



Former Union Parishad Chairman Mohammad Shafiqul Islam was allegedly shot dead by RAB in Comilla

Fact-finding Report
Odhikar

On April 4, 2011 at around 2.30 am, former chairman of Ziarkandi Union Parishad Mohammad Shafiqul Islam (45), son of late Chand Mia and Zabeda Khatun, and the resident of Ziarkandi village under Titas Police Station in Comilla, was allegedly shot dead by members of the Crime Prevention Company (CPC)-1 of RAB-11.

Wife of Shafiqul told Odhikar that she was informed that Shafiqul was picked up by RAB from Demra in Dhaka city and was killed at Choto Kamarer Char Dakshinpara village under Araihasar Police Station in Narayanganj district.

Odhikar conducted a fact-finding mission into the incident. During the mission, Odhikar spoke with:

- Relatives of Mohammad Shafiqul Islam;
- Eye-witnesses;
- Morgue Assistant, Dhaka Medical College Hospital; and
- Members of law enforcement agencies



Picture: Md. Shafiqul Islam

Tahmina Akhter (36), wife of Shafiqul

Tahmina Akhter told Odhikar that her husband Mohammad Shafiqul Islam was a member of the Titas Thana unit Awami League and former chairman of Ziarkandi Union Parishad. On November 18, 2010, Korban Ali, son of late Nazir Ahmed, was stabbed in Ziarkandi village. Upon receiving this news, her husband had admitted Korban to a local hospital, where he succumbed to his injuries. Shafiqul was preparing to contest for the upcoming Union Parishad

elections. According to Tahmina Akhter, Korban's mother was motivated by Shafiqul's rivals to file a case accusing 14 persons, including her husband so that he could not contest in the election. He was released on bail from the High Court under this case. She along with her husband and children had been living in the Duari Bazar Eastern Housing complex at Pallabi in Dhaka city.

On April 3, 2011 at 9.30 am her husband went to the High Court from their house to get an extension of the bail granted earlier. At around 2.00 pm Shafiqul told her over cell phone that hearing for the extension of bail would be heard on a later date. One Mokbul was accused in the same case along with Shafiqul. She was informed by Shafiqul that Mokbul had suggested communicating with the deceased Korban's brother, Abdul Mazid, who was in the Kajla area at Demra, and convince him to withdraw the case. Shafiqul went to Kajla from the Court with Mokbul instead of returning home. As Shafiqul did not return home, at 10.00 pm, Tahmina Akhter tried to contact him on his cell phone but it was switched off.

On April 4, 2011 at about 2.00 am Mokbul informed Tahmina on her cell phone that when he went to Kajla with Shafiqul, they did not find Abdul Mazid. Later Mokbul left for Ziarkandi leaving Shafiqul near a CNG station at Kajla. He also told Tahmina that he heard from local people of Kajla area that Shafiqul was picked up by 6/7 plain clothes men in a white microbus from the CNG station at around 10.00 pm. At around 2.30 am Mokbul called her again and informed her that he had learnt that Shafiqul had been shot dead by members of RAB-11 after taking him to Choto Kamarer Char Dakshinpara village under Araihasar Police Station in Narayanganj district. When she asked Mokbul how he got this information, Mokbul did not name the informer. She contacted Shafiqul's nephew Shakil Ahmed over telephone and told him to check with Araihasar Police Station and the local hospital for Shafiqul. She also told Shafiqul's niece Fatema Begum, who lives in Dhaka, to search at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

At 10.00 am Fatema Begum informed her from the DMCH morgue that Shafiqul's body was lying at the hospital morgue escorted by the members of RAB and police. Hearing this news Tahmina went to the DMCH and saw Shafiqul's body at the morgue. She saw five bullet wounds in his chest and left rib. She was waiting outside the morgue to receive the body. Journalists from various media had gathered there too. At around 3.00 pm RAB members suddenly came in and tried to take away the body from the morgue. She asked RAB where they were taking Shafiqul's body without post-mortem. RAB members got angry at her and said that they can take the body away wherever they want. She was threatened by RAB not to speak. Journalists present at the morgue also asked RAB why they were taking the body away without conducting a post-mortem. RAB told journalists that since the incident took place at Araihasar in Narayanganj district, police of the said police station had prepared an inquest report. But the concerned Magistrate would not sign the inquest report without seeing the body. That is why they have to

