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Odhikar Report

121 killed by law enforcement, 55 killed by Indian Border Security Force between 01 January to 30 June 2007

Odhikar, a human rights organization, compiled a comparative data analysis on the human rights situation in Bangladesh of the first six months of 2007 and 2006.

Extrajudicial Killing in 2007

During the period of six months from 01 January to 30 June 2007, **121** persons were reported killed by the law enforcement agencies, of which, **51** were reportedly killed while in custody. Of the total killed, **70** were killed by the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), **29** by the police, **7** by the Army, **7** by Joint Forces, **3** by the Navy and **1** by officers of the Department of Narcotics Control, **1** by Jail Police and **3** by RAB and the police jointly.

It should be noted that out of **121** people, who were killed by law enforcement agencies from 01 January to 30 June 2007, **78** were killed in so-called “crossfire” incidents, **23** were allegedly tortured to death and the remaining **20** died in various circumstances.

Of those **121** people who were allegedly killed by law enforcement agencies, **67** were killed in “crossfire” by the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB). **One** was reportedly tortured to death by RAB and another **2** were arrested by RAB and later died in hospital. It has also been reported that **7** were killed in police “crossfire” and that the police tortured **9** to death, **10** were shot dead by them, a further **1** person died in police custody, **2** people died in hospital after their arrest by the police. **Five** were reportedly killed due to torture by the Army, while **1** died while trying to escape from an army van. Another **1** died in hospital after being arrested by the Army. **3** were reported to have been tortured to death by the Navy. **Three** were reported to have been tortured to death by Joint Forces while **1** was allegedly killed by Joint Forces in “crossfire”. **One** who was arrested by Joint Forces reportedly died in the hospital while **1** allegedly jumped off a six storied building and died while in Joint Force’s custody. **1** was arrested by Joint Forces and died in a police station and another **1** was reported killed after being tortured by the officers of the Department of Narcotics, **1** tortured to death by Jail Police and **3** persons were killed in “crossfire” by RAB and the police jointly.

It was reported that of the **121** persons, **8** were from the Bangladesh National Party (BNP), **5** from Awami League, **7** from Purbo Banglar Communist Party (Jonojuddho), **8** from Purbo Banglar Communist Party, **6** from Purbo Banglar Communist Party (Red Flag), **6** from Biplobi Communist Party, **1** from New Biplobi Communist Party, **4** from Gono Mukti Fouz, **1** from Jatiyo Shomajtantrik Dol (JSD), **3** from Sromojibi Mukti Andolon, **4** from Shorbohara Party, **1** from United People Democratic Front (UPDF), **1** was reported as an ‘extremist’.

Members of other groups were also among those allegedly killed, namely: **3** from Gangchil Bahini, **1** from Masim Bahini, **1** from Haji Bahini and **1** from Salam Bahini. **Two** persons were alleged arms smugglers, **3** alleged arms dealers, **3** alleged muggers, **1** was an alleged gambler, **2** were alleged drug peddlers, **2** were under trial prisoner, **1** was a prisoner, **1** alleged gunrunner, **10** were alleged dacoits and **22** alleged criminals were also among those reported killed.

Apart from the above groups, others allegedly killed including **3** farmers, **1** businessman, **1** police informer (source), **1** bus driver (according to his family), **1** detained bus driver, **1** was a freedom fighter, **1** female garments worker, **1** housewife, **1** was an indigenous leader, **1** adolescent boy and **1** was a person whose profession was unknown

Extrajudicial Killing in 2006

During 01 January to 30 June 2006 **166** people were killed by law enforcers. Of them, **84** were killed by the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), **80** by the police, one by an official of the Forestry Ministry, **1** by the Detective Branch of the police.

Of which, **133** persons were killed in 'crossfire' and 8 were tortured to death. The remaining 25 were killed in various ways.

Decrease in Extrajudicial Killing

The percentage of extrajudicial killings by law enforcement agencies decreased by **27.1%** in the first half of 2007 compared to the same period in 2006.

