



August 1, 2010

Human Rights Monitoring Report

01 -31 July, 2010

**Continuation of 'Extra-judicial killings' is cause for concern;
Allegation of enforced disappearances and killings following arrests
by law enforcement agencies;
Sylhet border under attack by BSF and Indian intruders;
Police obstruct human chain made by opposition party;
DU Teacher arrested for being Hizb-ut Tahrir supporter;
Attack on Ethnic Minority communities at Naogaon;
Arrest of people struggling for self-determination;
Charge sheet on BDR mutiny case submitted before the Court;
BDR trial begins at Lalmonirhat;
Attack on Hindu temple;
Distribution of leaflets within police force;
Mahmudur Rahman shown arrested under corruption case.**

Odhikar defends civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights of the people and as part of its mission, observes reports and analyses the human rights situation of Bangladesh. Odhikar documents and records violations of human rights and receives information from its network of human rights defenders as well as from monitoring media reports in twelve national daily newspapers. Odhikar conducts detailed fact-finding investigations where serious violations occur.

In line with this campaign, an account of the human rights situation of Bangladesh covering the period of July 01 – July 31, 2010 is given below.

Continuation of 'Extra-judicial Killings' is cause for concern

1. In the early morning on August 1, 2010, a businessman named Mizanur Rahman died in police custody at Gulshan Police Station. Taslima Begum, his wife, alleged that police picked up Mizanur Rahman on June 29, 2010 from the Nayanagar area in Baridhara in the city. After that, police demanded Taka one hundred thousand from her. Police allegedly shot and killed her husband upon failure to realise that money. She said that she had supplied food to her husband in custody at Gulshan Police Station on the same night when her husband was shot dead.¹
2. Manik, who was arrested with the deceased Mizanur Rahman, told Odhikar that he resides in a rented house belonging to the owner of 'Goodwill Tire and Battery' shop, Md. Aslam Sheikh, located at Plot no. 10, Block-J, Progoti Soroni at Baridhara residential area at Dhaka. He works at Aslam's shop as a driver. At mid night on June 29, 2010, Manik went to a CNG station at Bishwa Road at 1.00 am for gas. As there was a long queue at the CNG station, he parked his microbus near the station and fell asleep inside the vehicle. At around 5.00 am Aslam made a call to his cell phone and asked him to come to Notun Bazar. Manik reached Notun Bazar in a few minutes and saw Aslam in a police pick-up van. He also saw Mizan and Jalal sitting in the police van. 5-7 policemen in civilian dress came to his vehicle with arms and took him out of the vehicle and handcuffed him. He was blindfolded with a gamcha (a cotton towel) and was taken inside the police van. After a while he was brought to Gulshan Police Station. When his blindfold was removed, he found himself in custody. On August 1, 2010 at around 1.00 am police brought him and Mizan out of the custody and pushed them to the ground and shot at their legs with a pistol. He said that he got two bullets while Mizan got three bullets. Police also fired three blank shots. Mizan died while he was under treatment. Manik informed Odhikar that there was no case filed against him.²

¹ The daily Jugantor, 02/07/2010

² Fact-finding report of Odhikar

3. On July 3, 2010, some plain clothes police of the Darus Salam Police Station at Mirpur allegedly picked up one person named Mojibar. His body was recovered from the Turag river the next day. It has been learnt that Mojibar's 7-year old son Iqbal was with him when Mojibar had been picked up by police. Mojibar was allegedly beaten by police and drowned into water in front of his son.³
4. Dhaka Metropolitan Police Headquarters formed a separate inquiry committee on the incidents of deaths of three persons in the hands of police in the city. A three-member committee headed by the Joint Commissioner of Police is investigating these matters.
5. On July 3, 2010, Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner AKM Shahidul Huq told the journalists that "the three incidents of death which occurred in three police stations in the city were isolated incidents. These could be fabricated stories of the newspaper."⁴
6. Odhikar is further concerned by this type of statement made by the Police Commissioner. Rather than recognizing the gravity of the incidents and its implications the Police Commissioner has flatly termed these cases a fabrication of the media.
7. On July 5, 2010, a Division Bench of the High Court Division of the Supreme Court comprising of Justice AHM Shamsuddin Chowdhury and Justice Sheikh Md. Zakir Hossain had ordered that members of the law enforcement agencies be barred from the inquiry committee regarding the incidents of three custodial deaths in the city.⁵
8. On July 8, 2010, Law Minister Barrister Shafiq Ahmed said, "action will be taken against the perpetrators if any further incident of extrajudicial killing occurs."⁶
9. On July 11, 2010, a rickshaw puller Nurul Huq (35), son of late Sona Mia was arrested by Shibpur Police Outpost in Charge Sub-Inspector Md. Nurunnabi from Bidyakut village under Nabinagar Upazila in Brahmanbaria district. He

