



Mohammed Rafikul Islam allegedly stoned to death by the BSF at the Bamondol border of Patgram Police Station, Lalmonirhat

Fact Finding Report

Odhikar

At around 5:00 am on 24 July, 2011 the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) allegedly killed Mohammed Rafikul Islam (35) of Ufarmara village (which is under the jurisdiction of Patgram Police Station, Lalmonirhat) by throwing stones at him.

The river Saniajan flows between the 'BS Bari BSF Camp' and 'Khorkhoria BSF Camp' in India towards Bangladesh through the Bamondol village in the area of Patgram Police Station. The Indian government made a bridge on its side of the river and they also put up a barbed wire fence. BSF members guard the border standing on the bridge. Indian businessmen send their goods from Fokirer Danga village of Mekliganj Police Station of Kuchbihar district in India, through to Bangladesh on the river, under the bridge. The cattle traders of India help the Bangladeshi cattle traders to return to Bangladesh by swimming under the bridge. The BSF members throw stones whilst standing on the bridge, on the people swimming towards Bangladesh. As a result people and cows are often killed and remain floating on the water after death. It is alleged that members of the BSF threw stones at Rafikul Islam from the bridge and then brought him to the bridge and hit him, resulting in his death.

It is the allegation of the inhabitants of the border area that the more the issue of border killing is discussed between Bangladesh and India, the more techniques of killing are being invented by the BSF.

Odhikar conducted a fact finding mission into the incident. During the fact finding Odhikar interviewed-

- The relatives of the deceased Rafikul Islam
- Eye-witnesses
- The Members of the law enforcement agencies.



1) Body of Mohammed Rafikul Islam



2) The body was found near this pillar of the bridge.



3) The floating corpse of one of the cows.



4) On either side of the bridge are fences.

Mosammut Mini Begum(28), wife of Rafikul

Mosammut Mini Begum informed Odhikar that her husband was a landless farmer. She has two sons named Riyad Hossain (8) and Rifat Hossain (6). When his farming work was finished Rafikul used to work as a labourer at the zero point of the Burimari border in order to make ends meet.

Around 5:00 am on 23 July, 2011 her husband went shopping to Burimari market. When Rafikul didn't return home at night, Mini Begum informed Rafikul's cousin, Mohammed Abedar Rahman. Abedar Rahman told her that Rafikul might go to bring back cows.

The next morning, 24 July, 2011 at around 5:00 am she repeatedly tried to call Rafikul again on his mobile but failed to make any contact. At around 7:00 am she again talked with Abedar Rahman. Abedar Rahman informed her that he went at dawn to the Burimari market and heard from the cow traders that many people came back with cows last night but Rafikul was not among them. He also heard people in the market talking about many people being injured by stones thrown by BSF members at night when crossing the river. Some people also mentioned that BSF members threw stones at Rafikul as well.

Abedar Rahman took Rafikul's brother Nazrul Islam with him, and went to the Shaniajan river of Bamondol village near the border, recovered Rafikul's dead body from the river and brought it home at 9.30 am. Police, from Patgram Police Station took the body with them from Rafikul's home. After postmortem, the body was buried at the family graveyard at 4.30 pm on 25 July, 2011. There was a large injury on Rafikul's forehead, the brain was exposed and protruding from the skull and a large amount of blood was seeping through his nose, mouth and ear.

Mohammed Abedar Rahman (45), Rafikul's cousin

Mohammed Abedar Rahman informed Odhikar that at 5.00 pm on 23 July, 2011 he went to Burimari market and saw Rafikul talking with a few local cow dealers. Then he called Rafikul over and warned him about the danger of bringing cows from India.

On 24 July, 2011 at around 7:00 am, Rafikul's wife Mosammut Mini Begum informed him that Rafikul went to Burimari market yesterday and hadn't returned home. Then Abedar Rahman called Rafikul on his cell phone but was unable to talk to him. He went to Burimari market in the early morning. In the market after talking with some cow traders he came to know that BSF members had thrown stones at Rafikul. As Rafikul failed to return to the market, they assumed that Rafikul was possibly dead.

Then he went to the Bangladesh side of the Shaniajan river of Bamondol village near the border, with Rafikul's brother Najrul, Enamul Haque- the commander of the Ansar and VDP camp and some local people.

Standing on the border, Abedar Rahman saw the BSF members on the bridge. The members asked the Indian farmers the reason for the crowd on the border of Bangladesh staring at the bridge. Then an Indian farmer asked Abedar Rahman 'What are you searching for?'. He replied that at night a person was lost and that they were looking for him. Then a BSF member told the Indian farmer that under the bridge in the water there was a bamboo pole and under the bamboo pole was a dead body. The BSF member also told the Indian farmer that during the previous night, BSF members threw stones on a person taking cows towards the Bangladeshi border and two cows died along with that person. The cows floated towards the border of Bangladesh and in order not to lose the dead body, they anchored it with a bamboo pole.

The BSF gave the Bangladeshi people 20 minutes to take the dead body. Abedar Rahman heard the BSF member talking and tried to talk with him repeatedly but could not. Then the BSF members left and the Indian farmer told him to go to the bridge. He along with around 20/25 local people of Bamondol and Ufarmara village, swam to the bridge, from the Bangladeshi side of the border. He saw congealed blood on the bridge. Then with the help of the people of Fakirdanga village of India he went under the bridge and recovered and identified the dead body of Rafikul.