show the body to the Magistrate and get the inquest report signed from Narayanganj. Tahmina tried to get in the RAB microbus to go with Shafiqul's body. But she was pushed down from the microbus by the members of RAB and told to come along in a separate car. She then hired a microbus and followed RAB's microbus, which was carrying Shafiqul's body. After some time the RAB microbus took a different turn and she lost it. She came to know that no body had been taken to Narayanganj hospital. She assumed that the body could have been taken to Munshiganj, as the Narayanganj hospital morgue was undergoing repair work. Later she went to Munshiganj District Hospital. At around 6.00 pm a man from Dhaka Medical College Hospital anonymously informed Tahmina that RAB had brought the body of Shafiqul back to the morgue. She went to the DMCH morgue again from Munshiganj District Hospital. Tahmina received the body at 11.00 pm after the post-mortem and returned home with Shafiqul at around 12.00 am. Shafiqul was buried at their family graveyard at Ziarkandi village on April 5, 2011 at around 5.00 pm. She alleged that her husband's rivals paid RAB to kill her husband.

Fatema Begum (30), Niece of the deceased

Fatema Begum told Odhikar that she was informed by her aunt Tahmina on April 4, 2011 at around 9.30 pm that RAB had killed her uncle Shafiqul at night. She was asked to go to DMCH to look for the dead body. At 10.00 am Fatema reached the DMCH morgue. She saw a dead body being escorted by some RAB members and police. RAB obstructed her when she tried to approach the body to identify it. Later she managed to see the body with the help of a journalist and identified the body as being Shafiqul Islam.

Faruque Ahmed (29), Eye-witness

Faruque Ahmed informed Odhikar that he was sleeping at home in Choto Kamarer Char Dakshinpara village in the night of April 4, 2011. He woke up at 2.15 am hearing shouting of 'robbers' 'robbers' near the MRMTIN Mill adjacent to his house. He came out of the house and walked towards the mill with a torch. He heard 5/6 gunshots. He saw 7/8 armed RAB members in front of the mill and a dead body lying with blood on its throat and chest. A gun and a bullet were also lying on the ground beside the body. Members of RAB told him that a man was shot when shootout erupted with robbers and RAB. He was told to sign a piece paper by a RAB member. He signed without saying anything and left. Later he came to know that the deceased man was Mohammad Shafiqul Islam, a former Chairman of Ziarkandi Union Parishad under Comilla district.

Mohammad Sana Ullah (23), Eye-witness

Mohammad Sana Ullah told Odhikar that he was also sleeping on that night when the incident took place. He woke up at 2.15 am hearing the shouts 'robbers' 'robbers'. He heard 5/6 gunshots when he came out of his house. Later he saw 7/8 RAB personnel with arms and torches around a body lying on the ground. A gun and a bullet were also lying on the ground close to the body. One of the RAB members asked him whether he knew the deceased. He told RAB that he did not

know the deceased man. Sana Ullah was also told to sign a piece of paper by a member of RAB. He asked that member of RAB why he had to sign. The RAB member told him that an incident of shootout took place here which was described on the paper. He was too scared to read it and signed the paper.

Sub Inspector Ashrafuzzaman, Second Officer, Araihasar Police Station, Narayanganj

Sub Inspector (SI) Ashrafuzzaman informed Odhikar that on April 4, 2011, Deputy Assistant Director of CPC-1 under RAB-11 unit filed two cases with Araihasar Police Station, one of which was numbered 1, dated 04/04/2011 under section 19(A) of the Arms Act, 1878. The case number 2 was filed under sections 186/307/332/353/302/427 of the Penal Code. In both cases 6/7 persons, including Shafiqul were shown accused. SI Zahirul Islam was given responsibility to investigate both cases. There was no other case filed against Shafiqul.

SI Zahirul Islam, Araihasar Police Station, Narayanganj

SI Zahirul Islam told Odhikar that on April 4, 2011, he had been informed from the police station that a body was lying at Araihasar Upazila Health Complex. He saw the body escorted by RAB personnel in the health complex. He prepared an inquest report and sent the body to Dhaka Medical College Hospital for autopsy as there was no such facility at the Narayanganj District Hospital. Later he brought the inquest report to a Magistrate for his signature. The Magistrate would not sign the report without seeing the body. Later he brought the body back from DMCH and got the inquest report signed by the Magistrate after showing it to him. He also informed that an incident of shootout between RAB and robbers occurred in Choto Kamarer Char Dakshinpara area where the deceased man had been hit by bullet. Being a complainant Deputy Assistant Director (DAD) Yunus Ali filed two cases with the police station on April 4, 2011. He is investigating both the cases.