³ The daily Prothom Alo, 03/07/2010

⁴ The daily Manabzamin, 04/07/2010

⁵ The daily Ittefaq, 06/07/2010

⁶ The daily Manabzamin, 07/07/2010

was taken to Shibpur Police Outpost and died in custody on the same night. The family members of Nurul Huq alleged that he died due to alleged torture in police custody.⁷

10. "Many of those being picked up or arrested by police become sick. If anyone dies due to illness or disease it is mentioned that the arrested persons died in police custody due to torture." This was the comment of IGP Nur Mohammad on July 17, 2010, in a meeting with local journalists of Sylhet at the office of the Sylhet Metropolitan Police Commissioner.⁸
11. Odhikar would like to express its concern that this type of statement made by the higher authority in the police force generally inspires torture in custody.
12. During the month of July 2010, 10 people have been killed extra-judicially. It has been further alleged that of these people, 04 were killed by Police, 01 was killed during joint drives of the RAB and Police and 05 were killed by the joint operation of RAB- Police and Coast Guard. Of these 10 extrajudicial killing related casualties, 04 allegedly killed while they were in custody of police.

Crossfire/Encounter/Gun fight:

13. It has been alleged that of the extrajudicial killings, 06 were killed in 'crossfire/encounters/gun fights'. It has been alleged further that 05 of these persons were victims of 'crossfire/encounter/gun fights' involving the joint operation of RAB-Police-Coast Guard and 01 was the victim of 'crossfire/encounter/gun fights' which involved the Police and RAB.

Death caused by torture:

14. During the month of July 2010, a total of 03 persons were allegedly tortured to death. All were allegedly tortured to death by the Police.

Shot to death:

15. In July 01 person was allegedly shot to death by police.

⁷ The daily Manabzamin, 12/07/2010

⁸ The daily Manabzamin, 18/07/2010

Identities of the deceased:

16. Of the 10 deceased, it has been reported that 01 was a businessman, 01 was a transport worker, 01 was a mason, 01 rickshaw puller, 01 an alleged criminal, 02 were alleged dacoits and 03 were pirates.

Death in jail/Court custody

17. In July 2010, it has been found that 02 persons reportedly died in jail custody.
18. Odhikar is alarmed by the fact that despite the government's assurance, extrajudicial killings, custodial deaths, torture etc, have not been stopped. These incidents are continuing and the law enforcers are killing suspected and accused persons disregarding due process of the law.
19. Odhikar urges the National Human Rights Commission to investigate these extrajudicial killings and present the report to the proper authorities to ensure that justice is met.

Allegation of enforced disappearances and killings following arrests by law enforcement agencies

20. On June 25, 2010, Md. Chowdhury Alam, a Councilor of Dhaka City Corporation and a member of the National Executive Committee of BNP, was allegedly picked up by plain clothes RAB members while he was on his way to Dhanmondi by car from a relative's house at Indira Road in Dhaka city. His son, Abu Sayed Chowdhury Himu, informed Odhikar that on June 20, 2010 a group of people tried to forcibly drag him out of his car when he was returning from United Hospital in Gulshan after visiting Dhaka City Corporation Mayor Sadek Hossain Khoka who was under treatment there. He managed to escape and was chased by the people. He immediately informed the Sub Inspector (SI) Mohammad Ali who was on duty at Gulshan-2 circle. SI Mohammad Ali asked Chowdhury Alam to leave and apprehended one of the men. The man identified himself as Belaet, a member of the RAB intelligence unit. Abu Sayed Chowdhury Himu also informed Odhikar that after the disappearance of his father on 25 June, no trace has been found of his whereabouts. The vehicle which carried his father was

found abandoned on the road side at the Karwan Bazar area, opposite the WASA Bhaban.⁹

