The reception was arranged for the party men who were recently released from prison. Initially Police tried to close the program which led to some scuffles and caused injuries to 5 activists of *Jamaat*. Though Police did not arrest anyone from the spot, but later on they arrested Mr. *Zakir Hossain Patwary*, a *Jamaat* activist from his office.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://theindependentbd.com/paper-edition/frontpage/129-frontpage/41281-17-shibir-men-held-in-capital.html>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.dailysangram.com/print.php?news\\_id=50667](http://www.dailysangram.com/print.php?news_id=50667)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.amardeshonline.com/pages/details/2011/03/27/74138>

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.dailysangram.com/print.php?news\\_id=50667](http://www.dailysangram.com/print.php?news_id=50667)

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/print\\_news.php?nid=179294](http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/print_news.php?nid=179294)

<sup>7</sup> The Daily Sangram - 23<sup>rd</sup> November, 2011; Also in Daily Naya Diganta of the same date.

## ***Case - 2***

Police arrested six activists of *Islami Chhatra Shibir* who were the students of Khulna Medical College on 24<sup>th</sup> November.<sup>8</sup> Police did not clarify any specific reason for the arrest of those students and the President of BICS Khulna Medical College branch claimed that they went for having their dinner and then they were arrested. However, the Principal-in-charge of KMC didn't show that much interest on that news of arresting his students.

So, these are some of the glimpse of the political tolerance of the govt., as well as the misuse of Police. But situation are far worse than that. Police are now attacking in the offices of Jamaat and Shibir, without any reason. These are some of the incidents that occurred last month.<sup>9</sup>

## ***Attack of 19 September<sup>10</sup>***

In order to implement the program, leaders and activists of Jamaat took to the streets on 19 September in protest against the 'conspiracy' to try Jamaat leaders on 'false' charges by using a 'black law' and demanding their release.

But police was ready with necessary arms to vandalize the program. Jamaat claimed that at least 700 leaders and activists were injured and 400 were arrested across the country. Dhaka Metropolitan Police admitted that they had arrested 75 persons during clashes with Jamaat activists in Dhaka city.

A large number of police and members of Armed Police Battalion with water cannons and armoured carriers were deployed at different places ahead of the scheduled demonstrations in Dhaka. The capital's Kakrail, Paltan, Bijaynagar, Shantinagar and Malibagh areas turned into battlefields during the clashes that left around 100 people, including 30 police personnel injured. Police fired five hundred shots, mostly rubber bullets, and tear gas to disperse the demonstrators.

Witnesses said police had charged batons and fired a barrage of tear gas shells to disperse hundreds of Jamaat activists who gathered at the Diploma Engineers Institute at Nightingale

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<sup>8</sup> The Daily Prothom Alo - 25<sup>th</sup> November, 2011

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.banglanews24.com/English/detailsnews.php?nssl=b71faf915b91184a5c4dc56c7d6262da&nntl=2011091525012>

<sup>10</sup> <http://newagebd.com/newspaper1/frontpage/33934.html>

crossing at Kakrail to march towards Paltan. But police swung into action and tried to disperse them by using batons. Soon the clashes spread out to Paltan, Bijaynagar, Fakirerpool and Malibagh areas.

After being attacked by police, activists of Jamaat and Islami Chhatra Shibir (student wing of Jamaat) with mass-people confronted the police with simple sticks and hurled stones during the nearly two-hour clashes.

### **Police Attack in Hospital!**

After 6pm, Police appeared in Islami Bank Hospital where many injured activists of Jamaat-Shibir were hospitalized for treatment. Police launched sudden attack on the injured people and arrested them dragging forcefully. At this time, police made an attack upon the security guards of the hospital. A doctor of this hospital named Hafizur Rahman who was then on duty was also attacked and later arrested by Police. Nurse hostel of this hospital was also searched by police. Making brutal attack upon hospitalized patient is unprecedented in the history of Bangladesh.<sup>11</sup>

### **Countrywide Mass-Arrest**

Not only in capital Dhaka, but also in various towns and cities of the country police launched mass arrest and repressive action against the leaders and activists of Jamaat while they were trying to hold procession in support of their urge. Police arrested 26 leaders and activists from Kushtia,<sup>12</sup> 3 from Barishal,<sup>13</sup> 10 from Comilla,<sup>14</sup> 25 from Chittagong<sup>15</sup> and 5 from Kurigram.<sup>16</sup>



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<sup>11</sup> [http://www.dailysangram.com/news\\_details.php?news\\_id=64012](http://www.dailysangram.com/news_details.php?news_id=64012)

<sup>12</sup> [http://www.dailysangram.com/news\\_details.php?news\\_id=64062](http://www.dailysangram.com/news_details.php?news_id=64062)

<sup>13</sup> [http://www.dailysangram.com/news\\_details.php?news\\_id=64061](http://www.dailysangram.com/news_details.php?news_id=64061)

<sup>14</sup> [http://www.dailysangram.com/news\\_details.php?news\\_id=64052](http://www.dailysangram.com/news_details.php?news_id=64052)

<sup>15</sup> [http://www.dailysangram.com/news\\_details.php?news\\_id=64049](http://www.dailysangram.com/news_details.php?news_id=64049)

## **Attacks on Jamaat-Shibir Offices**

### ***Case - 1***

Police attacked on the Dhaka City office of Jamaat and forced the office bearers and secretaries to leave.<sup>17</sup> Police had done this for consecutive four days, but did not admit that for a single time. Secretary of Dhaka City Jamaat Hamidur Rahman Azad MP complained that, Police also compelled him to leave the office showing very rude attitude. Though about 20-25 Police including D.B was running the operation, Officials of the Local Police stations (Paltan Thana & Motijheel Thana) denied the fact.

### ***Case - 2***

Police run an operation in the Central office of Shibir and arrested three persons.<sup>18</sup> This operation was committed on 5:00 pm afternoon on 23<sup>rd</sup> November. But later on, *Police snatched away about One thousand taka from them and released them.* However, Police also arrested some more local people suspecting them as Shibir activists, but they were released after a while.

### **Attack in Dhaka**

Police severely attacked on Jamaat-e-Islami procession in the capital Dhaka demanding the release of top its leaders including Delawar Hossain Sayedee.<sup>19</sup> The attack left at least 10 people injured at the city's Malibagh area on 12 September 2011, afternoon. Police baton-charged the party men when they were holding a peaceful procession organized by Dhaka Metropolitan unit of Jamaat. Police arrested at least 25 Jamaat activists from the spot.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> [http://www.dailysangram.com/news\\_details.php?news\\_id=64068](http://www.dailysangram.com/news_details.php?news_id=64068)

<sup>17</sup> The Daily Prothom Alo - 25<sup>th</sup> November, 2011

<sup>18</sup> The Daily Amar Desh - 24<sup>th</sup> November, 2011

<sup>19</sup> <http://newagebd.com/newspaper1/index.php?news=33052>

<sup>20</sup> [http://thedailystar.net/newDesign/print\\_news.php?nid=202227](http://thedailystar.net/newDesign/print_news.php?nid=202227)

The party members were due to gather at the Engineers Institution compound at 4 pm for which proper permission was obtained from the authority. But the police locked the whole place up in the morning and did not allow any person to come around the area. Several persons were arrested who tried to enter the venue of the protest rally. Being unable to hold the meeting in the scheduled venue, the Jamaat activists assembled in the Kakrail area of the city and prepared for the rally led by Assistant

Secretary General of the party Professor Mujibur Rahman who has recently been released from detention. At one stage, the Jamaat activists brought a procession from



Kakrail crossing and proceeded towards Malibagh crossing at about 4:00pm.<sup>21</sup>

At the end of the program police suddenly swung into action to disperse the rally. Fierce beating and firing by the police at the demonstrators caused widespread panic in the neighboring areas. More than hundred activists of Jamaat along with 30 common passersby were severely injured in the police action in the area. All business establishments were shuttered during the clash that also created a huge traffic jam, causing public sufferings.<sup>22</sup>

Police charged batons and fired teargas on Jamaat men who gathered in the protest rally demanding the release of detained leaders. More than 50 Jamaat activists were arrested from the procession among them 21 are in Shahbag police station and 26 are at the Ramna police station. This was the one of the largest incidents of mass arrest in several months. Rafiqul Islam, officer-in-charge of Ramna Police Station, said they detained 25 to 26 men on charges of attacking the law enforcers and injuring them without any provocation.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> <http://www.amardeshonline.com/pages/details/2011/09/13/104991>

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.amardeshonline.com/pages/details/2011/09/13/104991>

<sup>23</sup> [http://www.dailysangram.com/print.php?news\\_id=63352](http://www.dailysangram.com/print.php?news_id=63352)

## Attack in Sylhet

Police attack on Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Chhatra Shibir activists has left at least 35 injured. The incidents took place in two phases around 4 pm on 11 September 2011 at the Sylhet city's Zindabazar and Chouhatta intersections. The clashes ensued when police blocked a procession of Jamaat and Chhatra Shibir activists demanding release of its central leaders, who are currently in jail on charges of alleged crimes against humanity in 1971.<sup>24</sup>

The demonstration of hundreds of BJI activists began at the Court point led by Sylhet Metropolitan President Ehsanul Mahbub Zubair. As soon as the tail of the rally reached Shyamoli Centre, a great number of police started to throw tear shells at the demonstrators without being



provoked. Police fired 30 rounds of rubber bullet shots and 25 rounds of teargas shell at the activists. Police charged baton and fired teargas shells a second time to stop the procession that led to another fierce clash. Later, a Rapid Action Battalion

contingent joined the police in the action, eyewitnesses said. Three severely wounded Jamaat activists namely Shahjahan Ali, Shahriar Alam and Anwarul Wadud were admitted to a private clinic in the city.<sup>25</sup>

Eight people were arrested by the police from the site. Among the arrested activists are— Obaidur Rahman Masud, Obaidul Haque, Shukur Ali, Touhid Ahmed and Oliur Rahman.<sup>26</sup> Later police has filed a case of assault against 3000 Jamaat activists and leaders including Metropolitan President Ehsanul Mahbub Zubair, District South President Habibur Rahman, Professor Abdul Hannan, Dr. Sayef Ahmad, Sirajul Islam Shahin Advocate Zia Uddin Nader and others.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> [www.bdnews24.com/details.php?id=205796&cid=3](http://www.bdnews24.com/details.php?id=205796&cid=3)

<sup>25</sup> [http://www.dailysangram.com/print.php?news\\_id=63256](http://www.dailysangram.com/print.php?news_id=63256)

<sup>26</sup> [www.bdnews24.com/details.php?id=205796&cid=3](http://www.bdnews24.com/details.php?id=205796&cid=3)

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.amardeshonline.com/pages/details/2011/09/13/105009>

In the same night, Police arrested Jamaat leader Shams Uddin from a clinic where he was under treatment for his wound he received from the attack on the procession. On 3 am in the morning, Police conducted a raid in the house of Surma Upazila Chairman and Jamaat leader Maolana Lokman Ahmed for arresting him, when he was not at home.<sup>28</sup>

## 2012

### **Ruling Party Shuts Entry to Dhaka**

On June 11, 2012 activists of Jatiya Ghat Shromik League (an ally of ruling party Awami League) were patrolling the river with sticks in the presence of police at Sadarghat Launch Terminal in the capital and at the Buriganga river, to stop people from coming to Dhaka to attend the meeting called by 18 Party Alliance led by the Opposition BNP. They also beat boatmen and passengers. A boat was sunk when the panicked passengers were trying to get off it.<sup>29</sup>

## 2013

### **Cancellation of Registration of Jamaat**

Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami has always been holding a key position in the process forming of government after the elections. In 1991 and 1996 respectively, BNP and Awami League managed to form government by securing the support of Jamaat. The alliance of Jamaat and BNP in 2001 election resulted in a landslide victory of BNP against Awami League. After the defeat in 5 city elections of 2013, Awami League is anticipating the same effect in the next general election as well and is desperate to prevent that from happening.

In 2010, the govt set up a court that it called the International Crimes Tribunal to try crimes committed in 1971. Among those the court has convicted are several top Jamaat leaders. The government had promised to meet international standards in these trials, but it has been far away from meeting this commitment. Unfortunately the present trial of war crime has been severely

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<sup>28</sup> <http://www.amardeshonline.com/pages/details/2011/09/13/105009>

<sup>29</sup> The daily Manabzamin, 12/06/2012

criticised by various institutions as biased and targeted to have political vengeance rather than securing justice.

The govt backed Shahbag movement which was initiated earlier this year has been consistently demanding a ban on Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami. Various top leaders of the ruling party have also voiced the same demand and it has become clear that Awami League is determined to eliminate its rival Jamaat from the political scenario using the state power.

Subsequently in 1 August 2013, the High Court Division cancelled the registration of Jamaat debarring its participation in elections. Awami League has termed the verdict as a success in its effort against Jamaat and declared that the judgment is the first step in the process of eliminating Jamaat from politics. The use of the judiciary to prevent political opponents from democratic process is a matter of great concern for the advancement of rule of law in Bangladesh.

In 2008, during the military-backed caretaker government, the EC made it mandatory for political parties to register if they wanted to contest polls. Jamaat, a key ally of the BNP, registered with alongside 37 other parties.

Some people including Bangladesh Tariqat Federation's Secretary General Syed Rezaul Haque Chandpuri, Jaker Party's Secretary General Munshi Abdul Latif and Sammilita Islami Jote's President Ziaul Hasan moved the court challenging Jamaat's registration in January the following year. A Sufi group, which practises Islamic mysticism, filed the public interest litigation in January 2009 seeking to scrap Jamaat's registration. Pro Awami League protesters have been demanding that Jamaat be banned for its role in the 1971 war of independence, during which it opposed Bangladesh's breakaway from Pakistan.<sup>30</sup>

The case was later shifted to the bench of Justice AHM Shamsuddin Choudury but after partial hearing, the bench's authority to hear the matter further was altered. Later it was shifted to a larger bench which finished hearing the plea on Jun 12 this year.

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<sup>30</sup> <http://www.dailynayadiganta.com/welcome/post/9745#.Ug8qQz8ipH0>

Finally, Bangladesh's High Court declared the registration of Jamaat-e-Islami, the country's main Islamist party, is illegal, banning it from contesting January's general election. The court made the pronouncement in the country's capital, Dhaka, on 1 August 2013 after hearing the petition arguing that Jamaat's charter<sup>31</sup> breached the constitution<sup>32</sup>.

The bench of justices M Moazzam Husain, M Enayetur Rahim, and Quazi Reza-Ul Hoque announced the verdict, cancelling Jamaat's registration. "By majority, the rule is made absolute and registration given to Jamaat by the Election Commission is declared illegal and void," Justice Husain said. The verdict comes at a time when the demand for outlawing the party has been voiced by govt supporters. The full verdict will be published later, the court said. The Jamaat termed it a 'wrong verdict' which merely 'reflected the government's political vengeance'.

Election Commissioner Mohammed Shah Nawaz said the court's order was 'absolute'. The Chief Election Commissioner said the EC would take "immediate actions" after examining the verdict. "We will move quickly on the issue," Kazi Rakibuddin Ahmad said.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> [http://www.jamaat-e-islami.org/en/articlepdf/108\\_Jamaat%20Constitution-2008.pdf](http://www.jamaat-e-islami.org/en/articlepdf/108_Jamaat%20Constitution-2008.pdf)

<sup>32</sup> Constitution of Bangladesh, [http://bdlaws.minlaw.gov.bd/print\\_sections\\_all.php?id=367](http://bdlaws.minlaw.gov.bd/print_sections_all.php?id=367)

<sup>33</sup> <http://bdnews24.com/bangladesh/2013/08/01/ec-steps-after-examining-verdict>

# Killings and Enforced Disappearances

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## A Brief Overview and Statistics of Killings

(2009 - 2013)

### At a Glance

Murder - 20,693

Political Killings - 1330

Extra Judicial Killings - 775

Mob Lynching - 720

### 1. Murder

Total number of Murders in Five Years - 20,693

Average Murder per day - 12

<b>Murder</b>	
Year	Number of Murders
<b>2009</b>	4219
<b>2010</b>	3988
<b>2011</b>	3966
<b>2012</b>	4114
<b>2013</b>	4406
<b>Total</b>	20693

## 2. Political Killings

Total number of Killings in Five Years - 1330

Average killing per month - 22

Total number of injuries in Political clashes in Five Years - 79,883

Average injury per day - 44

Killings in the internal Clashes between factions of Awami League - 178

<b>Political Killings</b>	
Year	Number of Killings
<b>2009</b>	251
<b>2010</b>	220
<b>2011</b>	135
<b>2012</b>	184
<b>2013</b>	540
<b>Total</b>	1330

<b>Political killings in the Internal clashes of Ruling</b>	
Year	Number of Deaths
<b>2009</b>	38
<b>2010</b>	38
<b>2011</b>	38
<b>2012</b>	39
<b>2013</b>	25
<b>Total</b>	178

### 3. Extra Judicial Killings

Total number of Killings in Five Years - 775

Average killing per month - 13

Number of Deaths in Cross fires and Encounter - 404

<b>Extra Judicial Killings</b>	
Year	Number of Deaths
<b>2009</b>	154
<b>2010</b>	127
<b>2011</b>	84
<b>2012</b>	70
<b>2013</b>	340
<b>Total</b>	775

### 4. Mob Lynching

Total number of Killings in Five Years - 720

Average killing per month - 12

<b>Death by Mob Lynching</b>	
Year	Number of Deaths
<b>2009</b>	127
<b>2010</b>	174
<b>2011</b>	161
<b>2012</b>	126
<b>2013</b>	132
<b>Total</b>	720

## 5. Killing and Suppression on Journalists

Total number of Killings in Five Years - 18

Total number of assaults on Journalists - 1389

- i. Injured Journalists - 822
- ii. Harassed Journalists - 267
- iii. Threatened Journalists - 300

<b>Journalist Killings</b>	
<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of Deaths</b>
<b>2009</b>	1
<b>2010</b>	5
<b>2011</b>	4
<b>2012</b>	4
<b>2013</b>	4
<b>Total</b>	18

### 2009

During the year 2009, 154 people have reportedly been killed extra-judicially by law enforcement agencies. It is alleged that of these people, 41 were reportedly killed by RAB, 75 by police, 25 jointly by the RAB-Police, 3 by Army, 2 by Ansar, 1 by Jail Police and 1 by Forest Guards, 5 were under the custody of BDR and 1 was a coast guard. Of the 154 killed, 35 were killed while they were in custody of the law enforcement agencies.