He saw that the forehead was split and the brain was exposed. There was an injury on the left side of the neck. He assumed that the BSF members threw stones from the bridge and then brought Rafikul onto the bridge and hit him on the neck to ensure his death, which is why there was congealed blood on the bridge. Then he took the body with him to Rafikul's home.

Mohammed Nazrul Islam (45), Rafikul's brother

Mohammed Nazrul Islam informed Odhikar that at 5:00 am on 24 July, 2011 he was informed by Rafikul's wife that Rafikul had not return home at night. Then with Abedar Rahman and a few other people, he recovered Rafikul's dead body from under the bridge over the Saniajan river and brought the body home. He said that after they returned home with the dead body the members of BGB from Dhobolshuti BOP Camp came to Rafikul's home. They wanted to take the body again to the border for a flag meeting but the local people refused as the BGB had failed to take any steps before to stop or help people in such incidents. He along with the local people went to the Patgram Police Station at 2.15 pm and as complainant he filed a case against unidentified BSF members for committing murder and hiding the evidence. The case is numbered: 21; date: 24/07/2011 under sections 302/201/34 of the Penal Code.

Nazrul Islam also said that at around 3:00 pm on 24 July, 2011 the Sub Inspector of Patgram Police Station Shri Khirod Chondro Bormon, came to their home and prepare the inquest report. Then police sent the dead body to the Lalmonirhat Sadar Hospital for post-mortem.

At 4.30 pm on 25 July, 2011 the body of Rafikul was brought back from Lalmonirhat and at 5:00 pm the burial was concluded at the family graveyard.

Enamul Haque, Commander, Anser and Village Defence Party (VDP), no 8 Union Parishad, Patgram

Enamul Haque informed Odhikar that on 24 July, 2011 he got the news from Abedar Rahman that Rafikul had not returned home after he went to the border. He went to the Shaniajan river with Abedar Rahman and recovered the dead body of Rafikul.

After one hour of bringing the dead body home, 2 members of BGB from Dhobolshuti BOP came to Rafikul's home. They asked him why the dead body was brought without their permission. At one point they told him to take the dead body back and leave it under the bridge in the water. He tried to make them understand that though the body was brought from India, taking it back to India was not possible. But the BGB members didn't listen to him and threatened to arrest him. At last, local people surrounded the BGB members and requested them not to create any scene with the dead body. However, the BGB members did not give up insisting and the local people prepared to confine the BGB members and inform the police station. Finally the BGB members left.

SI Shri Khirod Chondro Bormon, Patgram Police Station, Lalmonirhat

Sub Inspector Shri Khirod Chondro Bormon informed Odhikar that at 2:15 pm on 24 July 2011 a person from Ufarmara village called Nazrul Islam came to the police station and as a complainant filed a case. The case is numbered: 21; date: 24/07/2011 under sections 302/201/34 of the Penal Code. He is the investigation officer of the case. At around 3:00 pm he went to Rafikul's home and prepared the inquest report. After that police sent the body to Lalmonirhat Sadar Hospital for post-mortem. On 25 July, 2011 after completion of the post-mortem the body of Rafikul was handed over to the family.

Dr. Goutom Kumar Bishwas, Residential Medical Officer, Sadar Hospital, Lalmonirhat

Dr. Goutom Kumar Bishwas told Odhikar that at 7:00 pm on 24 July, 2011 police of Patgram Police Station brought a body of a person named Rafikul to the hospital. He came to know that the man died after being hit with stones thrown by BSF members. At around 10:00 am on 25 July, 2011 a board consisting of three members, Dr. Motachib, Dr. Mehedi and Dr. Bishwas conducted the post-mortem. He explained that due to being hit by a stone or something hard, Rafikul's skull had been fractured and as a result the deceased had lost a large amount of blood, which was the reason for his death.

Mohammad Ali, Morgue-Assistant, Sadar Hospital, Lalmonirhat

Mohammad Ali informed Odhikar that on 24 July, 2011 the police of Patgram Police Station brought a dead body of a person named Rafikul to the hospital. At around 10:00 am on 25 July, 2011 a board of 3 members conducted the post-mortem. During the post-mortem he cut the body.

He saw that there was an injury on the forehead, the brain was protruding from the head and a large amount of blood was lost through nose, mouth and ear.

Nayeb Subedar Mejbah, BGB, Dhobolshuti BOP, Patgram, Lalmonirhat

On 24 July, 2011 Nayeb Shubedar Mejbah was informed by the local people that a person named Rafikul of Ufarmara village was killed with stones thrown by the BSF members while coming towards Bangladesh, under the bridge over the Saniajan river. He said that he sent his members to the spot. BSF members wanted to hold a flag meeting but the family refused to hand over the dead body and that is why he sent an objection letter to the BSF Camp.

Shafikul Islam (36), who washed Rafikul's body before burial

Shafikul Islam informed Odhikar that at around 4.30pm on 25 July, 2011 he washed the body of Rafikul before his burial. There was an injury on the forehead and the brain was protruding out of the head. It was apparent that a large amount of blood had been lost through the nose, mouth and ear.

There has been no implementation of the continuous guarantee to Bangladesh that Bangladeshi citizens will not be killed by the BSF. It is apparent that the BSF is using new techniques to continue killing people. According to reports, these techniques used against unarmed Bangladeshis include connecting electricity to the barbed wire fence and has been seen in this case, also the throwing of stones to cause severe injury and often death.

Odhikar demands that the government of Bangladesh take strong effective steps against this shameful killing which not only harms its citizens but also undermines national sovereignty and weakens the Bangladeshi government as a whole.

-End of Report-