21. On July 4, 2010, Abu Sayed Chowdhury Himu filed a habeas corpus petition in the High Court Division of the Supreme Court. A Division Bench of the High Court Division comprising of Justice AHM Shamsuddin Chowdhury and Justice Sheikh Md. Zakir Hossain heard this matter. But this Bench did not issue any rule.
22. On July 13, 2010 the State Minister for Home Affairs Shamsul Islam Tuku said at the core committee meeting of the Ministry, "It seems that Chowdhury Alam had been kidnapped. The law enforcement agencies have been ordered to scrutinize when, how and why Chowdhury Alam had been kidnapped and who were behind this abduction."¹⁰
23. On July 19, 2010, another Division Bench of the High Court Division of the Supreme Court comprising of Justice Mamunoor Rahman and Justice Sayeda Afsar Jahan heard the writ petition filed by Abu Sayed Chowdhury Himu and ordered the Inspector General of Police and the Director General of RAB to take effective measures through quick investigation.¹¹
24. On July 4, 2010 at 12 noon one Mojnu Khan was allegedly picked up by a group of people in a microbus from Nazirpur area under Muladi Upazila in Barisal district. Rina, his sister held a press conference at Barisal Press Club on July 13, 2010 in this regard. She informed that her family had communicated with Babuganj Police Station and the RAB-8 office to know about the whereabouts of Mojnu. On the same day at 12.00 am, police and RAB informed them that no one named Mojnu had been arrested. The next day RAB claimed that Mojnu had been killed in a gun fight with RAB members.¹²
25. On July 14, 2010 Golam Mortaza (30), a student organiser, was arrested by 6/7 plain clothes men, who identified themselves as Detective Branch (DB) police. The family members of Golam Mortaza alleged that the DB police picked him

⁹ Fact-finding report of Odhikar

¹⁰ The daily Amader Shomoy, 14/07/2010

¹¹ The daily Ittefaq, 20/07/2010

¹² The daily Prothom Alo, 15/07/2010

up from Rabinrda Sarobar at Dhanmondi, Dhaka. The relatives of Mortaza inquired about him at the CID, RAB and Dhanmondi Police Station and found no trace of him.¹³

26. A recent trend in human rights violations in Bangladesh is plain clothes men claiming to be members of law enforcement agencies, making arrests. There are allegations of several incidents of enforced disappearances that took place after arrests by law enforcement agencies. Afterwards many of the arrested persons are nowhere to be found. Sometimes their dead bodies are discovered after few days. The families of the victims claim that members of the law enforcement agencies are making these arrests.
27. Odhikar expresses its deep concern over these incidents and demands an explanation from the government about the acts of involuntarily disappearances and secret killings.
28. Odhikar also urges the government to sign the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances, which was adopted on 18 December 2009 in the UN General Assembly.

Sylhet border under attack by BSF and Indian intruders

29. On July 4, 2010, the Border Security Force (BSF) of India and Indian 'intruders' attacked Bangladeshi citizens at Jointapur border in Sylhet. Several rounds of bullets were fired during this attack which led to 10 Bangladeshis being injured, including 4 with gun shot wounds. Among those shot were Kamal, son of Abdul Karim of Jointapur Adarsha village; Abdul Mannan, son of Nurul Islam; and Koyes son of Kona Mia of Kendi village who have been admitted to Sylhet Osmani Medical College Hospital. The annoyed villagers raised a barricade on Sylhet-Tamabil Road near Shreepur BDR camp for one and half hours in protest against the inactive role of the BDR in this regard. The villagers also attacked BDR bunkers at Pagla Tila and chanted slogans against the BDR.¹⁴