It has been further alleged that of the extra-judicial killings, 129 were killed in 'crossfire/encounters/gun fights/shootout'. Of them, 38 were reportedly killed by RAB, 63 by

police, 25 jointly by the RAB-Police, 3 by Army. During this period, 21 persons were allegedly tortured to death. Among them, 3 by RAB, 11 by Police and 1 allegedly died due to torture by jail police, 1 was by coast guards and 5 were allegedly tortured while under BDR custody.

The political affiliations of some of the victims of extra-judicial killings are as follows:

2 from *Awami League*, 1 from *BNP*, 2 from UPDF, 6 BDR Jawans, 19 from Purbo Banglar Communist Party (Jonojuddho), 3 from Purbo Banglar Communist Party, 6 from Purbo Banglar Communist Party (Red Flag), 11 from Gono Mukti Fouz, 6 from Biplobi Communist Party, 3 from New Biplobi Communist Party, 8 from Gono Bahini, 5 from Shorbohara Party, 2 from Sromojibi Mukti Andolon, 1 from Pahari Chattra Parishad (PCP). Two of those killed were students of the Polytechnic Institute, 2 were villagers, 2 garment workers, 1 was a Union Parishod (UP) Chairman, 2 were young men, 1 was a Madrasa student, 1 a petty trader, 1 a labourer, 1 a freedom fighter, 1 farmer and 1 a shopkeeper. One person was an under trial prisoner, one a clearing and forwarding agent, 38 were alleged criminals, 13 alleged dacoits, 3 were alleged muggers, 1 an alleged drug dealer, 1 was from the alleged gangster group 'Lalchand Bahini', 1 from the Bahini group, 1 from Panna Bahini and 3 were from the alleged gangster group 'Gangchil Bahini'.

### **Mutiny at the Bangladesh Rifles Headquarters**

On the morning of February 25, 2009, during the ongoing 'BDR Week', a group of protesting members of the BDR attacked senior officers coming from the Army, at the BDR Headquarters, situated at Pilkhana, Dhaka. In the incident, the mutineers killed 74 high ranking army officers, BDR members, including the Director General of the BDR and his wife and civilians indiscriminately. A number of family members of the army officers were confined at Pilkhana by the mutineers. BDR jawans claimed that BDR members fell victim to injustice and have been deprived of their rights by the army officers who command and control the BDR and as a result, the mutiny took place. BDR jawans had submitted a 50- point demand to the authority stating that BDR jawans are under the command of army officers which led to the exploitation and deprivation of BDR jawans. They demanded that the BDR be directed by its own officers. Furthermore, it was suggested that the BDR officers could be appointed under public service examinations and that discriminations in pay-scale be removed in order to modernize the BDR.

### ***Confined BDR Members Allegedly Tortured to Death***

On February 26, 2009, the Prime Minister declared a general amnesty for the BDR members who revolted, in order to quell the ongoing mutiny. Following this declaration, the BDR mutineers laid down their arms. As per the declaration made by the Government, many BDR members reported to the BDR Headquarters. They were confined by RAB and taken blindfolded to unknown destinations. Since the laying down of arms, the BDR mutineers were screened out from the whole group of BDR members that were inside the Pilkhana during the revolt. After the conclusion of the screening process, the BDR members against whom there were specific allegations were sent to different places for questioning, prior to being arrested. During the questioning, those who agreed to give confessional statements were handed over to police. It has been alleged, and in many cases, it was evident that during the questioning process, the BDR Jawans were tortured. During this period of time, a number of BDR members died in custody. Family members of the deceased Monir Hossain, Mobarak Hossain, Kazi Saidur Rahman, Mohiuddin, Zakir Hossain Bhuiyan and Rezaul Karim alleged that they had died due to torture inflicted upon them.

A total of 51 BDR members have died since the February 2009 BDR Headquarters mutiny till December 31, 2009. Among them, 26 BDR members died while in custody, of which 6 have allegedly died due to torture.

## **2010**

### **Upazila Chairman Killed by Ruling Party Men in Daylight**

Awami League activists with sharp dagger, knife, steel rod, beat to death Sanaullah Noor Babu, in 8<sup>th</sup> October during a BNP procession in Bonpara Bazar, Natore. He was BNP-backed chairman of Boraigram upazila,. Around 50 AL activists equipped with firearms, sticks, iron rods and machetes swooped on the



BNP procession and started beating the opposition men leaving 30 others including Bonpara Municipality Mayor Ishaq Ali and while taking photographs four journalists were injured. Killers of Boraigram upazila chairman Sanaullah Noor Babu set free although Natore police identified 16 people on October 9 from video footage of the attack that killed Boraigram upazila chairman Babu the previous day. Police arrested only one of them in this connection. The arrestee, Russell Hossain Rappu, is a Bangladesh Chhatra League activist of the upazila. Several footages from TV news showed how Boraigram upazila chairman and local BNP leader Sanaullah Noor Babu was brutally beaten to death on October 8 allegedly by AL men. The police so far have identified 16 of the 27 accused from the videotape. One was arrested, but main accused Zakir Hossain stayed out of police reach. Awami League lawmaker of Baraigram-Gurudaspur constituency Abdul Quddus assured his party men accused of the BNP leader Sanaullah Noor Babu murder case of “trouble-free” future. “There is nothing to be worried about. The Awami League government is in power. Nothing will happen to the accused of the murder case,” he told a party rally on Bonpara bypass. While the Natore Awami League and the local MP are trying to portray the murder of BNP leader Sanaullah Noor Babu as a consequence to BNP's internal feud, the investigators are certain that the ruling party activists had committed the offence. Investigation officer (IO) of the case Sub-Inspector Abdul Hannan of Detective Branch said "I have enough evidence against the accused but they are now hiding to escape arrests". The main accused Zakir, A member of Boraigram Upazila unit AL, is under local MP's shelter.

### **3 Shibir activists murdered by ruling party men**

In 2010, 3 students of Bangladesh Islami Chhatrashibir were murdered by the terrorists of ruling party. They are: Hafizur Rahman Shahin from Rajshahi, Mohiuddin Masum from Cox's Bazar and Harunur Rashid Kaiser.

### **DU student Killed by Chhatra League**

A student named Abu Bakar was killed in clashes between two groups of the *Awami League*-backed *Chhatra League* at the Dhaka University on February 1, 2010. The clash took place between *Chhatra League*'s A F Rahman Hall Unit President Saiduzzaman Faruk and its General



Secretary Mehedi Hasan, over establishing supremacy in the political landscape of the University. Both groups attacked each other with razor-sharp knives, butcher knives, canes and hockey sticks. During the clash Abu Bakar was severely injured in front of his room on the third floor of A F Rahman Hall. He died in Dhaka Medical College Hospital on February 3, 2010. On February 4, 2010, Home Minister Sahara Khatun at a joint meeting of three Ministries held at the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs said, "This is a stray incident. It is no big deal. Such things happen."

## **2011**

### **Two Jamaat Activist Killed**

The incident took place on Satkania, Chittagong where Abdul Hakim (39) and Kamal Uddin (34) were murdered by the gang of local Awami League leader and terrorist Bashir on 2nd September, 2011 Friday at night. According to the family members and friends, both the victims were returning from a program of their friend Rafiq's residence while they were kidnapped by Bashir and his gang of 15-20 members. Later, slaughtered dead body of Abdul Hakim was found

in a canal called “Hatiar Bil” connected with river Dalu in Satkania at Saturday. After one day, bullet pierced dead body of Kamal uddin was also found from river Dalu.<sup>34</sup>

Ameer (President) of Jamaat-e-Islami Satkania upazila Dr. Nurul Haq said that, Abdul Hakim owned and possessed a garden with valuable trees. After the Awami League govt. took power in 2008, Local BAL terrorist Bashir harassed Abdul Hakim and threatened to take over the garden. He forcefully cut down some trees from the garden which led to a strong dispute between Bashir and Abdul Hakim. Following the dispute, Bashir with the help of his friends killed Abdul Hakim and his fellow Kamal Uddin.<sup>35</sup>

However, leaders of Jamaat-e-Islami Chittagong city and districts condemned their deep shock to such brutal act of terrorism and demanded immediate arrest of Bashir and other identified terrorist who murdered those two Jamaat workers. The Member of Parliament from Satkania-Lohagara constituency and Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami Chittagong City Mawlana Shamsul Islam said that, “No human being can kill a person on the eve of Eid-ul-Fitr, only beasts can do that. The peaceful environment of Satkania is being tried to be violated by such nasty works.” Local leaders also strongly demanded the arrest of the culprits as soon as possible.<sup>36</sup>



### **Jamaat Leader Missing in Rajshahi**

College teacher and Imam of a Mosque in Rajshahi Maolana Aminul Islam has been missing for days after being picked up by people claiming themselves as members of law enforcing agency in civil dress. He was an activist and a unit president of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami Rajshahi branch and a teacher of Palpur Dharampur College. On 23 October 2011, some people in civil

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<sup>34</sup> The Daily Sangram – 4<sup>th</sup> September, 2011

<sup>35</sup> ibid

<sup>36</sup> The Daily Sangram – 5<sup>th</sup> September, 2011

dress identifying themselves as members of law enforcing agency came to Aminul Islam's residence of Vatpara of Lakshipur, Rajshahi and bring him with them to some unknown location.

The next morning his family members went to the police station but police did not acknowledge anything about the arrest of Aminul Islam. No other law enforcing agency provided any information about his whereabouts Aminul Islam. Zahra Khatun, the wife Aminul Islam has made a general diary entry in the Rajpara police station. It is feared by the family members that he might have been abducted by members of the ruling party out of political enmity.<sup>37</sup>

Dead body of Iqramul Haque, general Secretary of BNP of Paushuram Union of Rongpur, is found on 30 December. It is alleged that he is killed by activists of rival political party, Awami League (AL). BNP party men alleged that he was killed in lieu to upcoming Union Parishad Election as he declared to take part in election.<sup>2</sup>

A young man named Jewel (28) has become recent victim of crossfire in Keranigonj on 19 January. Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) – 10 claim that Jewel had active involvement in various crimes. Jewel is supposed to be a close aide of jailed Kala Jahangir, a top terror.<sup>3</sup>

Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) activist abducted a Jatiotabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) leader Arifur Rahman Aunu and beaten him to death in Pirozpur on 1 January. Aunu was secretary of Literature and cultural affairs of Pirozpur JCD. Awami terror Tara Selim and his aide abducted him on the way of his journey to Dhaka to attend a party program and attacked him critically.<sup>5</sup>

BNP leader of Burichong Upazila of Comilla Mokter Hossen (40) is brutally killed by terror on 16 January. He was organizing secretary of Burichon BNP. According to Police, Mokter was brought from his house and killed by unidentified terrors.<sup>6</sup>

Two persons including a ward leader of Jubo Dal were killed at the capital's Motijheel and Kalyanpur on 10 January. Shahid was shot dead around 6:30am near Motijheel Police Station when he was going on foot from his hotel and restaurant at Motijheel to Kaptan Bazar. In the

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<sup>37</sup> Daily Amar Desh, 29, 10, 2011

way of his going some unidentified criminals stopped him on the way. They fired two shots through his head and neck and fled the scene.<sup>7</sup>

## 2012

### **Police Kills Four in Chandpur**

On January 29, 2012 violence started between activists of BNP and the police in various districts when police stopped a mass procession organised by the BNP. On that day, four persons died in Chandpur and Laxmipur when police opened fire on demonstrating BNP activists and supporters. The deceased have been identified as Limon Choiyal (25), a rickshaw puller of Guakhola in Chandpur; Abul Hossain Mreedha (50), a rickshaw puller of Baburhaat in Chandpur; and Mohammad Rubel (25) of PashchimLaxmipur village under LaxmipurSadarUpazila; and Mohammad AbulQashem (55) of Charmonosha village in Laxmipur. Mohammad Rubel was the Vice-President of 8 No. ward Jubo Dal of Dalalbazar Union while Mohammad AbulQashem was the Vice-President of Tewariganj union BNP.<sup>38</sup>

### **Shibir-man killed in Dinajpur**

Jamaat-E-Islami called a daylong hartal demanding the release of the detained leaders of that party. Jamaataranged protests and other demonstrations throughout the country. In a clash with police, a Shibir man was killed in Khanshama, Dinajpur. In many places clashes with police took place, many were arrested.<sup>39</sup>

### **Shibir-man killed in Police Custody**

A leader of Islami Chhatra shibir has died after being severely injured at the hands of the Police. The leader, Badiuzzaman was injured after he was attacked by the police at a procession at Jaypurhat. The leader was shot and severely beaten and later succumbed to his wounds.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> The daily ProthomAlo, 30/01/2012, <http://www.prothom-alo.com/detail/date/2012-01-30/news/220633>

<sup>39</sup> Amar Desh: 4.12.2012

<sup>40</sup>NayaDiganta 11-11-12

### **Jamaat Leader killed by Police-fire**

A local leader of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami was shot dead in Chouddagramupazila on allegedly by activists of Awami League. The local unit of Jamaat called a half-day hartal in the district for Monday, protesting at the killing. Local activists of Jamaat went out on demonstrations and clashed with the police at Chouddagram bazaar after the killing. Police fired at least 50 rounds of bullet to disperse the protesters and arrested 24 Jamaat men from the spot.<sup>41</sup>

### **Enforced Disappearances**

In recent years, the instances of enforced disappearance have been on the rise in Bangladesh. People are abducted and disappearing from various places in broad day light by the men claiming to be members of law enforcement agencies. Some are recovered as dead. In many cases families of the disappeared allege that law enforcing agencies picked up the victim. However, the law enforcing agencies flatly refuse the allegation that the victim had been picked up by agents or mysterious people posing as agents of police or RAB. Some incidents are as follows-

#### ***Aminul Islam***

On April 4, 2012 Aminul Islam (41), a leader of the Bangladesh Garments and Industrial Workers Federation and a staff of the Bangladesh Centre for Workers Solidarity (BCWS), was allegedly picked up by members of the law enforcement agencies from Ashulia, Dhaka, taken to an unknown destination and allegedly tortured to death. The deceased's body was recovered by police on April 5, 2012 from Ghatailunder Tangail district with signs of severe injury. Aminul Islam's wife HosneAra Begum Fahima informed Odhikar that her husband was arbitrarily detained several times in the past and tortured in 2006 and in 2010 by law enforcement gencies.

#### ***Ilias Ali***

On April 18, 2012, former Member of Parliament and Organising Secretary of the Central Committee of BNP9, M Ilias Ali and his driver Ansar Ali were allegedly picked up by members of law enforcing agencies from Banani in Dhaka city. TahsinaRushdir, wife of Ilias Ali, claimed

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<sup>41</sup> New Age 14.10.12

that her husband had been picked up by the ‘agency of the government’.<sup>42</sup> Mr. Ilias Ali is missing ever since. Human rights groups have expressed grave concern regarding the incidents of ‘enforced disappearance’ and demands that the Government should rescue or recover the victims of enforced disappearances and take stern action against the responsible persons.

### ***Mohammad Firoz Khan***

On August 24, 2012 at around 7.00 pm Mohammad Firoz Khan (25), Joint Convener of Barisal city unit Chhatra Dal139, was picked up by 5/6 plain clothed men claiming to be members of the Detective Branch (DB) of Police in a black microbus (Chittagong-Metro Cha-15-9906) with a CID sticker, from a tea stall beside MunsurabadWapda Colony Jame Mosque under Haliashahar, in Chittagong Metropolitan city. His wife alleged that he was disappeared by the law enforcing agency due to his involvement in the BNP, the major Opposition party.<sup>43</sup>

### ***Defence Witness of ICT Case***

Police have abducted a witness who was to testify on behalf of Maulana Delwar Hossain Saidee, Nayeb-E- Ameer of Bangladesh Jamaat E Islami from the gates of the International Crimes Tribunal, Dhaka. The witness, Sukhoranjan Bali, was initially listed to testify on behalf of the govt. but later he changed his mind and decided to stand in favor of Maulana Saidee. The defendant’s lawyers have expressed outrage at the kidnapping.<sup>44</sup>

## **2013**

### **28 February Countrywide Violence**

After the verdict of case against Maolana Sayedee was pronounced on 28 February, people all over the country came out with spontaneous rallies demanding the release of Sayedee. Police ruthlessly suppressed the protests by shooting and torturing people. At least 55 people have died in just one day marking the most violent day in the political history of Bangladesh. Whole Bangladesh turned into a place of panic by the mass killing by the law enforcing agencies. From

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<sup>42</sup> The daily ProthomAlo, 19/04/2012

<sup>43</sup> ibid, Para 171

<sup>44</sup>NayaDiganta 06-11-12

28 February to 6 March, 97 were killed by indiscriminate shooting Police, BGB and RAB. Among them 46 belongs to Jamaat and Shibir, 6 from BNP, 1 from LDP, and 33 were general people not belonging to any party. In Satkhira 19 people were killed, in Bogra 14, in Rangpur 9, in Gaibandha 8, in Thakurgaon 7, in Jaipurhat 6, in Noakhali 4, in Rajshahi 3, in Sirajganj 2, in Cox's Bazar 3, in Chapainawabganj 4, in Chittagong 4 and in 1 each were killed in Moulvibazar, Natore, Mirpur of Dhaka, Dinajpur, Keraniganj, Nilfamari, Senbag, Ullapara and Horinakunda.<sup>45</sup>

### ***2 March: 3 Killed in Chittagong***

On 2 March in Satkania of Chittagong, 3 opposition activists were killed by police and BGB. On 10 am, police and BGB launched a joint attack near Chittagong-Coxbazar Highway. The deceased are LDP activist Osman Gani and Jamaat activists Abu Taher and Shahidul Islam.