The number of people killed in so-called "crossfire" incidents decreased by **41.4%**.

However, the number of people who were tortured to death increased by **187.5%**.

Death in Jail and in Police Stations in 2007

Between 01 January - 30 June 2007 it was reported that a total of **52** persons died in jail custody; among them **1** was allegedly tortured to death by jail police and another one reportedly died in a clash between prisoners. A further **50** prisoners, some on remand, died due to illness.

During this time **3** people died in police stations: **2** persons died due to illness and **1** committed suicide.

Death in Jail and in Police Stations in 2006

During 01 January - 30 June 2006 a total of **29** persons died in jail custody and **8** died in police stations.

Change to Deaths in Jail and Police Stations

Deaths in jail increased by **79.3%**.

Deaths in police stations decreased by **62.5%**

Deaths of RAB Personnel

In 2007 **two** RAB personnel were killed.

Freedom of Expression

In 2007 there were a total of **123** attacks on journalists and newspaper offices. 15 journalists were injured, **10** were arrested, **10** were assaulted and **75** were threatened. **12** legal cases have been filed against journalists and **1** journalist's house was attacked.

In the first half of 2006 there were a total of **270** attacks on journalists and newspaper offices. **114** journalists were injured, **2** were arrested, and there were **13** incidents of attacks. **30** journalists were assaulted, **42** were threatened and legal cases were filed against **69** journalists.

Changes in Attacks on Journalists

The statistics show that in 2007 the total incidents of attacks on journalists decreased by **54.4%**

Violence Against Women

Between 01 January to 30 June 2007 a total of **272** women were reportedly victims of human rights violations due to dowry demands, raped or were victims of acid violence. Whereas, in 2006 **471** women had been victims of these human rights violations during the same period in 2006. Dowry, acid and rape related violence against women decreased by **42.3%**

In 2007 a total of **118** women have reportedly been the victims of dowry related violence. Of them, **85** were killed, **27** were tortured and **6** committed suicide.

From 1 January – 30 June 2006 **175** women were victims of dowry related violence. Of them, **133** women were killed, **38** were tortured, and **4** committed suicide due to dowry demands.

From 01 January to 30 June 2007 a total of **111** women were reportedly victims of rape. Of them, **23** women were killed and one woman committed suicide after being raped. Among those raped **50** women were the victims of gang rape.

Whereas, from 01 January to 30 June 2006 a total of **252** women were reportedly victims of rape.

Violence against Children

From 01 January to 30 June 2007, **340** children were reportedly victims of human rights violations. Of them, a total of **173** children were killed. **137** girls were raped, of which, **29** were the victims of gang rape. **10** girls who were raped were then killed. **16** children were reportedly abducted and **11** children committed suicide.

Whereas from 01 January to 30 June 2006, **393** children were reportedly victims of human rights violations. Of them, a total of **152** children were killed, **66** were injured, **47** were allegedly abducted, **16** committed suicide, **4** were arrested and **97** girls were raped.

The percentage of violence against children has decreased by **13.5%** in 2007 compared to the same period in 2006.

Acid

A total of **72** people; **13** children, **43** women and **16** men were victims of acid attacks in 2007.

The same numbers of people, 72, were the victims of acid violence during 01 January – 30 June 2006. In that year there were **11** children, **44** women and **17** men injured in acid violence.

Violence in Indo-Bangladesh Border Area

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) reportedly killed **55** Bangladeshis during the period 01 January to 30 June 2007. In addition, **41** people were injured, **4** people were arrested, **56** were abducted, **2** women were raped, **2** incidents of looting by BSF were reported and **4** people were reported missing. In 2006 from 01 January to 30 June **64** people were killed, **104** people were injured, **11** people were arrested, **83** people were kidnapped, **2** women were raped, **8** incidents of snatching/looting were recorded and **18** people were reported missing.

Methodology

The data in this report was gathered from analysis of eleven national daily newspapers and information from Odhikar's nationwide network of Human Rights Defenders.