¹³ The daily Amader Shomoy, 25/07/2010

¹⁴ The daily Juganto/Kaler Kantho, 05/07/2010

30. On July 23, 2010, five Bangladeshi children went to Nagor river to fish near the border pillar no. 345, located at Minapur village under Thakurgaon district. The BSF members of Molda Khongaon camp entered Bangladesh territory and surrounded them. In the mean time, the farmers who were working nearby rushed to the spot hearing the screams of the children. But the BSF kidnapped Dania Ali (15), son of Daniul Islam; Shahabuddin (13), son of Abdul Kuddus; Montu (8), son of Nazrul Islam; Raihan (8), son of Atabuddin; and Setabul (9), son of Joynal Abedin by threatening to shoot the farmers.¹⁵
31. The BSF is continuing its anti-humanitarian activities which are undermining the assurance provided in the joint agreement between the Bangladesh and Indian Prime Ministers for stopping border violence and also similar assurance provided in this regard at the meeting between the Director Generals of the two border forces held during March 7-11, 2010. The BSF is also provoking Indian intruders in this regard.
32. According to Odhikar information, several incidents of human rights violations towards Bangladeshi citizens along the border area were committed by the Indian BSF and Indian 'intruders' in July 2010. During this month, the Border Security Force (BSF) reportedly killed 09 Bangladeshis and 14 were allegedly injured by BSF-Indian citizens joint attacks. Among those 14 injured persons, it is reported that 04 were solely attacked by BSF. Among those 04, 02 Bangladeshi citizens were shot and wounded and 02 were tortured. Furthermore, 12 Bangladeshis were abducted by the BSF. During this time 02 persons were missing; 01 incident of looting and five Hindi speaking Indian Muslim citizens were pushed into Bangladesh as well.

Police obstruct human chain made by Opposition party

33. Obstruction by police and consequent violence occurred in many places during human chain programmes organised by the opposition Bangladesh National Party (BNP) across the country, including Dhaka from 11.00 am to 12.00 pm on July 7, 2010 demanding the release of its leaders and activists

¹⁵ The daily Naya Diganto, 25/07/2010

during the general strike; withdrawal of false cases; and ending torture and custodial deaths. Police allegedly attacked and beat leaders and activists of the BNP while they were making human chains in different parts of the capital city, including the National Press Club, Shahbagh, Dainik Banglar More, Bangla Motor, Kawran Bazar area, Farmgate, Asadgate, Kalyanpur and Mirpur. The main opposition party BNP alleged that at least 15 leaders and activists have been injured in police attacks and over 100 leaders and activists have been arrested.

34. Odhikar expresses its concern over the formation of police barricades on peaceful human chain programmes of the Opposition and demand that the democratic space should not be narrowed further.
35. Limiting the space for democracy and repression on opposition political parties will only provoke resentment.
36. Odhikar believes that any citizen of the State has the right to form a political party or an organisation and organise political activities in a peaceful manner. These political parties or organisations also hold the right to criticise the Government. Furthermore, all citizens have the right to organise and take part in meetings and associations and assemblies as guaranteed in Articles 38 and 39 of the Constitution.

DU Teacher arrested for being Hizb ut Tahrir supporter

37. On July 8, 2010, Syed Golam Mowla, Professor of the Department of Management at Dhaka University, who is a supporter of Hizb ut Tahrir, was arrested by DB Police from the Katabon area of Dhaka city. He was shown arrested in a previous case filed with Uttara Police Station in March 2010. He had been taken into 3-day remand for interrogation.¹⁶ It is to be mentioned that police have arrested about 300 leaders and activists of Hizb ut Tahrir so far, including its Chief Coordinator Mohiuddin Ahmed and Joint Coordinator Kazi Morshedul Huq.¹⁷

¹⁶ The daily Naya Diganto, 09/07/2010

¹⁷ The daily Star, 14/07/2010

38. On October 22, 2009, the Government banned all activities of Hizb ut Tahrir Bangladesh. The news of banning the organisation was circulated by a press note signed by Dr. Md. Kamal Uddin, Joint Secretary (Political), Ministry of Home Affairs.
39. Hizb ut Tahrir condemned violence and anti democratic activities through its leaflets and meetings. It also demanded freedom of thought and speech through peaceful means as a fundamental human rights.
40. Odhikar believes that society becomes more violent and unstable, if the State or Government blocks alternative opinion and different thoughts regarding the international, regional and internal political situation of Bangladesh.