### ***3 March: 18 Killed in Bogra***

Police have killed 12 protesters on 3 March by indiscriminate shooting in Bogra. 200 more were injured in the ruthless oppression by the law enforcing agencies. Army was deployed to control the situation. When Sayedee supporters reached neas Yakubia intersection with a rally, police started brush firing at the rally. One Jamaat worker Alamgir Hossain and another unknown school boy were killed in this shooting. When the news of this killing spread throughout the district, thousands of people came out with processions on which police opened fire again killing two more Jamaat activists name Badal and Titu. More than 300 people were injured this time.

Agitated mob marched towards the police station only to face yet another brush fire by police. This shooting killed Arzina Begaum, Monzila Begam, Asia Begam and Abdur Rahman. In Shibganj, another four people named Ziual Islam, Babu Mia and Abdus Shahid were killed by

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<sup>45</sup> <http://www.amardeshonline.com/pages/printnews/2013/03/09/191190>

police. An injured Jamaat activist named Selim Mia died later on 5 March.



Awami League activists carry firearms in an attack on BNP activists on Laksam Road in Comilla during the daylong general strike enforced by the main opposition. -- New Age photo

### ***3 March: 6 Killed in Jaypurhat***

In Pachbibi of Jaipurhat, in a clash between hartal supporters and police, 5 activists of Jamaat and Shibir were shot dead by police. In Himchi of Sadar area, another person was killed on the same day. At least 55 were wound by bullets and injurd. The deceased are Abdul Hakim, Nasir Uddin, Mohudul Islam, Hesab Uddin, Forman Ali and Mojnu. All of them belong to Jamaat and Shibir.

### **5 May: Motijheel Massacre**

Hefajat-e-Islam, a non-political religious outfit set out to ensure punishment of the anti-religious bloggers for their blasphemous campaigns, staged its scheduled “Dhaka Siege & Sit-in” program on last 5th May 2013 urging the government to meet its 13-point demand announced earlier. Since the break of dawn on that day, a sum total of about 3 to 4 million Hefajat men, as a whole, blocked the entrances to Dhaka city and they took, as per the governmental permission, to the streets round the “Shapla Square” at Motijheel in Dhaka at around 3:00 pm. But as soon as Hefajat-e-Islam began its gathering and sit-in therein, armed cops and RAB personnel started to shoot at the participants indiscriminately. Soon, the hub of Dhaka city turned into a battlefield and Hefajat men were turning into ‘corpses’ one after another.

On 6th May at 3:00 am at midnight, the Motijheel area was blacked out by switching streetlights off, two TV channels on stream (namely, Diganta TV and Islamic TV) were cut off and made go off the air as they dared to air true news about governmental injustice, and all the journos were forcibly made leave the locale by the government official dudes and pro-party thugs. Then, all on a sudden, an integrated band of cops, BGB and RAB personnel began to open fire wantonly at the sit-in participants to take over the reins of the area whereby over 5 hundred people died, thousands of people got injured and shot and about 2 thousand more went traceless.

In Paltan area of the capital, police started indiscriminate shooting at the peaceful gathering of thousands of Hefazat activists. At least thirteen Hefazat activists were killed and 200 others injured in assaults on Hefajat men by Awami League activists and police in the city's Bangabandhu Avenue and other areas on Sunday. At least eight hefazat activists have died at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital. At least five other dead bodies were seen near at the Shapla Square.

Panic gripped the city dwellers as violence escalated amid the Hefajat grand rally being staged at the city's Shapla Chattar following its April 6 massive showdown at the same venue. After the



police rampage, vehicles almost disappeared from the city's bustling streets. Many were seen walking back home on foot.

One of the deceased was identified as Siddiquir Rahman Siddique, 28, helper of a bus of 'Hanif Paribahan'. The others, including a Hefajat man, could not be identified yet. Helper Siddique,

injured in the firing, was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where doctors

*Thousands of rounds of bullets were fired from police vehicle at unarmed people.*

declared him dead. The two others also succumbed to their injuries at the DMCH. The injured were admitted to different hospitals and private clinics.

On Sunday evening, Hefajat-e-Islam Bangladesh ameer Allama Shah Ahmed Shafi said their 'peaceful' Shapla Chattar sit-in will continue until their 13-point demand is met.<sup>46</sup> After the declaration of overnight stay came from the Hefazat stage at 8 pm, electricity cut throughout the area by authorities. Police ordered evacuation of all Media personnel from the spot. Heavy armored RAB and Police force and about 30 Platoons of BGB were deployed near the Program spot. Police fired Tear cells inside the Mosque while the I'sha prayer was on. Some miscreants set fire to the Islamic Bookstores and Jewelry Market of Baitul Mukaram Complex. Sporadic clashes continued between Police and Hefazat activists. Police continued indiscriminate fire and charging Sound Grenades.



*Police taking away the dead body of an activist killed in the massacre.*



*A Hefazat activist critically injured by police bullet.*

From 9 pm, the security forces started surrounding the gathering of unarmed assembly of hundreds of thousands people in Motijhil. No one could enter or exit from the assembly

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<sup>46</sup> <http://www.english.rtnn.net/newsdetail/detail/12/62/55034#.UYdeqFcipH0>

anymore. Ten platoons of Border Guard members were deployed in the area.<sup>47</sup> Hefazat activists' attempt to resistance by placing blocks road divider and tree branches proved futile in the face of heavily armed security forces.

After 2 pm in the morning, Police started a huge crackdown with continuous brush fire upon the sleeping protesters. Thousands of sound grenades were charged upon them as well. Some 600 members of RAB and BGB were deployed at Paltan at around 11:30pm. On and on the number of armed force members increased to initiate the joint operation on the sleeping activists of Hefazat. It was 2:30 in the morning. Dhaka was rattled by the sound of indiscriminate gunshot and grenade explosions. One-way war started with whistles as Joint Law enforcers BGB, RAB and Police attacked and cornered the unarmed Hefazot activists. Mothijeel, Dainik Bangla, Fakirapool and Ittefaq intersection turned into a killing ground within minutes.<sup>48</sup>

BGB and Rab personnel removed Hefajat-e-Islam activists from the city's Shapla Chattar area. Police and Rab sources said they started the drive at about 2.20 am and drove out the Hefajat men from Shapla Chattar area by 3 am, firing rubber bullets and sound grenades. They said some 10,000 law-enforcers took part in the drive that first started from Notredame Collage point then Ittefaq Intersection. The entire area was rocked by gunshots and sound grenades.

The defenseless innocent Islamist's were forced to move away at the face of continuous gunshot and canisters. Many wounded laid at the road.<sup>49</sup> Some took



-বাংলার চোখ

*Dead bodies of demonstrators left in the scene after the midnight crack down.*

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<sup>47</sup> <http://www.timenewsbd.com/politics/2013/05/06/1486>

<sup>48</sup> <http://www.english.rtnn.net/newsdetail/detail/12/62/55034#.UYdeqFcipH0>

<sup>49</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?v=127457774117069>

shelters at nearby alleys. Law enforcers then attacked the alleys. They were beaten till dispersed.<sup>50</sup>



*Police action on the unarmed people. A dead body lying on the street.*

Amid the massive drive, unarmed Hefajat men retreated fast and ran into various lanes and alleys in the area although they had first tried to resist the law-enforcers showering them with brick chips. It was not still certain how many Hefajat men were injured in the predawn drive.

Television footages showed armoured vans driving about and non-stop teargas shells being lobbed and rubber bullets fired in Motijheel which during weekdays is one of the busiest places in Dhaka.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> <http://www.amardeshonline.com/pages/details/2013/05/06/198937#.UYg08aJwqdw>

<sup>51</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-JrVILUL6Pg&feature=youtu.be>

Many dead bodies and injured were seen all over the street and adjacent buildings after the joint operation of armed forces. Motijheel was littered with stained blood, papers, sandals and some bags after the operation drove the sleeping band of Hifazat supporters away. Fire was burning in a few places. Five vehicles were also burning at the scene.



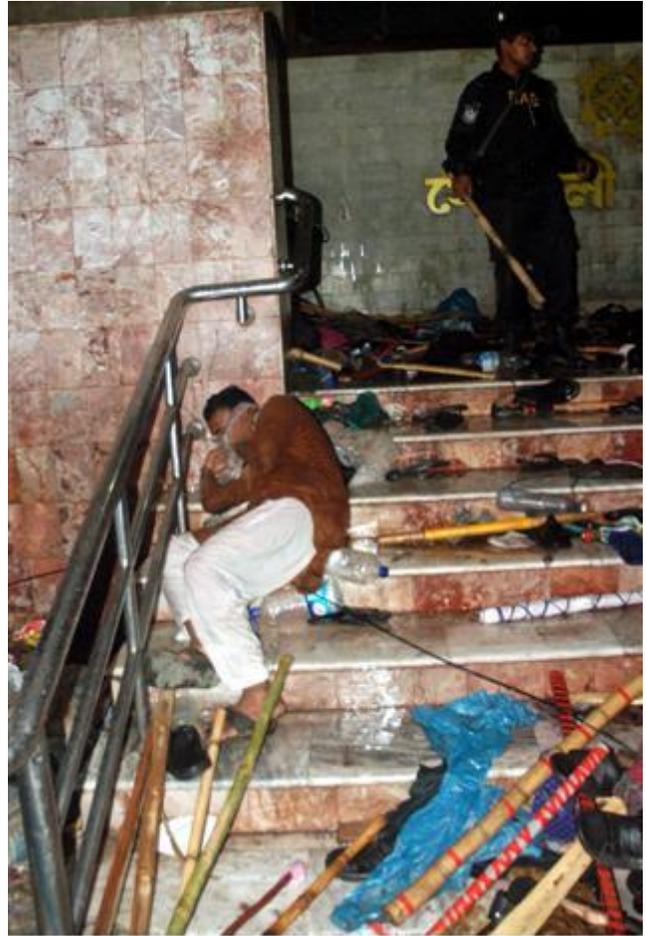
*Bullet wound bodies of demonstrators left all over the scene after the bloody crackdown.*



*Bodies of two Hefazat activists killed by armed forces in the crackdown.*



*The scene at Motijhil after the shooting spree of govt. forces is over.*



*Dead bodies of Hefazat activists left after the joint operation.*

Law enforcers took less than 15 minutes to take control of Shapla Chattar after conducting a simultaneous drive from the Notre Dame College and Dainik Bangla intersection at around 3am. No leader of Hefazat was seen on the rally stage after then. Police began positioning themselves on the street stretching from Paltan to Dainik Bangla intersection since 8:30pm on Sunday.<sup>52</sup>

Most of the corpses were reportedly hidden and transported to some remoter places by trucks by the law enforcement agencies to escape public wrath and international condemnation. Initially

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<sup>52</sup> <http://bdnews24.com/bangladesh/2013/05/05/hifazat-activists-flee-motijheel>

the number of dead was claimed to be as many as 431 by various sources.<sup>53</sup> Several internet reports have mentioned that the number of deaths could be as high as 2,500 or more.<sup>54</sup>

### **Narayanganj Clash**

At least 15 people were killed and 100 others injured in a clash between the activists of Hefajat-e-Islam Bangladesh and police at Shimrail intersection on the Dhaka-Chittagong Highway in the city early on 6<sup>th</sup> May.<sup>55</sup> All the deceased could not be identified immediately.



The attack was conducted by a joint force of police, Rapid Action Battalion and Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) when Hefazat activists tried to block the Dhaka-Chittagong

Highway at Shimrail intersection around 5:30am, after being driven away by law enforcers from Shapla Chattar in Motijheel area of Dhaka city. A chase and counter-chase followed.

Police lobbed several rounds of teargas shells and fired shots to quell the violence, leaving 15 of the Hefazat activists dead and 100 others injured. Police and Rab members also entered Madaninagar Madrasa in Kanchpur area and fired gunshots on its premises. The bodies of the deceased were taken to Narayanganj General Hospital.<sup>56</sup>

### **Killings after Molla Execution**

Amid the heightened political crisis of the country over the national elections, the ruling party executed Abdul Quader Molla, a top leader of an opposition party convicted by the controversial and deeply flawed International Crimes Tribunal. The trials have been widely criticised by the international community as having failed to incorporate minimum standards of procedural fairness. On 12<sup>th</sup> December 2013, the Government hurriedly executed the death penalty against

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<sup>53</sup> <http://www.bdbreaking24.com/view.php?id=1689>

<sup>54</sup> <http://www.humanrights.asia/news/ahrc-news/AHRC-STM-088-2013>

<sup>55</sup> <http://www.english.rtnn.net/newsdetail/detail/12/62/55046#.UYfy0VcipH0>

<sup>56</sup> <http://www.english.rtnn.net/newsdetail/detail/12/62/55041#.UYddl1cipH0>

Mr. Abdul Quader Molla completely ignoring the requests of the international community to halt the execution.

Following the execution of Mr Abdul Quader Mollah, opposition party activists protested against the unlawful execution throughout the country.<sup>57</sup> On the orders of the ruling party, the law enforcement agencies fired bullets on unarmed civilians.

***December 10, 2013: Police Kills Shibir Activist in Feni***

An activist of Islami Chhatra Shibir was killed during a clash with police at Khajuria area in Feni. The deceased was identified as Abdullah Al Salman, 15, a madrasah student who hailed from Silonia village under Daganbhuiyan



Upazila of Feni. Following the announcement of the execution of Abdul Quader Molla, the Shibir activists gathered on the streets, whereupon the Police fired several rounds of teargas canisters and rubber bullets to disperse them triggering a clash which left Salman dead on the spot at about 11:00 pm.<sup>58</sup>

***December 13, 2013: Seven Killed Country-wide by Law Enforcing Agencies***

At least seven people were killed and scores injured as Police and ruling party activists attacked activists of Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Chhatra Shibir when they brought out processions at different places across the country protesting the execution of Abdul Quader Molla. A Shibir activist was killed by the Police in Khulna. A street vendor and a Shibir activist died during clashes with the Police in Noakhali. A BNP activist in Pirojpur and a Jamaat activist in Jessore were killed in clashes that erupted following the execution of Abdul Quader Molla at Dhaka Central Jail.

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<sup>57</sup> The UN Secretary General also expresses his concern and mourns to this execution.

<sup>58</sup> <http://www.newagebd.com/detail.php?date=2013-12-11&nid=76378#.Uq4GACc09Zo>

In Khulna, an activist of Shibir was killed when the Police opened fire to disperse the peaceful procession organized by Shibir. The deceased, Nayem, 18, died after being hit by a bullet in the chest.



Shukkur Ali, 25, a local activist of Jamaat, was killed during clashes with Awami League activists at Ghosherhat Bazar in Bhandaria before dawn. Jamaat men brought out processions in protest of the execution of Abdul Quader Molla. While the procession was passing Ghosherhat Bazar, a local Awami leader named Tobarak Ali Hawladar fired from the roof of his home which left Shukkur dead.

In Noakhali, a clash between activists of Shibir and Chhatra League left a Shibir activist killed and 10 others injured at Sonapur village under Sonaimuri upazila in the evening. The deceased was identified as Zubair, 22, who was an activist of Shibir. A street vendor and a Jamaat activist Khorshed Alam, 30, were killed by Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) and ruling party men at Afaniabazar in Begumganj upazila.

In Jessore, a Jamaat activist, Ashraful, 20, of village Mohiran, was knocked down and killed by a truck while Jamaat men was protesting execution of Abdul Quader Mollah.<sup>59</sup>

#### ***December 14, 2013: Jamaat Leader Murdered in Lakshmipur***



Dr. Fayeze, vice-president of Lakshmipur district Jamaat-e-Islami was killed by members of law enforcement agency on Saturday. Plainclothes law enforcers broke into the house of Fayeze, took him to the roof, shot him, threw the body from the roof of the three-storey house and then dumped his body on the hospital premises. A group of law enforcers broke into the house and shot him to death. The body bearing injury marks in the legs and head was left

<sup>59</sup>

<http://www.amardeshonline.com/pages/details/2013/12/14/228409#.Uq35-Cc09Zo>,  
<http://newagebd.com/detail.php?date=2013-12-14&nid=76738>

lying on the Lakshmipur hospital premises at about 1:40 AM. Kazi Helal Uddin, Assistant Circle Superintendent of Police in Lakshmipur, told a national daily that he had no idea that who killed Fayeze. Asking whether the police operated any drive at Fayeze's home, he said that the Police did not operate any drive to arrest him.

