



BDR member Mozammel Hoque was allegedly tortured to death in Pilkhana BDR Head Quarters

Fact finding Report

Odhikar

On 9 March 2009, Nayak Subedar Mozammel Hoque (50), died while in confinement in the BDR Headquarters in Pilkhana, Dhaka. Mozammel was the son of late Alimuddin Dewan and Momena Begum of Jhargram village of Naogaon district. His family alleged that he had been tortured to death.

Odhikar conducted a fact-finding mission into the matter. During this, they interviewed:

- relatives of the deceased
- law enforcement agencies

Rahima Begum (45), wife of the deceased, Jhargram, Naogaon

Rahima Begum told Odhikar that on 25 February 2009 after the Pilkhana BDR mutiny, her husband phoned her and said that he was not sure about what would happen to him. After the Pilkhana BDR massacre, she used to talk with her husband over phone until 6 March. At 7 in the morning on 6 March she spoke to him for the last time. Her brother-in-law, Ayub used to talk to Mozammel regularly. She kept telling Mozammel to come home but he did not. Her husband was confident that nothing would happen to him as he said that he was not involved with the mutiny. If her husband had been tortured in Pilkhana, she was not informed, as she might get upset. Later on, she came to know that Mozammel was tortured. She said that her husband was not given food regularly there. While talking with her, Mozammel always talked about hunger, used to cry, and wanted to eat rice. He sometimes requested her to educate and take care of their children. Sometimes he told her to pray.

She claimed her husband to be innocent; however, her husband was tortured. She demanded fair investigation and punishment of the accused. Her family is facing so many difficulties now and she is living inhuman life with her children, she mentioned.

Ayub Hossain Chan (45), younger brother of the deceased, Jhargram, Naogaon

Ayub Hossain told Odhikar that from 25 to 28 February 2009, he communicated with Mozammel and he asked Ayub to keep his cell phone always near to him. Though Mozammel was not present at the place of incidence during the mutiny, he was tortured. He used to talk with Mozammel regularly to know about his condition. Mozammel used to call 1/2 times a day whenever he got the chance. He complained that his brother was not allowed to eat well or bathe.

He said Mozammel worked in BDR for a long time and had good reputation. While posted in Chittagong, he was rewarded for his dutifulness and courage. When Mozammel's phone was ceased, he used to call from different mobile phone repeatedly. Mozammel used to tell him how he had been tortured and asked him to pray. At around 1.30 pm on 5 March 2009, his brother told him that he was being asked to give his full address or the full address of any near relative. He found this matter mysterious, since his brother was a BDR member and they had his file with full details. On 8 March, a person named Motaher called Ayub and told him to talk with the Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Naogaon Police Station. While he called the OC, he was told to go to Mitford Hospital, Dhaka to bring his brother. Just after that, he came to know about the death of his brother from several news media and confirmed about the death of his brother. On 9 March 2009, he brought the body of his brother back to home from Mitford Hospital. Mozammel's palms and soles looked tender and wrinkled. His neck and chin were covered with mud. At that time, the Special Police super of Criminal Investigation Department (CID), Abdul Kahar Akhond was asked about the death of his brother by the journalists. Abdul Kahar replied that an investigation committee had been formed and the fact could be known after the investigation was done. Ayub said that his brother did not do anything for which he had to die by being tortured. He claimed his brother to be innocent and demanded justice.

Khorshed Alam (62), the person conducted the bathing ritual of the deceased, Jhargram, Naoqaoon

Khorshed Alam told Odhikar that he and his neighbour Ismail conducted Mozammel's bath ritual. At that time, he saw that the palm of hand and sole of foot as decomposed. Those seemed bloodless and shattered. More than hundreds of villagers went to console his family and attended his funeral. Mozammel had a reputation as a good person at his locality.

Dr. Md. Belayet Hossain Khan, Departmental Head, Forensic Medicine Department, Sir Salimullah Medical College Hospital, Dhaka

Dr. Md. Belayet Hossain Khan told Odhikar that he did not know anything about the postmortem of Mozammel. At that time, Professor Dr. Tejendro Chondro Das was in this department and he is in retirement now. Office assistant Borhan is now under treatment for blood cancer. That is why he expressed his inability to find the records. He also said that the assistant in the postmortem, Shamol is not in service anymore.

Abdul Kahar Akhand, Special Police Super of Criminal Investigation Department (CID), Dhaka

Abdul Kahar Akhond informed Odhikar that the incident of BDR mutiny happened two years back, therefore, date and information regarding the death of Mozammel is hard to look for.

The end