Political violence continues

41. On July 5, 2010 a clash took place between supporters of two rival groups of the Awami League backed Chattra League of the Jahangirnagar University unit led by Rashedul Islam Safin and Nirjhar Alam, over imposing supremacy on the Al-Beruni residential hall of the University. At least 35 students were injured in the clash and two received gun shot wounds during the gunfight between the two groups.¹⁸
42. Meanwhile Home Minister Sahara Khatun's comment regarding the clash between Chattra League factions in Jahangirnagar University was, "This type of incident can occur, but what can be done once it has occurred?"¹⁹
43. According to information gathered by Odhikar, 16 persons have been killed and 1127 injured in political violence in July 2010. There were also 46 incidents of internal violence in the Awami League and 04 within the BNP. In addition to this, 04 people were killed in Awami Leagues internal conflict while 410 were injured. On the other hand, 45 persons were injured in BNP initiated violence.

¹⁸ The daily Prothom Alo, 06/07/2010

¹⁹ The daily Naya Diganto, 07/07/2010

Attack on ethnic minority communities at Naogaon

44. On July 12, 2010, a group of land grabbers led by Shariful Islam, with the support of influential local political leaders of the ruling party, attacked a village of ethnic minority communities at Nak-El under Niyamotpur Upazila in Naogaon district. More than 50 houses belonging to ethnic minority community people were ransacked and looted in this incident. The attackers also beat the men and women. One of the wounded, Palash Murmu, is under treatment in Niyamotpur Hospital. It has been claimed that two members of the ethnic minority community, namely Anil Murmu and Sufan Soren, have gone missing. Members of the ethnic minority communities alleged that the attack took place in order to grab their land.
45. Odhikar believes that it is the Government's responsibility to ensure legal rights of the ethnic minority communities along with their land rights and security of their property. When the State fails to ensure these rights, violence against ethnic minority communities occurs.

Arrests of people struggling for self-determination

46. On July 17, 2010, Ranjan Chowdhury alias Major Ranjan, Military Commander of United Liberation Front of Asam (ULFA) along with his Bangladeshi associate Prodeep Marak were arrested by the intelligence unit of the RAB Headquarters and a special team of RAB-9 from Laksmipur area of Bhoirab under Kishoreganj district.
47. Ranjan Chowdhury was engaged in the struggle for self-determination and took shelter in Bangladesh to protect his life. Article 25(1) (C) of the Bangladesh Constitution states, 'the State shall base its international relations on the principles of respect for national sovereignty and equality, non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, peaceful settlement of international disputes, and respect for international law and the principles enunciated in the United Nations Charter, and on the basis of those principles shall - (c) support oppressed peoples throughout the world waging a just struggle against imperialism, colonialism or racialism.

48. Odhikar expresses concern over the political stand taken by the Government of Bangladesh regarding the self-determination struggle of the oppressed people.

Charge sheet on BDR mutiny case submitted before the Court

49. On July 12, 2010, the Criminal Investigation Department of Police (CID) submitted a charge sheet of 132 pages against 824 accused persons in connection with the Pilkhana BDR mutiny case. BNP leader Nasiuddin Ahmed Pintu, Awami League leader Torab Ali and 23 general citizens were included in the list. Among the BDR members, 6 Deputy Assistant Directors, 44 Subedars, 80 Habildars, 60 Nayaks, 68 Lance Nayaks, 504 soldiers, 14 chefs, 1 office clerk, 1 peon and 1 hospital boy, 2 caretakers, 18 sweepers and 2 carpenters. A total of 1285 witnesses, including Ministers, Parliament Members and Army officers have been identified. It has been stated in the charge sheet that the incident of mutiny basically occurred in relation to the demands placed by the members of the BDR.²⁰

50. Meanwhile, the CID has submitted another charge sheet on July 27, 2010 in relation to the BDR mutiny case under the Explosives Act, 1884. A total of 808 BDR jawans and a civilian named Zakir Hossain have been accused in a 112-page charge sheet under sections 3, 4 and 6 of the Explosives Act, 1884.