Marzana, Dr. Fayeze's wife claimed that the RAB battalion broke into their house at around midnight and ransacked all the rooms. Later, they took her husband on the roof and shot him and left him dead on the spot, she said. Mohammad Alam, 25, a neighbour, claimed that the law enforcers broke



into the house through the main gate and shot Mr. Fayeze. They dropped the body from the roof. They also searched for his younger son, Billal, threatening to kill him if he is found, he claimed.<sup>60</sup>

### ***6 killed in Nilphamari***

At least three people have been killed and over 150 others were injured when Awami League activists attacked supporters of BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami in Nilphamari. The clash erupted



around 4 PM on Friday, a day after Jamaat Assistant Secretary General Abdul Quader Molla was hanged. It took place at Tupamari Union's Ramganj bazar area at the district's Sadar Upazila when the ruling party activists attacked them. When the Police came to the scene, they took a stance in favor of ruling party activists and shot at unarmed leaders and activists of opposition party. It resulted in the death of 6 persons on the spot.

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<sup>60</sup> <http://www.newagebd.com/detail.php?date=2013-12-15&nid=76833>,  
<http://www.amardeshonline.com/pages/details/2013/12/15/228555#.Uq35Zyc09Zo>

At least 50 motorcycles, six SUVs and three minibuses were set on fire by the ruling party supporters. The media activists were beaten by ruling party leaders while trying to take photo of their unlawful attack.

### ***8 killed in Companygonj, Noakhali***

Policemen with Awami League activists in action during fierce clashes with Jamaat-Shibir activists at Companygonj in Noakhali Saturday and left 8 people killed and many more injured.

At least 8 Shibir-men were shot dead by the members of law enforcement agency in Companygonj, an Upazila of Noakhali District. Jamaat-Shibir activists brought out processions in the Upazila protesting the execution of Jamaat leader Abdul Quader Mollah. Police created obstacles on the procession.

### ***December 15, 2013: 5 killed in Patgram, Lalmonirhat***

Police and Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) killed five persons including 3 Shibir-men in Patgram upzila of Lalmonirhat district. Local Jamaat-Shibir activists brought out processions in protest of execution of Abdul Quader Molla in support of their countrywide strike. But Police prevented the procession from entering into the main town resulting in clashes between members of law enforcement agencies and Jamaat-Shibir activists. Police and BGB fired indiscriminately on the Opposition party activities leaving 3 Shibir activists dead namely Upzila Shibir President Monirul Islam, Abdur Rahim and Saju Miah (21). During the incident, an unknown person died of a heart attack and a Chhatra League (student wing of ruling party) activist was killed by miscreants.

### ***2 Jamaat-Shibir men killed in Joypurhat***

Members of law enforcement agency shot dead 3 persons at Puranapool Haluttin Bazar of Joypurhat including 2 from Jamaat and Shibir. At the same time another 20 persons were injured, including women and children. According to eye witnesses, the local Jamaat men brought out processions in support of their program. The Police tried to remove the activists of Jamaat-Shibir from the spot resulting in clashes, but failed. Soon thereafter, 22 convoy of RAB and BGB came to the spot and attacked the protestors after surrounding the whole territory. Thousands of villagers came on the street to fight law enforcement agencies who fired upon

unarmed civilians leaving three including two Jamaat- Shibir activists dead on the spot. They were identified as Shibir activists, Shamim (22), Firoz (28) and a villager Insan Ali (28).

### ***One Jamaat man killed in Satkhira***

Jamaat supporter Habibur Rahman Habi (35) was shot dead by members of law enforcement agency. He was son of Akbar Ali, a union Jamaat leader. He had been abducted three days earlier by members of the law enforcement agencies. On December 15, he was found dead beside Kadamtala Bazar with bullet wounds in his chest and head.

## **Arrest and Custodial Torture**

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### **2009**

It is alleged that a leader of *BNP*'s youth wing named Ziaul Haq of Sreenagar under Munshiganj district was blindfolded, tied up and tortured by police. He was arrested by police over a land dispute on 28 April, 2009. On June 11, 2009, standing in Court, Former MP Nasir Uddin Ahmed Pintu, who was arrested in connection with the BDR mutiny case, stated that the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) had severely tortured him after taking him into remand and told him that if he did not provide a confessional statement during remand, he would end up being killed in 'crossfire'.

### ***Case Study:***

At around 11.00pm on June 18, 2009, Manjur Morshed Shipu (41), son of late Abul Hossain and the owner of house 24/8, Bijli Maholla, Block 'F' of Mohammadpur Joint Quarters, under the Mohammadpur Police Station, was abducted by 7-8 people from the gate of his rented house located on road number 1 in the Mohammadia Housing Limited area. At around 4.30am on June 19, 2009, his dead body was found in the playing field of Kisholoy Girls School and College. Shipu's family and witnesses stated that his body bore a lot of marks of beating. His family believes that he was not abducted by miscreants. They alleged that members of the law enforcement agency picked him up and tortured him and then shot him, leaving his body in the field.

On October 22, 2009, a Staff Reporter of the New Age, F M Masum was arrested by the RAB from his rented house at Jatrabari and tortured. Officers of RAB-10 in plain clothes went to the house rented by Masum. Upon their arrival they called on Masum to open the main collapsible gate. Flight Lt. Anisur Rahman led the other RAB officers to beat Masum because he delayed in opening the gate. When Masum told them that he was a journalist, the RAB officers tied up his hands and legs and beat him even more. Later on, the RAB officers took injured Masum to RAB-10 office where they locked him up in a small room and tortured him further.

## 2010

### **Top Jamaat Leaders Arrested**

On 29 June 2010 Police arrested three top Jamaat leaders; the President of Jamaat Mawlana Motiur Rahman Nizami, Vice President Mawlana Delwar Hossain Saydee and Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mujahid in connection with a case of hurting religious sentiment (CR 1012/12) and kept them in the Detective Branch (DB) office where the Jamaat leaders had to spend all night on the floor with nothing except two pieces of blanket each. They were denied access to their lawyers and family members despite repeated request to the authority.

On 13<sup>th</sup> July, Jamaat assistant secretary generals, Mr. Kamaruzzaman and Mr. Abdul Kader Molla (Molla) went to the High Court in order to obtain anticipatory bail in connection with some cases. The Attorney General office sought time and accordingly, the Court adjourned the hearing of anticipatory bail for a day and ordered the government not to arrest or harass them until the hearing. Nonetheless, the police arrested them both while exiting the Supreme Court premises. The lawyers of Kamaruzzaman and Molla produced the lawyers' certificates of court order to the police who replied that there were plenty of other cases awaiting the Jamaat leaders. Later the police showed them arrest in connection with another case. Pallabi PS case no 60(1)08.



Afterwards these top 5 leaders of Jamaat had been detained for 9 months without any charge framed against them and many of their human and legal rights had been violated. Political leaders were tortured in the custody. Jaamat Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mujahid and Vice-President Maolana Delwar Hossian Sayedee alleged that they were tortured continuously for nine days during remand period and could not take rest due to the torture of police in custody.<sup>61</sup>

### **Arrest during prayer**

Police had detained 20 Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami men with Professor Mujibur Rahman (56), former Member of Parliament, Assistant Secretary General of Bangladesh Jamaat E Islmai Central committee and President of *Sramik Kolyan Federation*, from 1/J, 2/10, section-1, Kalwalapara of Mirpur-1 of the capital city Dhaka on 28 October, 2010. A 3 days police remand had been granted for these 19 arrested Jamaat-men by the Court on 29 October 2010. These Jamaat men were holding a special prayer at their Mirpur local office for Habibur Rahman, a party activist killed on October 28, 2006, by Awami League-led 14-party alliance. While special prayer was going on, Police raided the office and held them without prior allegation and warrant of arrest.<sup>62</sup>

### **BNP top leader arrested**

BNP top leader and Member of parliament SQ Chowdhury was arrested in charge of setting fire during hartal.<sup>63</sup> But the home minister said that “war criminal is caught”<sup>64</sup>. Later AL advisory body member Suronjit Sen Gupta MP said the SQ would be tried for inhuman activities in 1971<sup>65</sup> Later he was taken into remand for five days and his family<sup>66</sup> repeatedly said that he was brutally tortured<sup>67</sup>. SQ Chowdhury’s son was going to file case against UK for training RAB<sup>68</sup> Later he was shown arrest in War Crimes tribunal<sup>69</sup> and sedition case was filed against him<sup>70</sup>. His bank

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<sup>61</sup> The Daily Nayadiganta, 11/07/2010

<sup>62</sup> The Daily Amar Desh; 29 October 2010

<sup>63</sup> Daily Star 17/12/10

<sup>64</sup> Prothom Alo 16/12/10

<sup>65</sup> Prothom Alo 16/12/10

<sup>66</sup> <http://mozlum.blogspot.com/2010/12/bnp-m-p-s-k-chowdhurys-foot-fingers-are.html>

<sup>67</sup> <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/mp-tortured-security-forces-bangladesh-2010-12-22>

<sup>68</sup> Guardian 31/12/10

<sup>69</sup> Daily Star 20/12/10

<sup>70</sup> Daily Star 24/12/10

account was scrutinized<sup>71</sup>. Amnesty international and US senator John Boozman said that these arrests are accused of being politically motivated.<sup>72</sup>

## 2012

### Student Leader Tortured Brutally in Police Custody



On April 22, 2012 Khulna Government City College unit Chhatra Dal leader, SM Mahmudul Huq Tito was tortured by being hung from his arms which were strung up from the ceiling of the Khulna Police Station, by the Officer-in-Charge, SM Kamruzzaman, during the first

day of Hartal. Photographs of the torture of MahmudulHuq Tito were published in many national dailies, after it was recorded on the video camera of a TV journalist.<sup>73</sup>

### Inhuman Torture on Mohila Dal Leader

One leader of BNP's associate body Mahila Dal Rehana Aktar Doli, who was arrested during a countrywide Hartal, was inhumanely tortured in police custody. Marks of wound were visible in her body when she was produced before the court the next day. Black marks of wound in her waist and legs were swollen. Her condition was critical. The court rejected a remand petition and sent her to prison. Rehana Aktar is Vice President of 74 no. Ward Mohila Dal and a candidate of councilor for the ward. Her relatives informed that she was beaten by police on the night she was arrested in the police station. Later she was shown arrested in a car burning case filed in the SHahbag station. She was brought to court carried by two policewomen. At one point she

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<sup>71</sup> Prothom Alo 24/12/10

<sup>72</sup> <http://goo.gl/MsMIU>

<sup>73</sup> Pictures of the incident can be found in different national daily papers, dated 23/04/2012.

fallednear the stairs of the first floor. Doli could not stand during the remand hearing and she vomited there once.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> <http://www.amardeshonline.com/pages/details/2012/05/01/143087>

# Campus Violence

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## 2009

Pro-government political activists caused unrest in the educational institutions. In Ziaur Rahman Hall of the University of Dhaka, Rajshahi University of Engineering and Technology, Shahjalal University of Science and Technology, University of Rajshahi, Jahangirnagar University, and Jagannath University, there were intra-group clashes in BCL (the student wing of ruling party), which left a number of injuries.

A number of casualties were also recorded in Dinajpur Haji Danesh Science and Technology University; Netrokona Govt. College; Jagannath University's Residential Halls; Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology; Khulna Medical College; Narail Govt. Victoria College; Feni Govt. College and Dhaka Polytechnic Institute due to clashes between the BCL and the JCD<sup>75</sup> and Islami Chatra *Shibir*.<sup>76</sup>

## 2011

### **BCL Violence in Islamic University**

Violent attack on students of Islamic University by BCL has caused the university to remain close from 26<sup>th</sup> September to 26<sup>th</sup> November with all examinations postponed. At least 40 people were injured, three with bullets, as the Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), the ruling Awami League's associate body of students, attacked Islami Chhatra Shibir, Jamaat-e-Islami's associate body of students, at the Islamic University in Kushtia on 26 October 2011. Thousands of students had to evacuate the dorms amid strike in transport sector.<sup>77</sup>

The clash centred on the appointment of a dining manager at the Lalan Shah Hall. Hall authorities had decided to change the dining manager on October 25 and issued a notice for the

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<sup>75</sup> Student wing of Bangladesh Nationalist Party

<sup>76</sup> Student wing of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami

<sup>77</sup> <http://newagebd.com/newspaper1/national/38190.html>

appointment of a manager over which BCL and Shibir had some disagreement. The authorities held a meeting with the two groups till 8:00pm to resolve the matter. When the meeting was going on, Chhatra League men gathered at the hall gate and started an attack on Shibir activists.

Chhatra League activists came out of Saddam Hossain Hall, Ziaur Rahman Hall and Bangabandhu Sheikh Muzibur Rahman Hall to take part in the attack. At least 10 crude bombs were exploded and 30 rounds were traded by BCL during the clash. The critically injured eight were admitted to Kushtia General Hospital after they had been primary treatment in the university medical centre.

The student's adviser, Meher Ali, the acting hall provost Shamsul Alam Siddique, and the acting proctor, Mohabbat Hossain, then met the university unit Chhatra League president, Jahangir Hossain, and the hall unit Shibir president, Assaduzzaman, in the office of the Lalan Shah hall provost. About an hour and a half afterwards, the superintendent of police, Mafij Uddin Ahmed, students' adviser Meher Ali, acting proctor Mohabbat Hossain visited the place. Begum Fazilatunnesa Mujib Hall provost Akhtarujjaman has allegedly encouraged violence instead of mitigating the conflict. The police fired blank shots and teargas shells to control the situation. The police on the evening raided the hall and seized a lethal weapon but no one was arrested.

The university unit Shibir president, Mainul Islam said that Chhatra League activists had attacked them without any provocation. Earlier on 14 August, BCL has carried out another attack on Shibir activists during the Ramadan vacation. According to Professor Dr. Tozammel Hossain, the president of Teachers Society of the university, lack of measures taken against previous violence has caused the repetition of the same incidents, which has undermined the general academic environment and safety in the campus. The month long closure is worsening the session jam situations of the faculties.

### **Torture on Shibir activists in Educational Institutions**

*Bangladesh Chhatra League* (BCL), the student front of the ruling party Awami League was extremely violent over its oppositions since day one of its regime. Their animalistic attitude remains still the same. The month of November witnessed two major clashes between BCL and Shibir. With the Police back ups, BCL unleashed their fury and anger over Shibir activists.

### ***Case – 1: Dhaka University of Engineering Technology (DUET)***

The BCL faction of *Dhaka University of Engineering Technology* (DUET) made an unnecessary attack over the Shibir activist students there on 27<sup>th</sup> October.<sup>78</sup> Sources said, some posters criticizing the activities of the present govt. was hung in the campus in the name of “*Conscious Students Society*”. BCL activists suspected Shibir for the posters and attacked on them with iron rods and batons at about 1:30 am at night. The tortured known faces of Shibir there and as a result; about 15 activists including the Secretary of DUET Shibir was severely injured. However, they started searching the rooms of suspected Shibir workers and collected and gathered the books, clothing and beddings of those Shibir activists and burnt them in fire. However, no case or any academic action was taken against those BCL cadres but Shibir supporter students are now out of campus.

### ***Case – 2: Islamic University of Kushtia***

Severe clash between BCL and Shibir took place in the *Islamic University of Kushtia* on 26<sup>th</sup> October.<sup>79</sup>

The clash started when *Rezwan*, an activist of Shibir was stabbed by BCL cadres at Lalan Shah Hall of the campus. Later on, BCL cadres attacked Shibir



ইসলামী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে ছাত্রলীগের হামলায় শিবিরের আহত কয়েক নেতাকর্মী

with fire arms and cocktail bombs. Police initially played an inactive role, but afterwards supported them by baton charging the Shibir activists along with firing tear cells towards them. This clash took place for more than two hours where about 30 Shibir activists were injured.

<sup>78</sup> The Daily Prothom Alo - 28<sup>th</sup> October

<sup>79</sup> The Daily Amar Desh - 27<sup>th</sup> October

So, after such little examples, it can easily be inferred that how dismal the actual scenario of the socio-political situation is now in Bangladesh. Awami League led Grand Alliance govt. is so much vindictive over Jamaat and Shibir from the very beginning of their electoral term. It creates suspicion and fear among the civil society and the general people as well about the future of democracy in Bangladesh.

### **Torture on Dhaka University Students**

On 6 February 2011 in Salimullah Muslim Hall of Dhaka University, Bangladesh Chhatra League activists tortured 4 students of the same university inhumanly by giving them electric shock, beating with hockey stick and metal rod throughout the night. In the midnight of 6<sup>th</sup> February at about 2 am, on the order of BCL SM Hall General Secretary Anu Anwar, his fellow activists Nahid, Hafiz, Didar, Polash, Shakil and one hired criminal Rana picked 4 students from different rooms and gathered them for torture in room no. 141, known as the remand cell.<sup>80</sup> The victims are Mobarak Hossain of Bangla Department (room no. 25), Hasanul Bari of Journalism Department (room no. 85), Tarekul Islam of Law Department (room no. 168) and Shahidul Islam of Islamic Studies Department (room no. 165).<sup>81</sup> BCL alleged that these students were members of Bangladesh Islami Chhatra Shibir (BICS), another major student organisation in Bangladesh.