Arman Uddin Chowdhury, Company Commander, CPC-1, RAB-11, Adamji, Narayanganj

Arman Uddin Chowdhury informed Odhikar that on April 4, 2011 a RAB team led by DAD Yunus Ali was on special duty in Gopaldi road under Araihasar police station in Narayanganj. At 2.10 am they were informed that a group of men were preparing for robbery in MRMTIN Mill at Choto Kamarer Char Dakshinpara. Upon hearing this information RAB rushed to the spot. They confined the area and a shootout erupted between robbers and RAB members, where 15/20 gunshots occurred. One man was found shot on spot. Locals told RAB members that his name was Shafiqul Islam and he was former chairman of Ziarkandi Union Parishad in Comilla district. The on duty doctor at Araihasar Upazila Health Complex declared Shafiqul dead when RAB took him to the health complex. Later police from Araihasar Police Station took away the body to DMCH for autopsy. He informed that a gun and cartridges were recovered from the place of occurrence. DAD Yunus Ali filed two cases with Araihasar police station after preparing a seizer list. He also informed that 38 cases were filed against Shafiqul with Daudkandi and Titas Police

Stations in Comilla. He told Odhikar to contact RAB headquarters for information about the said cases.

Major Mohammad Khurshid Alam, Deputy Director, Legal and Media Wing RAB Forces Headquarters, Dhaka

Major Mohammad Khurshid Alam informed Odhikar that 38 cases had been filed against Shafiqul with Daudkandi and Titas Police Stations. However, he did not provide the particulars of these cases and the exact number of cases filed in which police station.

SI Shubho Ranjan Chakma, Titas Police Station, Comilla

SI Shubho Ranjan Chakma told Odhikar that Nazma Begum, wife of Mohammad Hannan of Ziarkandi, filed a case accusing 9 persons, including Shafiqul Islam, which was numbered 9, dated 18/11/2010 under section 143/323/324/326/307/34 of the Penal Code. He had investigated the case. He did not get any evidence against the accused persons involved in this incident. However, during investigation he found 4 men who were actually involved with this case. On March 2010, he submitted a charge sheet before the court accusing those four persons. Furthermore, Titas Upazila Parishad Chairman Mohammad Parvez Hossain Sarkar filed a General Diary (GD No.895) on August 25, 2010 against Shafiqul. No more complaints were filed with this police station against Shafiqul.

AKM Kausar Chowdhury, Office-in-Charge, Daudkandi Police Station

AKM Kausar Chowdhury told Odhikar that he heard that Shafiqul had died in a shootout with RAB on April 4, 2011. He said, 2/3 political cases were filed against Shafiqul which he had been acquitted from. According to him, Al Amin Mia of Ziarkandi village filed a case (No. 16 dated 21/11/2010) against Shafiqul under section 143/341/302/34 of the Penal Code. 14 persons were accused in the case and the accused persons had been released on bail from the High Court. Sub Inspector Jahangir Alam, In charge of Gouripur Investigation Centre, was assigned for the investigation. When Odhikar drew his attention to the 38 cases which RAB said Shafiqul had been accused in, he commented that RAB knows better where these 38 cases had been filed against Shafiqul.

SI Jahangir Alam, Gouripur Investigation Centre, Daudkandi, Comilla

SI Jahangir Alam informed Odhikar that he heard that Shafiqul had been shot dead in a gun fight with the members of RAB-11 on April 4, 2011 at around 2.30 am. He was investigating the case which was filed with Daudkandi Police Station on 21/11/2010. All accused persons, including Shafiqul were released on bail in the case. He could not inform whether any other case had been filed with this police station against Shafiqul.

Dr. Khan Mohammad Zahir Uddin, Residential Medical Officer, Upazila Health Complex, Araihasar, Narayanganj

Dr. Khan Mohammad Zahir Uddin told Odhikar that RAB-11 brought a body to the hospital on the morning on April 4, 2011. He then informed the matter to the local police station. Dr. Ismail Hossain gave a death certificate to the deceased family. Later police took the body away to Dhaka Medical College Hospital for post-mortem.

Dr. AKM Shafiuzzaman, Dhaka Medical College Hospital

Odhikar fact-finding team could not talk to Dr. AKM Shafiuzzaman as he was not present in the hospital.

Babul, Morgue Assistant, Dhaka Medical College Hospital

Morgue assistant Babul told Odhikar that police of Araihasar Police Station brought the body of Shafiqul to the hospital morgue in the morning of April 4, 2011 for autopsy. However, RAB members were also present with police while escorting the body. RAB took the body away at around 3.00 pm without post-mortem due to complexity in the documents and brought it back at 4.00 pm and then Dr. AKM Shafiqul conducted post-mortem as post-mortem no. 592. He informed that five bullets were found in the deceased's chest and left rib. The body was handed over to the deceased's wife Tahmina Akhter after post-mortem.

Odhikar demands that the government should take legal action to punish the perpetrators through proper and impartial investigation.

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