51. A scope has to be given to the accused BDR members for presenting their comments through their nominated lawyers for the sake of justice and ensuring human rights. Odhikar urges the government to make public the full investigation reports prepared by two inquiry committees; one led by former Secretary Anisuzzaman and the other led by Lieutenant General Jahangir of the Bangladesh Army.

52. Odhikar demands that proper justice be ensured so that the real culprits involved in this incident are punished.

²⁰ The daily Kaler Kantho, 13/07/2010

BDR trial begins at Lalmonirhat

53. On July 27, 2010, trial of BDR mutiny case of 31 Rifles Battalion of Lalmonirhat commenced. The trial has begun at the Special Court 2 built in the Headquarters of the Battalion under the BDR Director General Major General Rafiqul Islam. The allegation brought against 24 arrested BDR jawans under a case filed by Junior Commanding Officer (JCO) Subedar Habibur Rahman of 31 Rifles Battalion was presented before the Court. 31 Rifles Battalion Commander Lt. Col. Aslam Hossain, prosecutor of this case, presented allegations before the Court and he was assisted by special prosecutors Gazi Zillur Rahman and Belaet Hossain.
54. Major General Rafiqul Islam, Director General of the BDR, adjourned the Court by declaring 07 November 2010 as the next date for hearing the case. Human rights defenders of Odhikar in Lalmonirhat district are monitoring the trial process.²¹

Attack on Hindu temple

55. On July 18, 2010, a group of criminals led by one Tofazzal Sheikh attacked, ransacked and broke the windowpanes of a temple and the idols of Lord Krishna at Shilimpur village under Tongibari Upazila in Munshiganj district. The attackers allegedly threw the broken idols into the water. It has also been learnt that Tofazzal Sheikh, Shaon, Nasir Monir and Shahdat have been harassing the Hindu families residing in that area for a long time in order to grab the lands of the temple.²²
56. Odhikar condemns this incident of attack on the religious minority community and demands the Government should take immediate actions against perpetrators.

Distribution of leaflets within the police force

57. Leaflets are being distributed within the police force in different areas of the country for the last month, claiming to be a 31-point charter of demands

²¹ Odhikar's Human Rights Defenders in Lalmonirhat

²² Human Rights Defender of Odhikar

including increase of salary and other benefits. Some of the 31 demands are: salary of the Constables to be paid under Grade XII; an additional three thousand Taka for food; 8 year's timescale to be given within a month; and 50% bonus for vulnerable/ risky duty to be paid with salary. Furthermore, it states that there should not be any difference between the salary structure of the Army and the police force.²³

58. Regarding the leaflet, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Nur Mohammad commented "I have doubts whether any policeman is involved with bringing out this leaflet."²⁴
59. Odhikar believes that the demands are justified. The government should take immediate measures about investigating the demands raised in the leaflets.
60. Odhikar would like to remind all that due to deprivation and unresolved matters among the security forces, incidents like the Ansar revolt and the BDR mutiny took place.

Mahmudur Rahman shown arrested in corruption case

61. On July 13, 2010, Mahmudur Rahman, Acting Editor of the daily Amar Desh, was shown arrested in a corruption case No. 28(6)2010, filed under Gulshan Police Station, Dhaka city. Investigating officer of the case, Md. Noor Ahmed, Deputy Director of Anti Corruption Commission (ACC), filed an application before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court that Mahmudur Rahman be shown arrested under a corruption case. Earlier, Mahmudur Rahman had applied to the lower Court for injunction against the notice of the ACC, which asked him to submit his wealth statements. But the lower Court rejected his application. Later he challenged the lower Court order at the High Court Division of the Supreme Court. On April 27, 2010, a Division Bench of the High Court Division issued a rule and granted stay on the ACC notice to submit his wealth statements. The ACC appealed against the stay order of the High Court Division before the Chamber Judge of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court. Following this appeal the Chamber Judge Mohammad

²³ The daily Prothom Alo, 14/07/2010

²⁴ The daily Prothom Alo, 14/07/2010

Mozammel Hossain on May 5, 2010, stayed the order of the High Court Division for 10 days and the ACC was instructed to file a leave petition within this period. Thereafter, the ACC filed a leave petition.