The BCL members then locked that room from inside and started beating the students while music was being played in high volume in order to hide the sound of torture and groaning of the victims. After torturing mercilessly with hockey stick and iron rods, BCL activists applied electric shock to the students' body until they were fainted.<sup>82</sup> The torture continued till 5 am in the morning. The provost did not respond while being requested to rescue the students from BCL members. Later proctor of DU A K M Saiful Islam freed the tortured students from that room. But the Hall authority and the Proctor did not take any step against those involved with this cruelty.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> <http://www.amadershomoy1.com/content/2011/02/07/news0198.htm>

<sup>81</sup> <http://www.amardeshonline.com/pages/details/2011/02/07/67078>

<sup>82</sup> <http://www.amadershomoy1.com/content/2011/02/07/news0198.htm>

<sup>83</sup> <http://www.amardeshonline.com/pages/details/2011/02/07/67078>

This incident was the part of a continued series of violent attacks by Chhatra League activists on other students, including non-partisan students as well as members of any rival organisation. For example, on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2011 BCL activists attacked Ahsanuzzaman, a student of Applied Mathematics in Rajshahi University with sharp weapons for his participation in a procession. Ahsanuzzaman was a leader of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dol, the student wing of the main opposition party BNP. BCL members led by Noyon stabbed him in several places and cut his veins of hand.<sup>84</sup> Ahsanuzzaman was admitted to Shuhrawardi Medical College in a critical condition and underwent several operations.

In Islamic University, Chhatra League activists severely injured 5 Chhatra Dol leaders including Omar Faruq, President of Islamic University Chhatra Dol.<sup>85</sup> Similarly in Rajshahi University on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2011, one student who was a member of Shibir was heavily beaten by Chhatra League men. Mizanur Rahman Shihab went to the campus for taking his 4<sup>th</sup> year final examination of Law when 7 or 8 BCL activists including Noyon, Deb, Shimul attacked him with rod, stick, hammer and other weapons in front of the Arts Building. Injured Shihab was brought to Rajshahi Medical College with blood shedding from his head and legs and his hands broken.<sup>86</sup> Classmates of the victim informed the media that the attack was actuated for the denial of Shihab to give the money forcefully claimed by BCL members.<sup>87</sup>

### **Attack on Students of Jagannath University**

Unruly activities of Chhatra League extended even to the general students unconnected with any political organisations. For instance, members of Bangladesh Chhatra League attacked on the procession held by general students of Jagannath University demanding to free several of its residential halls occupied by people of different quarters for long. On 27<sup>th</sup> January 2011 several Chhatra League activists led by Jakir Hossain attacked the peaceful procession from behind. Five students including Mahbub, Mohibul and Obaidul were injured by this unexpected attack. Besides, BCL members captured 3 students from the procession and brought them to the

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<sup>84</sup> <http://www.amardeshonline.com/pages/details/2011/02/11/67622>

<sup>85</sup> <http://www.amardeshonline.com/pages/details/2011/02/11/67622>

<sup>86</sup> [http://www.dailynayadiganta.com/2011/02/09/fullnews.asp?News\\_ID=261133&sec=8](http://www.dailynayadiganta.com/2011/02/09/fullnews.asp?News_ID=261133&sec=8)

<sup>87</sup> <http://www.amardeshonline.com/pages/details/2011/02/04/66574>

Proctor's office alleging that they tried to form a movement against the authority.<sup>88</sup> The 12 residential halls of Jagannath University are currently illegally dispossessed by various influential people and BCL opposes the retrieval of those halls for their interest in such illegal possession. Students alleged that BCL always created bar whenever any reasonable demand is raised from the general students.<sup>89</sup>

## 2012

### Historical College Burned in Sylhet

The historical hostel of Sylhet MC college has been burned down by Chhatraleague activists. Education minister Nurul Islam Nahid shed tears as he visited the site as it was his own hostel during his student life. He also demanded the immediate arrest of the Chhatra League activists. Sylhet district Chhatra league president Pankaj Purkayostho said that the hostel was controlled by Chhatra shibir and that why they had burned down the hostel to get rid of them. The hostel held a historical value due to its long heritage and exceptional structure.<sup>90</sup>

### Teacher killed in the hands of BCL-men!

Awami League cadres beat to death a head teacher of a school in open daylight while the meeting of the school managing committee was ongoing. The incidence took place in Chhotna Model high school in Debidar Upazila of Comilla district. The deceased head teacher is Md. Aktar Hossain. 15-20 Awami cadets under the lead of Khorshed Kibria committed the murder. The Awami terrorists killed Akter because they failed to appoint their candidate as head teacher.<sup>91</sup>

### BCL-men Shoot on Opposition in Daylight



Chhatraleague cadres including the former organizational secretary of RU unit named SM Towhid Al Hossain Tuhin is seen open firing on Islami Chhatrashibir

/2011-01-28/news/126915  
1/28/fullnews.asp?News\_ID=258867&sec=7

<sup>91</sup>Amardesh 03.09.12

activists in RU. At least 25 students were injured, three of them bullet-hit, in a fierce clash between Islamic ChhatraShibir and Bangladesh Chhatra League activists at Rajshahi University (RU)<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Daily Star 03.10.12

# Minority Persecution

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During the reign of the current Awami League government attacks on the minority communities have increased at an alarming level. Houses, temples and properties of Hindus and Buddhists have been subject to attacks launched by the Awami League and its associated wings all over the country. However, the police and other law enforcement agencies have failed to bring the perpetrators of the attacks to justice. Moreover, the Government is continuously blaming opposition parties for these attacks. This is simply a political race designed to mobilise international opinion in their favor by portraying the opposition as the oppressor of minority. Reports show that when the attackers remain unidentified, the Government is quick to blame the opposition, while the attackers who are caught red-handed invariably turn out to be member of the ruling Awami League.

## 2009

On March 27, 2009, a group of people attacked a Hindu family residing near Kazirbag Bazaar under Sadar Upazila of the district of Feni, resulting in the destruction of the victims' house and property and the looting of wealth amounting to Taka 5 hundred thousand in hard cash and valuable ornaments. The Feni Police Station took the case 48 hours after the incident. Sumon, a cadre of *Jubo league* and his associates Belal Hossain Apel, Mohiuddin, Nurrun Nobi, Anik Biswas, Delu, Md. Ismail, Nizam Uddin, Md. Azad and Abdur Rahim attacked Hira Bonik's house. They also wounded two women of the family who tried to resist the attackers.

On March 28, 2009, a group of unidentified miscreants set fire to the house of Bimol Chandra Sarker (50), a Hindu residing at the Ponditpur community of Vadsha union under Sadar Upazila of Joypurhat district. A number of cattle were burnt to death and some severely wounded, in the deadly arson attack. Supporters of *Awami League* vandalised a 50-year old temple at Sutrapur in old Dhaka. According to local people, the temple had 31 kathas of land where 68 families from different religions used to live. On March 30, 2009, *Awami League* activist Saleh and his two sons Dipu and Asad forcibly occupied the land by evicting 13 Hindu families. They have also

demolished the temple idols, all with an ulterior motive to grab the land and estates surrounding the homes and the temple.

In Brahmanbaria, several Hindu families including some fishermen families lived under potential threat of bodily harm and harm to property by the president of the local *Awami League*, Muslim Mia and his family members. Among other atrocities that occurred there was a death of a Hindu man named Hira Lal due to torture. The family of the deceased was barred from holding a funeral and was threatened not to take any legal action. One of the oppressed fisherman, Horey Krishna Das stated that amongst other atrocities, the Hindu families were victims of extortion, kidnapping, rape and abuse. They were also forced to execute deeds relating to transfer of land, and harassed with demands of ransom.

Another incident concerns the kidnapping of 9 members of a Hindu family including women and children and robbery at their home at Sutrapur in Dhaka. The crime took place on August 22, 2009 at house No. 95 of Hrishikesh Das Lane. A group of 10-12 kidnapers in the disguise of DB police took away the gold ornaments and other valuables of the family and tied all nine of them up and attach scotch tape over their lips.

Afterwards, the family members were rescued from an engineering workshop situated at holding No. 65 of the same area by a police force. Four local *Awami League* activists were arrested in this connection.

The incident of vandalizing the image of a Hindu goddess happened at Mithapukur of Rangpur district. On September 10, 2009, a group of unknown miscreants destroyed an idol of 'Durga' at the 'Krishna Bilash' temple of Chathli Moddopara village under Mithapukur upazila of the district.

On September 25, 2009, eight persons including the 'shebait' (the religious head) of the temple were wounded by a group of miscreants at 'Nagmondir' situated at Balashur village under Sreenagar Upazila of the district of Munshiganj. The joint-secretary of the Upazila *Awami League*, Hanif Bepari, who is also known for his notorious land-grabbing activities, led the attack.

Several other incidents of violation of the human rights of religious minority groups were recorded between January 1 to December 31, 2009. In these incidents, 1 person was reportedly killed, 502 injured, 5 assaulted and 1 was abducted. In addition, there were 12 reported incidents of land grabbing, 4 incidents of house grabbing, and 28 incidents of attack on a religious facility that occurred during the year 2009. According to the Penal Code, defilement or destruction of a place of worship or publication of any material disrespectful of a religious group are criminal offenses.

### **Repression on Ethnic Minority**

Shaktipada Tripura (42), Organizing Secretary of the Parbatya Chattagram Jana Samahati Samiti (PCJSS) and a traditional Headman and former UP Chairman, was arrested on January 22, 2009 from a house at Mirpur in Dhaka without being informed of any charge or warrant against him during the arrest.

Meanwhile, Ranglai Mro, a leader of the ethnic minority community and a Chairman of Sualock Union Parishad of Bandorban, who was arrested on February 23, 2007 over leading a movement to protect land rights of the ethnic minority people, was kept in chains in hospital.

On June 12, 2009, a group of felons attacked ethnic minority people living in the Chaur Union of Porsha Upazila under Naogaon district and looted and burnt down their homes. 25 persons were injured during the attack. Norendranath Murmu, a leader of the local ethnic minority community, alleged that a man called Noor Hossain had organized the attack on them with the motive of taking control of their land with fraudulent land documents.

On June 14, 2009, when local miscreants of the village of Boraitoli of Ramgor, Khagrachori, tried to take possession of 300 acres of land occupied by ethnic minority people, they got into a clash with members of the latter group. 14 persons were injured in the incident.

Eight representatives of ethnic minority groups organized a press conference on July 2, 2009, at the Dhaka Reporters Unity to report the arrests, torture and incidents of land grabbing that took place in the locality of Sajek of Baghaichori in Rangamati. It was alleged that later, on July 5, a group of Bangladesh Army took Ajit Chakma, village Chief of the village of Kojoichori of Gongaram Dor into their custody from the Baghaihat Zone. On the next day Manekdhon

Chakma, the village Chief of the village of Hogeietli was also taken. Both men were questioned about their press conference in Dhaka.

## 2012

### **Bishwajit Murder**

On December 9, 2012 a 24 year old tailor from the minority Hindu community Bishwajit Das



was brutally killed in broad daylight by the ruling party criminals with sharp weapons including knives, machetes, and iron rods in old Dhaka Bangladeshis and people all over the world witnessed the killing through media social network sites and Youtube.

The fateful incident ensued during the BNP- led 18-party alliance called road blockade programme on December 9 demanding restoration of the caretaker government system. The Awami League activists with firearms under the protection of police, chased and beat up the blockaders. The ruling party engaged its political activists to restrain the blockade of the Opposition.<sup>93</sup>

### **BCL Set Fire to Buddhist Hostel**

Chhatra League activists set fire to a room of a Buddhist hostel inside Bishwa Shanti Pagoda at Chittagong University over a trifling matter. The police quoting witnesses said that Chhatra League activist Shahed, a second-year student of English, had gone to the pagoda in the afternoon along with his girl friend and wanted to climb up an overhead water reservoir known as the University Tower. He sought keys to the staircase of the tower from a resident of the hostel, DilipTanchangya, a third-year student of history. As Dilip told him that he did not have

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<sup>93</sup>Odhikar Human Rights Report 2012 - Para 125

the keys, Shahed went back and returned along with 10-15 Chhatra League activists and looked for Dilip. Failing to trace him, Shahed and his associates forced into Dilip's room and burnt his clothes and bed. Other residents of the hostel put out the flames later.<sup>94</sup>

## 2013

### Ramu Violence on Buddhists

On 29 September 2013, a brutal attack on minority Buddhist community in Ramu by some unknown assailants shocked the whole country. Hundred-year old monastery and Buddhist temples were set ablaze, most of the valuables including gold and stone statues of Gautama Buddha were looted.<sup>95</sup> Poor Buddhists became homeless overnight after thousands of terrorists and thugs rampaged through villages, looting houses and burning down Buddhist temples. "People from all the major political parties were among the rioters – some were local leaders who are well-known to us" – according to a Buddhist community leader. Local people say the violence went on for nearly six hours in various villages of the Ramu sub-division.

The protests were triggered after an image allegedly insulting the Quran was posted on the Facebook wall of a Buddhist youth. Investigations by local media later revealed that the youth had nothing to do with the incident. Although some tried to link the attacks on Buddhists with the ethnic conflict between Rohingya Muslims and the



The first Rally led by Awami Fishermen League Ansar Bhutto, Jubo League leader Hafej and Chhatro League leader Saddam in Ramu. All from ruling party cadres. From this rally, the first attack was administered.

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<sup>94</sup> New Age 23.12.12

<sup>95</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-21161354>

majority Buddhist population in the neighboring Burmese state of Rakhine, local people dismissed the notion.<sup>96</sup>

However, digging deep into the crisis, it was found that the first protest rally against the unconfirmed post on Facebook insulting Quran, was brought out and headed by local Awami League leaders. Later on, they organized and instigated the mass people to attack on the Buddhist villages. More surprisingly, Police and Administration authorities did not take any action against this rampage which continued for about 5-6 hours. This also indicated some involvement or tacit approval from the Government and members of the ruling party. However, as always the media and Awami League leaders immediately started to blame Jamaat and BNP for this violence and some criminal cases were also filed against them.<sup>97</sup>

### **Sathia Attack by Ruling Party Men**

On 2 November 2013, a mob led by Awami League leaders went on rampage in Bonogram village in Sathia upazila of Pabna district attacking and looting the houses and shops of the Hindu community. According to a section of the media the attackers were BNP-Jamaat men who led the mob to destroy their homes and temples. But later, it turned out that the local ruling party goons with the support of government ministers, ruling party MPs and other party leaders had carried out the carnage.<sup>98</sup>

By way of background, ruling party goons had been demanding tolls from a local wealthy Hindu businessman for some time, who claimed to have had informed that and he claimed he had informed the matter to party leaders, in addition to the local administration, of late the goons belonging to Awami League has their demand for paying Tk 200,000 to them, failing which they had threatened the Hindu businessman with dire consequences. However the man refused to give in to the unlawful demands.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> <http://www.real-timenews.com/newsdetail/detail/1/1/54368>

<sup>97</sup> [http://www.weeklysonarbangla.net/news\\_details.php?newsid=6976](http://www.weeklysonarbangla.net/news_details.php?newsid=6976)

<sup>98</sup> <http://unbconnect.com/pabna-attack/#&panel1-3>

<sup>99</sup> <http://thenewnationbd.com/news-details/nn/1287/stop-exploiting-religious-sentiment---thenewnation>



**Mithu, one of the men alleged to have vandalised over 100 Hindu houses and temples, inset, at Bonogram in Santhia of Pabna on Saturday, is seen behind State Minister for Home Shamsul Hoque Tuku when he visited the area.**

By way of retaliation local Awami League leaders distributed insulting the Holy Prophet in the local market and blamed the son of the Hindu businessman to have been involved in the mischief. They later mounted an attack on the Hindu dominated village destroying over 100 homes and idols in temples.<sup>100</sup> The attackers also vandalised and looted 10-12 business establishments, 25-30 houses and three Hindu temples, and torched the house of Rajib Shah, a Hindu boy. The mayhem continued for about two hours.<sup>101</sup>

After the attack, the ruling party Awami League sent a delegation to Sathia on 6 November to show solidarity with the devastated villagers. Two of the alleged attackers were seen moving with the State Minister for Home Shamsul Hoque Tuku and two lawmakers from the district. Interestingly, during the visit, the state minister claimed that his party men had tried to save the Hindu families. Mithu and Rubel, who according to villagers were among the attackers, were prominently seen welcoming the ministers and taking part in a rally protesting the attackers. Another youth named Ani, who was also with the attackers, was seen in the programme.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> <http://www.bangladeshchronicle.net/index.php/2013/11/hindu-community-under-attack-ahead-of-election/>

<sup>101</sup> <http://unbconnect.com/pabna-attack/#&panel1-3>

<sup>102</sup> <http://www.bangladeshchronicle.net/index.php/2013/11/hindu-community-under-attack-ahead-of-election/>

National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) Chairman Prof Dr Mizanur Rahman on 7 November also expressed his concern over what he termed police inaction in arresting those who had attacked the Hindu community members at Bonogram in Sathia, Pabna. “Perpetrators (of Pabna incident) roam with ministers under police protection. But, you (police) can’t arrest them,” he said while visiting the affected Hindu houses at Bonogram. Handing a copy of an English daily to the Additional Superintendent of Police of Pabna, the NHRC chief said, “The newspaper (in its Thursday issue) photographed one of the perpetrators with a (junior) minister.” He then demanded arrest of the perpetrator as quickly as possible. Dr Mizan said, “If it doesn’t happen, we’ll think you (police) were involved in the incident.”<sup>103</sup>

### **Hindu Property and Temple Attacked by Ruling Party Leader in Barisal**

A ruling party leader of Barishal attacked a Hindu residence and vandalized Hindu idols in order to occupy a house in Gouranadi, Barisal on 25 November 2013.<sup>104</sup> They also assaulted two Hindu women, Tulshi Saha (55) and Maya Rani Poddar (80). The attack took place in the South Bijaypur neighbourhood at midnight. The locals said that the attacks took place when upazila Juba League leader and panel mayor of the municipality SM Firoz Rahman tried to grab the ancestral property of Ratan Bhoumik consisting of 2.77 acres of land.