62. It is to be mentioned that the ACC on March 10, 2010, gave a notice to Mahmudur Rahman to be present at the Commission on March 16, 2010 for interrogation. However, Mahmudur Rahman filed a civil case against this order before the Judge Court. The case is still pending in the Court.
63. The military-backed 'Caretaker' government arrested many political leaders including the present Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and the leader of the Opposition Begum Khaleda Zia and tried to change the political scenario by filing number of cases against them using the Anti Corruption Commission. However, the ACC are playing the same role under the present elected government.

Police baton charge on private university students

64. Agitated students of 13 private universities, including North South University, BRAC University, East West University, American International University of Bangladesh, and Daffodil University blocked the Mohakhali-Banani Road for several hours on July 26, 2010, protesting against imposing a 4.5% VAT on tuition fees. The police charged at them with batons to disperse them.
65. The students engaged in sporadic clashes with the police. The students demonstrated on the Gulshan-Mohakhali Road, blocking it in front of the BRAC University and demanded the withdrawal of VAT on tuition fees.
66. Following the protest by the students, the Finance Minister Abul Mal Abdul Muhit declared a withdrawal of VAT on their tuition fees on July 28, 2010.
67. Though the government has withdrawn VAT on tuition fees from private universities, the VAT on tuition fees in the secondary schools and kindergartens are still in force.
68. Odhikar believes that education must be treated as a right and not as a business commodity. It also urges the government to initiate a pro people education system.

Freedom of media

69. In the month of July 2010, several journalists became victims of abuse and assault. During this period, 01 journalist was injured, 03 threatened and 03 journalists were assaulted.

Situation in the readymade garments sector

70. During the month of July 2010, a total of 02 readymade garments factory workers have reportedly been killed and 454 Injured.

71. On July 29, 2010, the Minimum Wage Board declared Taka 3,000.00 (USD 43.47) per month as the minimum wage for garments workers. However, the garments workers have been demanding Taka 5,000.00 (USD 72.46) per month to be declared as the minimum wage.

72. On July 30, 2010 several thousand garments workers staged a protest against the decision of the Minimum Wage Board and vandalized property in the Tejgaon, Mohakhali and Gulshan areas. Annoyed garment workers in Fatullah under Narayanganj district blocked the Dhaka-Narayanganj link road and the workers in Ashulia area also blocked Dhaka-Tangail highway on July 31, 2010 and vandalized property. Police charged with batons on the agitated workers. At least 50 people including 2 policemen were injured in Narayanganj while more than 200 workers including police and journalists were injured in Ashulia.²⁵

Incidents of rape

73. On July 5, 2010, a female student of class IX went to a local shop to buy an exercise copy in Kaharta village under Shokhipur Upazila of Tangail. On her way back home she was kidnapped by Shokhipur Upazila Awami League backed Chattra League Joint Convener, Habibulla Etahas alias Habib; Upzalia Chattra League leader Arif Ahmed; Babul Azaz and Ariful Islam Akash, nephew and grandson respectively of Shokhipur Upazila Chairman Showkat Sikdar. They forcefully took her to a hostel at Hazipara in Shokhipur where Habibullah Etahas alias Habib allegedly raped her while his associates filmed

²⁵ The daily Shamokal, 01/08/2010

the incident by a video camera. The girl ran away when another man tried to rape her. When they chased her she screamed. Hearing her screams local people came forward to save her and the rapists fled. The next day, the victim filed a case with Shokhipur Police Station in this connection. Although police have arrested Ariful Islam Akash, the prime accused has not been arrested yet. The victim's family has left their home for want of security as they have been threatened by the accused persons.