About 10 people led by S.M Firoz Rahman and his two brothers trespassed into the house at midnight, claimed the ownership of the property and tried to erect a sign board on the premises. When the female residents of the house protested, the attackers beat them and vandalized the idols in the temple. Police reached the spot after the attackers have escaped.

### **Attack in Bashkhali, Chittagong**

Just after the judgment passed by the Tribunal in Sayedee case on 28 February 2013, thousands of people came down on the streets and started protesting. They passed by the marketplace which is mainly a Hindu inhabited area, but nothing happened then, as admitted by a Vivekananda Maharaz, head Shebait [i.e. the person responsible for taking care of the idols] of the local temple. However, after the procession had passed a number of masked came and set many Hindu

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<sup>103</sup> <http://primenews.com.bd/details/18485>

<sup>104</sup> <http://www.amardeshonline.com/pages/printnews/2013/11/26/225977>

houses on fire. They also attacked the temple, looted valuables and then ran away. Six houses were burnt to the ground, and the Loknath Temple was destroyed.<sup>105</sup>

Local people wondered as to why they did not get police attention at all, when the attacked temple was adjacent to the Police Camp. Locals said, the assailant waited for about two hours, till the fire burnt down everything but no one came to their aid. According to local residents Abdullah Liton, leader of the local Awami League faction was seen instigating people to attack the minorities. More interestingly, none of the houses or shops of Hindu people who were active supporters of the ruling party were attacked at all! Such unanswered questions created a very uncomfortable situation in the area. Yet, the AL leader Liton was later seen collecting money for helping the minorities and if anyone refused, he threatened that they would be implicated in the cases filed by the Police. However, the Police, the Local Govt. and the Local ruling party leaders including Liton blatantly blamed Jamaat; but the actual scenario in the locality is otherwise.<sup>106</sup>

### **Hindu Temple Attacked in Ramgati**

On 19 March 2013, two Hindus including a keeper of a Hindu temple were injured by an attack



carried out by Juba League leader Jahir Uddin Suman in Ramgati of Laksmipur district. Among the injured, Liton Debnath was admitted to a hospital in critical condition. The other victim Bijan Bhowmik was given first aid treatment.

The attacker Jahir Uddin Suman is the Joint Convener of Ramgati unit Juba League, the youth wing of the ruling party Awami League. The Convener of Juba League tried to explain the attack by claiming that Jahir Uddin was not metally sound despite being the Joint Convener of the

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<sup>105</sup> <http://www.w2.amardeshonline.com/pages/details/2013/03/10/191313#.UT7kNDfWHFz>

<sup>106</sup> <http://www.w2.amardeshonline.com/pages/details/2013/03/10/191313#.UT7kNDfWHFz>

party. City Councilor and leader of Hindu-Buddhist-Christian Unity Council Aparup Das has said that the incident has caused panic among the minority population in the area.<sup>107</sup>

### **BCL Rampage on Hindu Temples and Residents in Madaripur**

The student wing of the ruling party, Bangladesh Chhatra League committed rampage in Madaripur by attacking at least 30 Hindu business, properties, houses and temples on 3 April 2013. They torched the houses and shops owned by Hindu. At least 15 people were injured in their attack. The injured are admitted to various hospitals and clinics.

A few days back, a Hindu student named Biddut caught a BCL activist with narcotic drugs and handed him over to police. After this incident, BCL leader Rony along with 80 other activists of the ruling party launched a massive attack on Hindu properties in the Sabujbag area of Madaripur. They torched Hindu houses after pouring petrol. One Asha Goura and other Hindu residents alleged that their shops were torched by BCL in the incident. The Local Hindu people arranged a protest meeting in the city the next after the incident. that their shops have been torched by BCL in the incident.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> <http://www.amardeshonline.com/pages/printnews/2013/03/20/192756>

<sup>108</sup> <http://www.amardeshonline.com/pages/printnews/2013/04/05/195198>

# Obstruction on Freedom of Expression

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The freedom of expression and that of press are in unprecedented jeopardy in Bangladesh since the ruling government of Bangladesh doesn't allow criticism against its actions violative of constitutional and legal norms. Due to the offence (?) of publishing Govt.'s repeated brutality and corruption, a number of press, electronic and online media have been stopped and blocked. Bangladeshi journalists have said the government is threatening the freedom of the press in the country. The ruling Awami League has shut down TV stations and detained a prominent newspaper editor in the past few months in an apparent bid to restrict the media. Opponents say it is part of a political strategy ahead of next year's elections.<sup>109</sup> Some instances of closed media are mentioned below:-

## 2009

It is alleged around 4000 of *Jamaat* and *Shibir* leaders and activist were arrested blaming fraud case and without warrant during the February to July reportedly in whole Bangladesh. The Police and other law enforcement agencies told that they arrested the *Shibir* and *Jamaat* activist in connection with making hurled of police activities and sabotaging activities in the name of government's unlawful arrest of political leaders.

Furthermore, on March 21, 2009, former Deputy Speaker of the Parliament, Akhtar Hamid Siddiqui, was arrested by Naogaon district Detective Branch (DB) police over an allegation made by the Officer in Charge (OC) of Mohadebpur Police Station, Ilias Ali Fakir. In a general dairy, OC Ilias Ali Fakir stated that the former Deputy Speaker had threatened him. He was given a one month detention order under the Special Powers Act of 1974. The imposing of the Special Powers Act to restrain Opposition leaders and activists is one of the ways this law has been misused in the past.

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<sup>109</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia/2013/05/2013528153749695207.html>

## **Censorship on Websites**

The government imposed a rigid censorship in March 2009 on the browsing of some websites, including youtube.com, for Bangladeshi nationals. The Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission prohibited the visiting of some of websites on the pretext of protecting 'national security'. However, the government did not officially specify what kind of content and information should be forbidden in the name of 'national security'.

It has been assumed that the government wanted to impose a ban on the citizen's use of audio-visual information relating to the BDR mutiny and its consequences. If this is true, and if the audio-visual information contains very sensitive matter that could cause threats to the country's security, then why was it only restricted for the people in Bangladesh? The Government's justification regarding this matter, that Bangladeshi citizens can emerge as a threat to national security, is not acceptable. What about foreign entities? The government has failed to give a public explanation regarding the censorship imposed in the name of 'national security'.

## **The Media Hindered**

On January 31, 2009, a group of journalists from different national daily newspapers and the electronic media were denied permission to enter Parliament to cover two meetings of the Special Committee and the House Committee, even after showing their seasonal passes and accreditation cards to the security personnel. Asadullah Chowdhury, a deputy sergeant at arms, told the journalists that they had a 'special order' from the Speaker of the Jatiya Sangsad (National Parliament) not to allow journalists entry into the Parliament building unless the Parliament was in session. The supporters of Gias Uddin, a Member of Parliament representing Gaforgaon, Mymensingh, attacked and severely injured Abdullah Al-Amin Biplob, a district correspondent of the daily *Shamokal* of the said area on April 13, 2009, in consequence of a news he published. Biplob's hands and legs were broken. He was admitted to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital in critical condition the same day. After the incident, the MP threatened all journalists of the area saying "I am the MP of Gaforgaon, nothing can be written against me in the next five years. If you do, you will face serious consequences".

On September 1, 2009, in reaction to a report published in the daily *Amar Desh* against the *Awami League* MP of Chuadanga, Solayman Huq Joardar and his brother Pouroshava Mayor

Reazul Islam, the activists of *Chhatra League* and *Jubo league* attacked and ransacked the ‘Janata Store’ owned by Ariful Islam Dalim, Chudanga representative of the daily *Amar Desh*. The activists then set fire to the store using petrol and burnt copies of *Amar Desh*. In the evening, the activists of *Chhatra League* and *Jubo league* went to Dalim’s house and assaulted its inhabitants, including his wife and children and ransacked and looted valuables. In relation to the same incident, the members of the *Chhatra League* and *Jubo league* also attacked the business enterprise of Rajib Ahmed Kochi, the daily *Janakantha* representative and the home of Shah Alam, the daily *Prothom Alo* representative in Chuadanga. On the same day, a clash took place between the *BNP* and *Awami League* activists. A case was filed in relation to the altercation and the names of Ariful Islam Dalim and Shah Alam, the representatives of *Amar Desh* and *Prothom Alo*, were tagged into the case as accused persons.

On December 16, 2009, four journalists were wounded when attacked by Chhatra League activists over the publication of a report on extortion in Bishwanath, Sylhet. The attackers forcibly took three cameras from the journalists. The injured journalists were - Tofazzul Hossain Bhandari, Bureau Chief of the local daily *Manchitra*; photo journalist Saleh Ahmed Shanto; Ashique Ali and Fazal Khan; reporters of the daily *Jugobheri* and *Mukto Khabor* respectively.

On December 17, 2009, *Amar Desh* Acting Editor Mahmudur Rahman was openly threatened by the Agriculture Minister and Presidium Member of the *Awami League* (AL), Matia Chowdhury; the State Minister for LGRD and Organising Secretary of the *Awami League*, Jahangir Kabir Nanak and Joint General Secretary of the *Awami League*, Mahabub-ul Alam Hanif, at a discussion meeting organized on the occasion of victory day, December 16, over a news report published in the daily *Amar Desh* against Sajib Wajed Joy, son of the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Dr. Toufique-E-Elahi, the Energy Adviser, about sanctioning work amounting to Taka 3.7 billion for establishing Gas Compressors without bids and in exchange of bribes.

## 2010

### TV channel ‘Channel 1’ shut down



On April 27, 2010 Channel 1, one of the country's leading private television channels, was shut down by the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) on charges of violating its rules. Two BTRC directors rushed to their office at Uday Tower at Gulshan-1 and asked the authorities to switch off the transmission in their presence. The Channel had over 750 staff at different sections including 450 in the capital. It was learnt that the moment the announcement of the final closure was aired, staff at the premises broke down in tears. They had repeatedly urged the BTRC team not to shut down the channel and go for alternative action if there are any irregularities. The Channel 1 management claimed that they replied to all BTRC notices in time.<sup>110</sup> It also claimed that they had not done anything illegal. Journalists said that the Awami League government had stopped it as this channel is broadcasting news that goes against the ruling government.<sup>111</sup>

## 2011

### **Journalists Assaulted At DU**

Some Dhaka University students physically assaulted a photographer of The Daily Star in presence of a contingent of police, as he took snaps while the students were beating up another person in front of the Faculty of Fine Arts yesterday. The students of the faculty dragged Rashed Shumon, a staff photographer of the daily, into the faculty premises, beat him up, and tried to snatch his camera away around 11:30am.

Witnesses said the photographer came under the attack as he was capturing photos while some of the students were beating up one of the participants of a rally of South Asian Social Forum-2011 (SASF) and also damaging vehicles in front of the faculty.

A huge contingent of police witnessed the incident, but neither had they tried to rescue Rashed Shumon nor to arrest any of the violent students. Contacted, Additional Deputy Commissioner

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<sup>110</sup> <http://bdinn.com/news/private-television-channel-%E2%80%98channel-1%E2%80%99-shut-down/>

<sup>111</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Channel\\_One\\_%28Bangladesh%29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Channel_One_%28Bangladesh%29)

Syed Nurul Islam of Ramna division said the students got angry with the SASF activists, as the rally was disturbing their examination.

Another reporter of Somoy Television shahadat hossain was severely beaten by BCL activists over a trifling matter on 25 November 2011. BCL activist Bashar along with others tortured Shahadat when he went to cover the SM Day celebration program. Later he was also given death threat by them.<sup>112</sup>

### **Journalist Attacked At Jahangirnagar University**

Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) men at Jahangirnagar University beat up the university correspondent of the daily Janakantha. Ahmed Riyadh, the victim, and BCL activist Parvez Ahmed of Moulana Bhasani Hall engaged in an altercation over practicing cricket at the central playground. Following the squabble, a group of 20-30 BCL cadres led by Parvez attacked Riyadh at the dairy gate and beat him unconscious.

He was first taken to the university medical centre and then to Savar Enam Medical College Hospital. Riyadh suffered serious injuries in the head and waist. JU Proctor Prof Dr Arzu Miah visited Riyadh at the hospital and assured journalists and his family members of tough punishment to the attackers. BCL joint secretary SM Azgor Ali admitted the involvement of BCL activists in the incident.<sup>113</sup>

### **Terrorist Attacks on Naya Diganta Journalist**

A Daily Naya Diganta journalist Emdadullah was attacked and tortured in Kishoreganj. Tarail upazila correspondent of Naya Diganta was tortured by the treasurer of Tarail press club Nazmul and his brother Shohidul. Emdadullah was admitted at Kishoreganj Adhunik Sadar Hospital. In a meeting arranged to protest this incident, journalist community has urged to stop violence against journalists.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> <http://www.prothom-alo.com/detail/date/2011-11-26/news/204021>

<sup>113</sup> <http://www.prothom-alo.com/detail/date/2011-11-23/news/203020>

<sup>114</sup> <http://www.dailynayadiganta.com/details/12015>

In another incident, miscreants have assaulted the Debiganj (Panchagar) correspondent of Daily Naya diganta and snatched one hundred thousand taka from him. Journalist Mosharraf Hossain was attacked by Mokhlesur Rahman, Samiul Islam and others. A case has been filed with the Debiganj police station regarding this incident.<sup>115</sup>

### **Journalists under BCL attack in Rajshahi University**

Daily Solaler Khobor correspondent Sujan Najir was assaulted by activists belonging to the group of BCL president of Rajshahi University. The attack took place after Sujan Najir witnessed some BCL members abusing freshman students. Some BCL members including MBA student Mamun were abusing and some fresher students in front on Madarbokhs Hall. When Sujan arrived there he was told leave the place. On denial, Sujan was brutally tortured by 7 or 8 BCL activists. BCL president Ahmed Ali told the reporters of news media that the incident occurred due to some misunderstanding.<sup>116</sup>

In another incident, a group of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) activists of Rajshahi University (RU) unit threatened journalists of different dailies on the campus. BCL activist Sohel Rana, a fourth year student of Chemistry department, has been threatening and harassing a female student of the university for few days.

Following the incident, daily sun's Rajshahi staff reporter Kamruzzaman Shahin, cousin of the girl, came to the campus and informed the matter to RU unit BCL President Ahmed Ali and General Secretary Abu Hossain Bipu over mobile phone. Rohul Amin Babu, a follower of the BCL president, said Shahin over phone to come Madar Bux hall premises to settle the matter. As Shahin and ATN news' Rajshahi reporter Soumitra Mazumdar along with some other journalists went to Madar Bux hall premises, the BCL activists led by Babu verbally abused them and attempt to beat and hack them with hockey sticks, machetes and iron rods. However, the journalists left the place immediately.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> <http://www.dailynayadiganta.com/details/12295>

<sup>116</sup> <http://www.amardeshonline.com/pages/details/2011/10/29/114526>

<sup>117</sup> <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=208173>

### **BCL Men Assault Reporter at Chittagong University**

On October 28, a group of activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), Chittagong University (CU) unit, assaulted a journalist on the campus. A group of BCL men led by Nur Mohammad Nazmul attacked Mahbub Tamim, CU correspondent of the Daily Naya Diganta, in front of Suhrawardi hall around 11:00pm. They grievously hurt him with sharp weapons.

Though Mahbub gave his identity as a journalist, BCL men beat him without any reason, said Mahbub, also a fourth year student of Islamic History and Culture department. Later, he was given treatment at CU medical centre. Nazmul, however, denied the allegation of his involvement in the incident. Mamunul Haque, president of CU unit BCL, apologised for the incident terming it misunderstanding.<sup>118</sup>

### **Daily Destiny Journo Gets Death Threat**

On 30 October, a local leader of the ruling Awami League has allegedly threatened a journalist with death in Hatibandha upazila for publishing a report on misuse of fund for a local government project in a newspaper a day before. Ilias Bosuniya Pabon, Hatibandha upazila correspondent of The Daily Destiny, filed a general Genera Diary (GD) with Hatibandha police station on Tuesday. Basunia alleged that Abu Hena Mostafa Zaman Sohel, Barokhata union AL vice president, gave him the threat over cell phone on the day for publishing a report in The Destiny on misuse of fund for Local Government Support Project (LGSP) in 10 unions of Hatibandha upazila. The journalist said he had recorded voice of the AL leader. Local journalists demanded arrest and exemplary punishment of Sohel. Hatibandha Press Club member Kazi Altaf Hossain met the upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) and informed him of the threat.

### **Sheersha News Editor Rearrested**

A Bangladeshi editor was rearrested on the same day he was released on bail, as he was leaving the gate of the prison. Police detained Ekramul Haque, editor of *Sheershanews* website and *Sheersha Kagoj* weekly, on extortion charges on July 31. On October 25, the High Court in the

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<sup>118</sup> <http://www.prothom-alo.com/detail/date/2011-10-28/news/197354>

country's capital, Dhaka, granted the journalist bail, and he was released on November 1. But he was arrested again at the gate of the jail as he was leaving, news website *bdnews24* reported.<sup>119</sup>

Two weeks before Haque was detained, authorities cancelled his media accreditation and those of his nine staff members. The journalist's imprisonment led to both *Sheershanews* and *Sheersha Kagoj* being shuttered, news reports said. His colleagues believed the extortion accusations were in connection with corruption investigations the news outlets had published on two government ministers.<sup>120</sup> "The legal process is highly irregular, and Ekramul Haque's right to due process must be respected," states an International watchdog, CPJ. "The new allegations of extortion against him appear to be timed to keep him behind bars."

Local newspaper *The Daily Star* reported that a tax inspector had filed a new extortion complaint the day Haque was due to go home, although the extortion was said to have occurred nearly five months before, on June 12. On Thursday, *The Star* reported that a court had rejected the journalist's bail application. A government spokesman accused the news outlets of "character assassinations of ministers and officials" at the time of Haque's July arrest, news reports said. In the past, *Sheershanews* accused prominent businessmen and two government officials of corruption.<sup>121</sup>

### **Journalists Facing Contempt Ruling by Court**

A rule was issued on October 3 on the editor, publisher and a journalist of the English daily to explain why contempt charges should not be brought against them for publishing an article titled "A crucial period for International Crimes Tribunal". Written by Bergman, editor (special reports), the article came out on its October 2 OP-ED page.<sup>122</sup> The newspaper published the article to assist the court for holding trial of crimes against humanity committed during the country's Liberation War in 1971 speedily in a fair and neutral manner.

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<sup>119</sup> <http://bdnews24.com/details.php?id=210472&cid=2>

<sup>120</sup> <http://www.cpj.org/2011/08/news-editor-arrested-in-bangladesh.php>

<sup>121</sup> <http://thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=209520>

<sup>122</sup> [http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/latest\\_news.php?nid=34094](http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/latest_news.php?nid=34094)

ASM Shahidullah Khan, publisher of the daily, and David Bergman were brought before the tribunal's three-member panel led by its Chairman Justice Nizamul Huq at the hearing. The tribunal advised the New Age editor to apply Bangalee mindset while editing articles and reports of David Bergman. Saying that David Bergman, being a foreign journalist, writes articles in his own style, the tribunal asked the New Age editor to edit Bergman's articles "with Bangalee mindset". After concluding day's proceedings, the tribunal fixed December 20 for further hearing on the rule.

Making his submission on the laws on contempt, Kabir said, 'While the idea of punishing writers, particularly the critical analysts, under the contempt of court law is often inconsistent with the people's democratic freedom of thought and expression, the very notion of the doctrine of the "contempt of court" is colonialist.' 'Not surprising that the colonial juridical practice does not accept "truth" as "evidence" in the proceedings of contempt of court cases,' Kabir contended adding, 'it is, therefore, a political responsibility of the decolonised people to do away with the contempt of court doctrine.'<sup>123</sup>

## 2012

### Sedition Issue

Contrary to democratic norms, the Government is overly sensitive of comments criticizing its activities and actions. Freedom of opinion and expression of the citizens are being treated as



'sedition'. In a democratic scenario, such critical comments should not be taken in a negative manner. According to the 15<sup>th</sup> amendment of the Constitution, the highest punishment for sedition is the death penalty. The major concern is how 'sedition'

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<sup>123</sup> <http://newagebd.com/newspaper1/frontpage/42078.html>

is defined and used. Section 124A of the Penal Code defines the term ‘Sedition’ as: written or spoken words, or signs, or visible representation, or otherwise, that bring or attempt to bring hatred or contempt, or disaffection towards the ‘government established by law’. It is not enumerated in the said law that feelings of dislike, disregard, hatred or animosity of a person against an elected government or a member of the government are to be considered ‘sedition’, rather it has been specifically considered as a crime if committed against the President and the Government, in general. Therefore, to criticise any Minister or Head of Government on how it executes his/her professional activities, or express an opinion may be a defamatory act, but not sedition.

### **Sedition Case against University Teacher**

On August 13, 2011, five persons, including renowned film maker Tareque Masud and Chief Editor of ATN News Mishuk Munir died in a road accident in Manikganj. The incident resulted in anger and outrage among people across the country. People expressed their frustration over bad roads and incompetent drivers in different ways. Referring to this incident, on August 13, Muhammad Ruhul Amin Khandker, a teacher of Jahangirnagar University, who was studying in Australia, wrote on his Facebook page, “Consequences of driving licenses without inspection: five people including Tareque and Mishuk Munir died: Everybody dies, why not Hasina?”<sup>124</sup>

The next day at around 5.00 am in another status on Facebook, he wrote, “Driving licenses without inspection! Is this thinkable in a civilized society? The whole world has shown rigidity in the process of providing driving licenses where Hasina’s government is providing driving licenses without even tests!”<sup>125</sup> On January 8, 2012, a Division Bench of the High Court Division of the Supreme Court, comprising of Justice AHM Shamsuddin Chowdhury and Justice Jahangir Hossain, ordered a sedition case to be filed against Muhammad Ruhul Amin Khandker for writing his personal expressions in his Facebook account. The Inspector General of Police was told to file a sedition case under Section 124A of the Penal Code<sup>126</sup> against Ruhul Amin

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<sup>124</sup> The daily Amar Desh, 09/01/2012

<sup>125</sup> <http://www.bdnews24.com/bangla/details.php?cid=3&id=182242&hb=top>

<sup>126</sup> Section 124A of the Penal Code: whoever by ‘words, either spoken or written, or by signs, or by visible representation, or otherwise, brings or attempts to bring into hatred or contempt, or excites or attempts to excite

Khandker and report back to the Court by January 15, 2012. Prior to this case, as he was not present before the Court, the same Court, on January 4, 2012, sentenced him to imprisonment for six months for the allegation of ‘contempt of court’.

### **Sedition Case against National Daily**

On December 13, 2012 at about 7:30pm a prosecutor dealing with war crimes cases in the International Crimes Tribunals (ICT), filed a sedition case against the Acting Editor of Amar Desh, Mahmudur Rahman, and the publisher, Hasmat Ali, for publishing the Skype conversation between ICT-1 Chairman Nizamul Huq and a Bangladeshi born Belgium based international lawyer, on the ongoing war crimes trials in Bangladesh. The prosecutor, Shahidur Rahman, filed the case with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate’s Court in Dhaka at about 7:30pm. Magistrate Hasibul Haque directed the Tejgaon police officer-in-charge to register the case as a first information report and take legal action against the accused. In keeping with the Code of Criminal Procedure, however, there was no Government sanction to proceed with the case at the time of its initiation, but police can arrest an accused charged with sedition without any warrant for arrest. Mahmudur Rahman has been staying at his Amar Desh office since the filing of the case. Earlier on the same day, the High Court questioned the legality of the Skype conversations being recorded by way of hacking. The bench of Justice AHM Shamsuddin Choudhury and Justice Farid Ahmed also asked the government and the law enforcement agencies to explain in two weeks why they should not be directed, in keeping with the information and communications technology law, to arrest and prosecute the offenders who hacked into and recorded the conversation and published it. It also imposed a ban on further publications of the conversation which had been published by the daily Amar Desh since December 9 until the rule was disposed of. The Tribunal 1 Chairman, Justice Md. Nizamul Haq, resigned from his position on December 11 amid controversies over the Skype conversation. The conversations revealed

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disaffection towards the government established by law shall be punished with imprisonment for life or any shorter term, to which fine may be added, or with imprisonment which may extend to three years, to which fine may be added, or with fine.’

Justice Md. Nizamul Huq's personal views about different individuals, including his fellow Tribunal judges, and jurists.<sup>127</sup>

### **Banning YouTube**

Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) on September 17, 2012 at about 10:30pm blocked popular video streaming website YouTube.com. The BTRC had requested Internet giant Google to block a controversial anti-Islam movie trailer 'Innocence of Muslims' on YouTube, a website owned by Google. Google is accessed in Bangladesh through its Indian office and so the letter was sent to Google India.<sup>128</sup> YouTube has been blocked in Bangladesh for over three months. The Information Minister, Hasanul Haq Inu, on November 27, 2012 said the government would soon lift the ban on YouTube. 'We have sent a letter to YouTube authority to ensure that the anti-Islam movie cannot be watched from anywhere in Bangladesh,' Inu said when he was addressing a press briefing at the secretariat.<sup>129</sup> The ban on the video streaming website YouTube is, however, yet to be lifted depriving the people in general and researchers, scholars, students and academics in particular. The Government's intentions show that it wants to curb citizen's right to freedom of information, expression, and is using the so-called 'Islamic militancy' issue as a trick.<sup>130</sup>

## **2013**

### **Pro-Opposition Blog Blocked**



On February 16, 2013 the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission had shut down the Sonar Bangla blog ([www.sbblog.net](http://www.sbblog.net)), a pro-opposition blog in Bangladesh, for spreading so-called 'hate speech' and causing communal tension. Police also arrested its editor with alleged linked to the murder of an anti-Islamist blogger who helped organise protests against the leaders of the largest Islamic party. Editor of the blog, Aminul Muhaiman has been detained

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<sup>127</sup> The daily New Age, 14/12/2012

<sup>128</sup> The Daily Star, 18/09 2012

<sup>129</sup> The Daily Star, 28/11/2012

<sup>130</sup> New Age Xtra, 12/10/2012

by plain dressed Detective Branch (DB) police Saturday evening from his resident at Dhanmondi. DB police also seized Muhaimen's computer, mobile phone, bank cheque book, educational certificates and passport.<sup>131</sup>

### **Editor of Anti-Govt. Newspaper Arrested**

Police on Apr 11, 2013 arrested Mahmudur Rahman from his Karwan Bazar office on charge of sedition and for publishing reports on an alleged Skype conversation between an International Crimes Tribunal judge and an expatriate Bangladeshi legal expert. The conversations exposed political interference with



the trials. The conversations were originally published by The Economist and later republished in Bangladesh by Amar Desh and other news organizations and websites. Mr. Rahman was sued under the Information and Communication Technology Act 2006. Later that night, police raided the press of *Amar Desh*, the country's biggest-circulation pro-opposition paper, in the city's Tejgaon area and sealed it off. Meantime the newspaper has acquired a massive popularity among public for its courageous stand against the Govt. He has been arrested for the second time in the regime of the current Govt. He was receiving continued threats from high levels of government prior to this arrest. Amar Desh announced to publish a series of reports on Shiekh Mujibur Rahman's government, based on some files of U.S. Foreign Ministry. On the very morning of this Thursday, the government arrested the Editor of the daily, Mahmudur Rahman. Oliullah Noman, the correspondent who reported the skype scandal, have been forced to leave the country by serious life-risky situations. He is now in the U.K under political asylum.<sup>132</sup>

On April 14, the offices of another opposition newspaper, *Daily Sangram*, were raided by the police. The editor, Mohamed Abul Asad, has subsequently been charged for printing and publishing copies of Amar Desh after authorities had shut down Amar Desh after Rahman's

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<sup>131</sup> <http://bdinn.com/news/bangladesh-shuts-blog-site-arrest-editor/>

<sup>132</sup> <http://bdinn.com/news/mahmudur-rahman-on-the-ccu/>

arrest. Rahman's mother, who is the Acting Chairman of Amar Desh, has also been charged along with over a dozen others in the same case.

It's notable that, the newspaper attained unprecedented circulation and was being sold like hotcakes; in the months before the government shut it down, the circulation had jumped six-fold, to 200,000 copies daily.<sup>133</sup>

### **Two Influential Media's Transmittal Halted**



On May 5, 2013 the government stopped transmission of two satellite television channels-- Diganta TV and Islamic TV-- minutes after law enforcers in a drive removed Hefajat-e-Islam Bangladesh activists from the city's Shapla Chattar area. A team of Bangladesh Telecommunication Regularity Commission (BTRC) conducted a raid on the office of Diganta TV at 4:25am and forced the authorities to stop transmission of the channel

instantly. The team also seized the 'Up Link' (instrument of TV satellite connection) of the TV channel at that time. The BTRC team also stopped broadcast of another private television channel Islamic TV at the same time.<sup>134</sup> Earlier in the day(May 5), DTV telecast live demonstration of Hefajot e Islami from Matijhil Dhaka. Then government shut their live operation as people across the world visiting DTV through internet. Authorities overnight stopped broadcast of the channels hours for they aired live images of security forces' brutal attacks against hardline Islamist demonstrators, which left at least dozens dead. This is the fourth instance of government forcing private TV channels to go off the air. Ekushey Television was shut down by the BNP-Jamaat government in 2002, CSB News by the military-backed caretaker government in 2007, and Channel One by this government in 2010.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> <http://www.economist.com/blogs/banyan/2013/05/press-freedom-bangladesh>

<sup>134</sup> <http://www.thefinancialexpress-bd.com/index.php?ref=MjBfMDVfMDdfMTNfMV8yXzE2ODYwNw==>

<sup>135</sup> <http://www.thedailystar.net/beta2/news/diganta-islamic-tv-off-air/>

# Violence against Women

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## 2009

A housewife named Dulali was burnt to death due to dowry demands in Chatkhil, Noakhali. Family members of Dulali informed that Dulali had been tortured by her husband and in-laws very soon after her marriage. On February 22, 2009, Dulali's husband Mojibur Rahman and his parents set her on fire pouring kerosene onto her body as she failed to bring money from her father. Dulali was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital in critical condition where she succumbed to her injuries on 25 February, 2009.

On May 9, 2009 Shefali was killed by her husband and brother-in-law due to dowry demands in Kaulibera village under Bhanga upazila of Faridpur district. Shefali's husband Momin Hawladar and his brother Amin Hawladar killed her after hitting her with a crowbar in front of her four-month old daughter, Sadia. Dr. Tamanna, a young physician, was allegedly killed by her husband and in-laws who had demanded an apartment as dowry, on 29 August 2009 at Jatrabari, Dhaka.

There were a number of incidents of rape, which took place under 'political shelter' during this reporting period.

On September 24, 2009, a school girl in Jessore was kidnapped by *Awami League* activist Shishir Ghosh, son of Boidyanath Ghosh of Shasthitola area of the city. Following her abduction, she was raped by Shishir several times and he forcibly put *sindur* onto her forehead, violating her religious freedom.

On 25 September 2009, an adolescent was gang-raped following her abduction, by 10 activists of Bangladesh *Chhatra League* while she was returning from a *Puja Mandop* in Kolapara upazila in Patuakhali district. The rapists threatened the victim's family against taking any legal measures and Rafiqul Islam, General Secretary of Kolapara upazila *Awami League* made the victim and her father sign a blank sheet of paper. Police did not arrest anyone in this regard.

A school girl has been raped by being trapped in a love affair in Pirojpur and the rape was videotaped. Later on, the rapists circulated the video footage in the CD market which resulted in

the video spreading through mobile phones and also the internet. It was learnt that Ahsan Kabir Mamun alias Tiger Mamun, Information and Research Secretary of Pirojpur District *Awami League*, raped the school girl and his associate Monir Hossain taped the scene.

In most cases, the victims or their family members remain silent due to the social stigma or in fear of the rapist. The rape victims have to undergo severe mental and social problems. From January 1 to December 31, 2009, a total of 454 women and girls were reportedly raped, where 211 were adults and 243 were children. Of the 211 adult women, 64 were killed after being raped and 97 were subjected to gang rape. Among the 243 female children raped, 33 were killed after being raped and 79 were victims of gang rape. Furthermore, 4 women and 4 children committed suicide after being raped.

### **Acid Violence**

One of the most dangerous forms of violence against women is the acid attack. In most cases, the perpetrators throw acid on women in the cases they refused to marry the perpetrator or refuse to have sexual or illicit relations with him. Other reasons for acid violence include land disputes, personal feuds, jealousy and dowry. The consequences of an acid violence are disfiguration, loss of sight and permanent injury marks on the body. Acid may even melt teeth and bones.

On May 3, 2009, Kakoli Singh (31), a housewife from an ethnic minority community was attacked with acid by some unknown miscreants over a previous enmity at Khirpouta village (an area for ethnic communities) in Tarash Upazila of Sirajganj district.

As per a report from the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, 172 women became victims of acid violence in 2009. Acid violence continues due to lack of implementation of the Acid Control Act of 2002 and the Acid Crime Control Act of 2002. Acid is frequently sold, ignoring the law (the Acid Control Act, 2002) and without license. According to the Acid Control Act, 2002, whoever produces, imports, transports, stores, sells and uses acid without license could be sentenced to 3 to 10 years' rigorous imprisonment with fine. People who possess equipment used for producing acid without having the license to do so could be sentenced to 3 to 15 years' rigorous imprisonment with fine.

### **Three Women Arrested on Suspicion**

On July 3, 2009, the police from the Zianagar Police Station in Pirojpur district arrested two female students and one female teacher on suspicion all wearing veils, under Section 54 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, despite finding nothing illegal in the search. The matter did not end there. They were taken to court as ‘terrorists’ and taken into remand for three days and illegally handed over to the Taskforce Intelligence (TFI) for interrogation. The TFI cell did not find the accused women to be associated with acts of ‘terrorism’.

On July 20, 2009, the Deputy Attorney General, Rajik Al Jalil stated that the allegations against the three veiled women were found to be untrue. The action of arresting three women sets a precedence of sending innocent women to 'remand' simply because they were wearing veils. There are many women in Bangladesh who wear veils. Furthermore, personal choice of citizens is secured by our constitution. The acts by the police of the Zianagar Police Station deemed unlawful as searching the three women and arresting them, despite not finding anything illegal, and forcing them to take off their veils in order to take their photographs, which were later published in the newspapers. The whole incident was a gross violation of their human rights. This kind of behavior of the law enforcement agencies towards citizen is absolutely unacceptable.

## **2010**

### **Foreign Muslim Lady Arrested for her Hijab**

Accusations have been rampantly made against those who practice religion and this has happened all over the country during the present Government. On 01 October 2010, a Muslim lady from Cyprus wearing *Hijab* was arrested on the suspicion of being an extremist while she was simply taking photographs of the national mosque. Police had no prior information about the woman.