74. During July 2010, it has been reported that a total of 51 females were raped, where 20 were adults and 31 were children. From the adult females, 05 were killed after being raped and 06 were gang raped. From the 31 female children who were raped, 04 of them were killed after being raped and 05 were victims of gang rape.

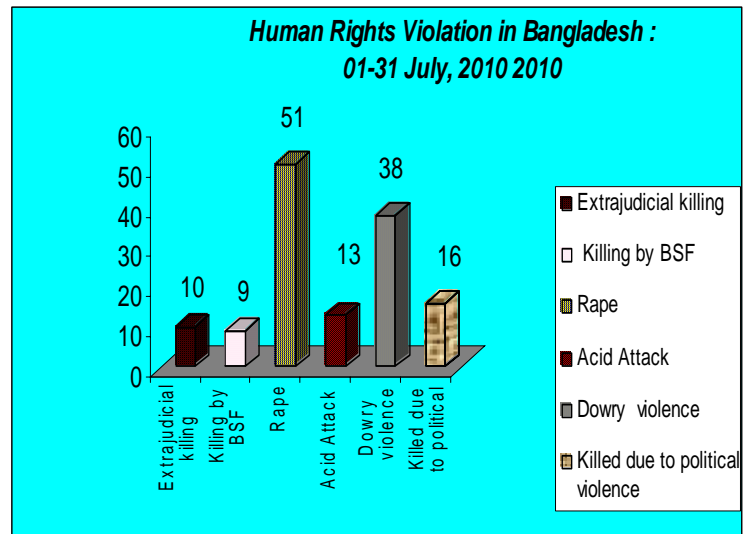
Dowry-related violence

75. During July 2010, a total of 38 women were subjected to dowry related violence. Of these women, it has been alleged that 26 were killed because of the dowry demands and 08 were treated inhumanly. Of these women, 04 allegedly committed suicide after failing to come to terms with the dowry related mistreatment and violence. Due to dowry related disputes, three minor children have reportedly been killed by their fathers. Furthermore, one woman committed suicide after killing her child.

Acid violence

76. In July 2010, 13 persons were victims of acid violence of which 09 were women and 04 were men.

<i>Human Rights Monitoring Chart</i>	
<i>01-31 July, 2010</i>	
Human Rights Violation	Total number of victims
Extrajudicial killing	10
Killing by BSF	9
Rape	51
Acid Attack	13
Dowry violence	38
Killed due to political violence	16



Recommendations

1. Extra-judicial killings and custodial deaths must come to an end as per the election manifesto of the ruling party and declaration made by the Government at the UPR session in the UN Human Rights Council. Those involved in such killings must be brought to justice by the Government.
2. Torture in remand and other forms of custody must be stopped. The Government must respect its commitment to 'zero tolerance' for extrajudicial killings, custodial deaths and torture.
3. Involuntary disappearance is a new phenomenon and extremely alarming. The Government must rescue those who have been kidnapped by groups claiming to be of law enforcement agencies and also provide a clear statement on the killings that follow such kidnappings.
4. The Bangladesh Government must take immediate steps to bring an end to the injuring and killing of Bangladeshi citizens by the BSF and Indian intruders.
5. The Government should be responsive in order to stop political violence. It must take effective actions against those involved in violence irrespective of political beliefs. The law enforcement agencies need to be proactive to stop violence.

6. The State must restore the fundamental rights of religious minorities and provide physical protection to those who have been abused, along with security over their property.
7. Harassment of the dissenting voices such as Mahmudur Rahman, acting editor of Amar Desh must be stopped. Government must ensure the enforcement of Article 39 of the Constitution of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh.
8. The minimum wages and other benefits of the garments workers must be ensured in order to ensure their rights to shelter, food, employment and health.

Tel: 88-02-9888587, Fax: 88-02-9886208

Email: odhikar@sparkbd.net, odhikar.bd@gmail.com Web: www.odhikar.org

Notes:

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