## 2012

There are a number of instances where females became victimized of many forms of harassment in the hands of the law-enforcing agencies as well as by the leaders and activists of the ruling party. Some of them are mentioned below-

### **Female Leader of opposition victimized of Police Brutality**

Police tortured BNP leader Rehana Akhter Dolly inhumanly. Police took her from her home and tried to made her state before judge that she was ordered to blast bombs before secretariat on April 29. Later she was found by her son lying on a bench in court premises; her face, hands and waist was covered with scars and clotted blood. A leading human right organization *Adhikar* revealed this in their report and demanded that the policemen linked to this heinous torture on a woman must be brought to justice.<sup>136</sup>

### **University Student Gangraped by BCL**

In Jhenaidah, 4 BCL leaders gangraped a university student. This horrible incident shocked people in the area. Victim's father filed cases against 7 including those 4 rapist BCL cadres. RAB captured the four criminals.<sup>137</sup>

### **Arrest of Female Students**

Police had arrested 20 young female students and another old woman (Wife of detained Jamaat Leader Abdul Kader Mollah) on 17<sup>th</sup> December, 2012 from an apartment at Maghbazar, Dhaka. Several reports have it that 20 activists of Chhatri Shangstha, female student outfit of



Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh, have been arrested. This is an escalation of the already torturous regime in place to disturb Opposition especially Jamaat's activities. A Police team led by AC Shibly Noman of Ramna Zone and OC of Ramna Police Station Shah Alam took an operation at

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<sup>136</sup> Amar desh: 11.7.12

<sup>137</sup> Amar Desh: 3.9.12

an apartment at Maghbazar where the Central Office of that organization is located. They searched the whole place for more than 4-5 hours and then arrested the girls.<sup>138</sup> Besides, breaking all the customs and laws, no female Police were deployed during the operation on those female students.<sup>139</sup> Despite of a huge dissatisfaction and countrywide protest, the Govt nailed down its autocratic disposition again by placing 21 female Islamist student party members on a two-day remand through Magistrate Court orders, all of whom except one – are students from the top universities of the country.<sup>140</sup>

### **Tazreen Fashions: A Tragedy and irresponsible Behavior of Govt**

On November 24, 2012 at around 6.30 pm at least 112 workers died and over 60 workers were injured in a fire at 9-storied readymade garments factory Tazreen Fashions Limited belonging to Tuba Group at Nishchintopur area in Ashulia, Savar, Dhaka. Among the deceased, 53 bodies could not be identified, the fire started in the warehouse at the ground floor of the building and gradually



climbed up to the 9th floor. Tazreen Fashions Limited did not meet any standard of working conditions required inside a factory. Even the minimum standard for building a factory under the Building Construction Code was not followed. The fire safety equipment did not work once the fire broke out. Although there were three stairways, all of them led to the storeroom downstairs and not to any emergency exit. The factory did not have the required space for the firemen to be able to operate in.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on 5 December, 2012 handed over Tk 6 lac each to the families of 43 workers, out of the 113 dead. Seventy families of dead workers have yet to receive compensation and those who are alive are still facing massive hurdles due to financial

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<sup>138</sup> <http://www.amardeshonline.com/pages/details/2012/12/18/178464#.UNkJLGfLlzQ>

<sup>139</sup> [http://www.dailysangram.com/news\\_details.php?news\\_id=104207](http://www.dailysangram.com/news_details.php?news_id=104207)

<sup>140</sup> <http://www.dailynayadiganta.com/new/?p=68529>

constraints. It is to be mentioned that at least 500 workers have been killed in 33 major fire incidents at garment factories since 1990. Of them, 330 workers have been killed in eight fires since November 2000.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> The Daily Star, 27/11/2012

# Abuse of Judiciary and Administration

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Ever since the Awami League led government has come into power in December 2008, the ruling party has grabbed the full control of the civil administration, the judiciary and the police in order to perpetuate the current regime. The democratic checks and balances have totally broken down amid widespread politicization the police force, the judiciary and the civil administration. Political allegiance rather than professional competence has been the determining factor in the process of recruitment and retirement of in all important state offices. Repeated transfers of persons in the service of the republic who belong to opposition ideology and making them OSD have become very frequent. Ruthless actions taken by the police officers in violation of law have been greatly rewarded by the government. Most judicial recruitments by the Awami League government are solely based on political affiliation rather than legal expertise or academic qualifications. The government is clearly advancing a policy of acquiring pervasive powers in all spheres of the state in order to ensure that no opponent political force can raise voice against the government in a fair democratic government.

The judiciary of Bangladesh is independent in pen and paper only. The Courts of Bangladesh are influenced by the administration. Recently, Barrister Rafiq-Ul-Huq<sup>142</sup> made a comment on the unexpected situation of the Judiciary where he quoted: “Different courts give different judgments on the same charge, as the Judges act out of their political bias. Unfortunately, the judgment in a case depends not on the case's merit but on the Judges' preference for respective political parties.”<sup>143</sup>

## 2009

### **Anti-Terrorism Law**

On February 19, 2009, the Government, in a Cabinet meeting, approved the Anti- Terrorism Bill to be made into law, without due considerations or feedback from the people. This Bill was later

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142 Senior Lawyer in the Supreme Court of Bangladesh and the former Attorney General of Bangladesh

143 The Daily Star, 20 October, 2010

passed by the Parliament in 2009. An Anti-Terrorism Ordinance 2008 was promulgated by the military-backed ‘Caretaker’ Government on June 11, 2008, and ‘terrorism’ and ‘terrorist activities’ have been redefined. The given definitions were so wide and unclear that it left scope for the possibility of misuse.

## 2010

### **Unprecedented Pardon to Convicted**

On September 03, 2010, President Zillur Rahman granted clemency to 20 Awami League activists sentenced to death for murder. Earlier, Judge Firoze Alam of the Speedy Trial Tribunal of Dhaka had sentenced 21 people, including Naldanga Thana Awami League General Secretary SM Feroze on August 24, 2006 for murder of Jubo Dal leader Sabbir Hossain Gama, also the nephew of former BNP central leader Ruhul Kuddus Talukdar Dulu.

## 2011

### **Arbitrary use of Mobile Court**

On 5<sup>th</sup> June 2011, the 36-hour general strike (Hartal) called by the main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party and its ally Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami against the government’s move to repeal the election-time caretaker government provision and amend the constitution began.<sup>144</sup> With a view



to preventing the opposition activists from taking part in the program, the government launched at least 10 mobile courts conducted by executive magistrates across the capital which sentenced imprisonment of various terms to hundreds of opposition activists in numerous instances during

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<sup>144</sup> <http://newagebd.com/newspaper1/index.php?news=22416>

the strike. Notably, such on-spot trial and punishment given under the Mobile Courts Act 2009, do not require a suspect's hearing or production of any evidence.<sup>145</sup>

The courts, led by Additional Executive Magistrate SM Mahbubur Rahman, were set up by the order of Dhaka District Administration. The Executive Magistrates, who are in no way part of the judiciary, summarily sentenced over 100 opposition supporters to jail and penalized many others on picketing charges for varying terms from a month to three months.<sup>146</sup> Among them at least 64 people were punished with one month to three months' jail allegedly under the Tobacco and Anti-drug law of 1952. However, two executive magistrates on that day claimed that they were handing down punishments under sections 353 and 186 of the 2009 Bangladesh Penal Code for mobile courts. The sections provide for action against obstruction in government duty.<sup>147</sup>

## 2012

### **21 Terror Received Prerogative Mercy!**

Twenty-one people sentenced to death penalty received presidential clemency during the current Awamee League-led government while the number was four between 1972 and 2008. The minister for home affairs, Muhiuddin Khan Alamgir informed the parliament. The High Court in a verdict in April 2012 said that the powers of the president to pardon, suspend or remit sentences of any convict should be exercised fairly and on unbiased relevant principles.<sup>148</sup>

The incumbent president pardoned a convict in death row in 2009, 18 in 2010 and two in 2011. In 2008, the then president granted clemency to a death row convict and two such convicts in 2005. And in 1987, another convict with death penalty got presidential pardon. It may be mentioned that Article 49 of the constitution says, "*The president shall have power to grant pardons, reprieves and respites and to remit, suspend or commute any sentence passed by any court, tribunal or other authority.*"

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<sup>145</sup> <http://www.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/asiapcf/06/12/bangladesh.strike.arrests/>

<sup>146</sup> [www.bdnews24.com/details.php?id=198907&cid=3](http://www.bdnews24.com/details.php?id=198907&cid=3)

<sup>147</sup> [www.bdnews24.com/details.php?id=198907&cid=3](http://www.bdnews24.com/details.php?id=198907&cid=3)

<sup>148</sup> New Age, 15/11/12

In February, 2012 President Zillur Rahman granted mercy to convicted killer AHM Biplob for the second time in seven months. This time, Biplob's life imprisonment in each of two murder cases was been reduced to 10-year imprisonment. In July 2011, Biplob, son of Abu Taher, an Awami League leader and mayor of Laxmipur municipality, was pardoned by the president in advocate Nurul Islam murder case, in which he was given death sentence. The president also pardoned Biplob's accomplice Babor, who was also awarded life term in the Kamal murder case. His sentence was reduced by seven years. The two are now serving jail terms in Laxmipur jail. Biplob had been convicted in absentia in all the three cases. After being on the run for more than 10 years, he surrendered before a court on April 6 last year. His father then filed mercy petitions to the president, following which the latter granted clemency to Biplob in Nurul Islam murder case in 2011. In 2009, President Zillur granted mercy to Shahadab Akbar, son of Deputy Leader of the House Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, who did not surrender before court. Shahadab was sentenced to 18 years' imprisonment and fined Tk 1.6 crore in absentia in four cases filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission and the National Board of Revenue during the last caretaker government rule.

President's granting of mercy drew sharp criticism from different quarters, including rights groups, legal experts and the media. Chairman of the National Human Rights Commission Mizanur Rahman reacted sharply to granting of presidential pardon, saying, the nation must come out of this culture.<sup>149</sup>

### **Top terror Bikash Released from Jail!**

Top terrorists are coming out of the prisons in the country. Recently a top terror named Bikash who was imprisoned for the last 15 years has been released under the indirect instruction of the home ministry. There has been an accusation of building up killing missions with these terrorists to tackle the opposition in the coming national election.

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<sup>149</sup> <http://www.bangladeshchronicle.net/index.php/2012/11/zillur-too-merciful/>

## 2013

### Hangings of Quader Molla

Abdul Quader Molla, a top leader of opposition Islamist party Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami, was hanged by the Awami League led government on 12 December 2013 at 10.01 pm at Dhaka Central Jail.<sup>150</sup> The execution took place despite objections made by the United Nations<sup>151</sup>, United Kingdom<sup>152</sup>, Turkey, Australia, European Union<sup>153</sup> and other Human rights organizations like Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International etc.

### Abdul Quader Molla

- Assistant secretary-general of the Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami.
- Former executive editor of The Daily Sangram,
- Former teacher of Rifles Public School and College, Udayan High School, Manarat International School etc.<sup>154</sup>



The hanging was in execution of a death sentence given by the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court in a trial that has failed to maintain minimum level of fairness. The Supreme Court judgment was incompatible with international principles of fair trial and human rights. The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court increased his sentence from life imprisonment to death following an appeal by the government against a judgment of the International Crimes Tribunal-2.

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<sup>150</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-25356034>

<sup>151</sup> <http://www.dhakatribune.com/foreign-affairs/2013/dec/12/int%E2%80%99l-community-opposes-molla%E2%80%99s-execution>

<sup>152</sup> <http://newagebd.com/detail.php?date=2013-12-11&nid=76332#.UqrsYCdYU1t>

<sup>153</sup> <http://newagebd.com/detail.php?date=2013-12-11&nid=76332#.UqrsYCdYU1t>

<sup>154</sup> <http://www.amardeshonline.com/pages/printnews/2013/02/06/186543>

Shortly before Mr. Molla was hanged, his eldest son, Hasan Jamil, said his father's execution was a "political killing." The Jamaat-e-Islami said in a statement the government had "murdered Mr. Abdul Quader Molla in a preplanned way, ignoring pleas from the international community and human rights organizations." The statement called on Jamaat supporters to exercise restraint.<sup>155</sup>

The judgments of both the trial and appellate have found the accused guilty based on uncorroborated hearsay evidence and contradictory testimony. The defence's pleas of alibi and other application was unreasonably rejected showing a clear bias against the accused. The Tribunal repeatedly deviated from recognized judicial norms and principles of fair trial in order to reach a verdict of conviction by any means.

On 5 February, the International Crimes Tribunal convicted Molla on five counts of crimes against humanity involving offences during the 1971 war of independence sentencing him to life imprisonment. It also acquitted him on one other count. Following large protests in the Shahbagh area of Dhaka demanding that Molla receive the death penalty, the government changed the law, allowing the prosecution to appeal against the sentences of life imprisonment.

On 17 September 2013, the appellate division, in a majority judgment, dismissed the appeals made by Quader Molla's lawyers confirming the convictions on five counts, reversing the verdict of acquittal on one count, and handing down the death sentence on one count concerning his involvement in the massacre of a family. The court upheld unanimously that his acquittal on charge no 4 should be reversed and should stand as a conviction, and most significantly that, by a majority, the sentence on charge no 6 (the murder of a family), should be changed from life imprisonment to a death penalty.

International rights activists have expressed their concerns about the Supreme Court's ruling and the apparent relentless effort by the government to ensure that Mollah is dead.<sup>156</sup> The entire process suffers from a number of anomalies which renders the execution incompatible with internationally recognised norms of human rights and fair trial guarantees.

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<sup>155</sup> <http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702303932504579253740672780748>

<sup>156</sup> <http://www.amnesty.org/en/for-media/press-releases/bangladesh-death-sentence-without-right-judicial-appeal-defies-human-rights>

Mr. Molla was hanged despite the flimsiness of the evidence on the charge which he has been sentenced to death and the fact that the tribunal simply did not allow him to put forward his defence.

Quader Molla was put to death relying on the contradictory statement of a witness, giving evidence in court 42 years after the event stating that Molla was present, who had previously given two statements - one to a 1971 museum and another to the investigation officer - neither of which stated that Molla was present at the scene. One of the statements even reveals that she was not present at the time of the incident. For the whole of the last 43 years since the incident on 26 March 1971, Momena never told anybody that Quader Molla had been present at the time of her family's murder. The courts – both tribunal and appellate division – did not take into consideration any of these previous statements which do obviously raise issues about the credibility of the witness.

## Recommendations

- Bangladesh is a state party to many International Conventions and the provision of those instruments are binding on Bangladesh. But, they are being violated every day by the present Govt such as-
- The attack on peaceful procession and arbitrary arrests violates some very basic human rights which Bangladesh is committed to protect but violating frequently. Bangladesh is a signatory of *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) 1966* which incorporated certain fundamental human rights. Under article 21 of this covenant, Bangladesh cannot impose any unreasonable restriction on the right of peaceful assembly held in accordance with law.<sup>157</sup> Afflicting the rally participants, police also disrespected the *rights of protection from torture and cruel treatment*.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>157</sup>Article 21 of ICCPR:*The right of peaceful assembly shall be recognized. No restrictions may be placed on the exercise of this right other than those imposed in conformity with the law and which are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public safety, public order (ordre public), the protection of public health or morals or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.*

<sup>158</sup> Article 7 of ICCPR: *No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.*

- Bangladesh is a state party of Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), 1984 that bars it to take initiatives that tend to form any kind of torture.<sup>159</sup> Instead of implementing, the existing Govt. is increasing the torture with brutal style on the oppositions. This is really very unacceptable and Govt. should immediately stop these violations.
- Again, a speedy trial is one of the fundamental rights of a citizen.<sup>160</sup> And under ICCPR, the Bangladesh government must ensure a fair and public trial for anyone charged with a criminal offense<sup>161</sup>, and such a trial must take place "without undue delay." But it's being fearfully seen that, the Govt. is delaying the trial of so called 'war criminals' and detain them for uncertain period which is clear violation of human rights.
- *Freedom of opinion and expression* is an inalienable human right which is recognized by the Constitution of Bangladesh<sup>162</sup> and by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948.<sup>163</sup> So the Govt. of Bangladesh should stop itself from exercising the arbitrary action harmful to freedom of media and expression. All restrictions and restrictive outlooks towards media must be changed. To prove that, gov't. must stop violence and suppression against media and media personalities.
- Being gross violation of the individual human rights, enforced disappearance is not only barred by international laws<sup>164</sup> but also the widespread or systematic use of the same is termed as a crime against humanity.<sup>165</sup> No exceptional circumstances whatsoever may be invoked by the state as a justification for enforced disappearance.<sup>166</sup>
- Being an elected member of UN Human Rights Council and signatory to catalogue of international human rights instruments e.g. ICCPR, ICESCR, CAT and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), Bangladesh has the strict obligation to protect and

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<sup>159</sup> Article 2 of CAT

<sup>160</sup> Article 35 of the Constitution of Bangladesh ensures it.

<sup>161</sup> Article 14 of the ICCPR

<sup>162</sup> Art. 39(2) of the Constitution of Bangladesh ensures the freedom of expression.

<sup>163</sup> Art. 19 says, Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

<sup>164</sup> Article 7(2)(i) of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court 1998

<sup>165</sup> Article-6 of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (ICCPED)

<sup>166</sup> *ibid*

secure the rights of its people from various crimes and injustices like disappearances which are rapidly turning into a systematic pattern of gross violation of human rights.