

## Shufol Singho, a farmer, was allegedly tortured by BSF members near the Porsha border in Naogaon district

Fact-Finding Report

Odhikar

Shufol Singho (52) claimed that on May 18, 2012, the members of Border Security Force (BSF) India took him away and tortured him. Shufol Singho is the son of late Shommopod Kormokar and late Surang of Duarpal village under Porsha upazila of Naogaon district.

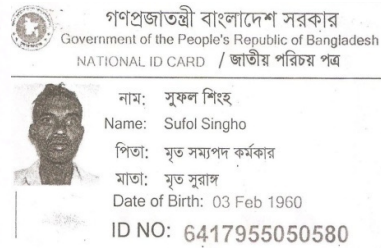
On May 18, 2012 at around 7 am he went to cut crops in his own field in Katlamari Chor near the 232/5 S pillar of the Bangladesh-India border. There, at around 11 am, the BSF members on duty at the Dalla border of Horipur thana of Maldah district asked him for some water while standing at the no man's land. He alleged that when he went to the no man's land with water, the BSF caught and tortured him.

Odhikar carried out a fact finding mission into the incident. During the mission Odhikar interviewed:

- Victim Shufol Singho and his relatives
- The village doctor who treated Shufol Singho
- Witnesses and
- Members of the law enforcement agencies



Photo: 1. Shufol Singho



2. Shufol Sinho's National ID Card

### Shufol Singho 52, victim:

Shufol Singho informed Odhikar that on May 18, 2012 at around 7 am he went to cut the crops in his field in Katlamari Chor near the 232/5 S pillar of the Bangladesh-India border. He was accompanied by his sons Shuk Chan Singho and Roop Chan Singho. At around 11 am two BSF members signaled him from the no-man's land and asked him for drinking water. Upon the request of the BSF members, he went near the no-man's land with the water. As he approached them, the BSF members grabbed him and began hitting him on his head, shoulder, chest, back, hands and legs with a rifle butt. He fell to the ground. Then one of the BSF members broke a branch from a tree and began beating him with that while another BSF member beat him with his belt. While beating him, the BSF members told him that his buffalo had eaten the crops from the fields of the people living on the Indian side of the border. At that time he told the BSF members that

he knew nothing about this matter. However the BSF members were not interested to hear anything from him. Then the BSF members began verbally abusing him, took off his shirt, pulled his hands back and tied them up. They began beating him again with the belt and stick. He asked for forgiveness from the BSF members and requested them to stop the torture but the BSF members paid no heed.

While they were beating him up, his sons Shuk Chan Singho and Roop Chan Singho came and requested the BSF members to stop. However, the BSF members snapped at them and told them to go away. After about one hour, the BSF stopped torturing him when a high official arrived on the scene. Shufol Singho mentioned that the BSF members quite frequently tortured Bangladeshis near the border without any reason. He demanded justice.



Map of the border between Duarpal village of Porsha Upazila in Naogaon district and Dalla village of Horipur Thana in Maldah district of India

**Shuk Chan Sing (27), son of Shufol Singho and a witness:**

Shuk Chan Sing told Odhikar that on May 18,2012 at around 11 am he and his brother were cutting their crops at the Katlamari Chor near the 232/5 S border pillar with their father. He saw, two BSF members standing in the no-man's land calling his father and asking for drinking water. When their father went near the border with the drinking water, the BSF members suddenly pounced on him. He saw the BSF members dragging their father towards the Indian border, all the while hitting him on his head, shoulders and chest with a rifle butt. At that time his father was screaming for help and requesting the BSF members to stop the torture. When his father fell to the ground, one BSF member began kicking him constantly and the other one broke a branch from a tree and began beating him with that. Then one of the BSF members took off his father's shirt, brought his hands towards his back and tied them up and another one began beating him all over his body with a belt. They were also slapping and punching him. At that time his father fell to the ground and began crying. He constantly requested the BSF members to stop. He and his brother Roop Chan then went to the BSF members and requested them to stop torturing their father but they paid no heed to them.

**Kona Rani Singho (45), Shufol Singho's wife:**

Kona Rani Singho informed Odhikar that on May 18 ,2012 at around 7am her husband along with their two sons were cutting the crops in his field at the Katlamari Chor near the 232/5 S number pillar of the India-Bangladesh border. At around 12 pm a local man informed her that BSF members were torturing her husband at Katlamari Chor. She rushed to their paddy field at Katlamari Chor and saw a few people were carrying her unconscious husband towards the village. She saw bruises on her husband's head, neck, hands, legs, thighs, waist, chest and back. She also said that there have been many other incidents of BSF members torturing Bangladeshi citizens living near the border. She said that the incident of torture of her husband has left the villagers feeling terrified and insecure.

**Yousuf Ali (50), witness:**

Yousuf Ali told Odhikar that on May 18,2012 at around 11am he was grazing goats and sheep in Katlamari Chor near the 232/5 S number pillar of the Bangladesh-India border. At that time he saw two BSF members standing in the no-man's land were calling out to different farmers working at the paddy field. However, the farmers did not approach the BSF members. After that, the two BSF members called Shufol Singho, asking him for drinking water. Sometime after that he saw Shufol Singho approaching the no-man's land with the water. When Shufol neared the BSF members, they dragged him towards the Indian border while hitting him on his head, shoulders, chest and many other parts of his body with a rifle butt. When Shufol fell to the ground, one of the BSF members took off his shirt brought his hands behind his back and tied them up. Another one began beating him relentlessly on his head, neck, hands, legs, thighs, waist, chest and back with his belt. They were also slapping and punching Shufol at the same time. At that point, Shufol was crying for forgiveness and requesting them to let him go. He along with Sanaullah (28), Mohammad Ajibur (32), Mohammad Jalaluddin (43), Mohammad Aidul (43), Mohammad Shahjahan (52), Mohammad Azizul (50), Mohammad Hafizul (62) and 30/35 other villager helplessly witnessed the torture that was being inflicted on Shufol. Then slowly, he along with a few other people went forward to save Shufol from the torture. The people present there could not understand at first, why Shufol was being tortured but after some time they realized that the BSF members were torturing him for no good reason. He informed that while the BSF members were beating him, they were constantly saying that Shufol's buffalo had eaten the crops from the fields of the Indian people living near the border. After some time, a high official of the BSF arrived at the scene and saved Shufol from torture by the BSF members. After that the villagers quickly took him to a doctor. He assumed that if that high official had not arrived, then the torture on Shufol would have continued. He said that the complaint that the BSF members have against Shufol, of his buffalo eating up the crops in the field of the Indian people living near the border is completely false. The owners of domestic animals at the Bangladesh-India border never send their cattle to graze at the Indian side, they are always careful about this matter, he mentioned. He also said that there have been such incidents before where the BSF members have taken away ordinary people from their village for no good reason and tortured them on false claims.

**Mohammad Shajeman (60), village doctor, Duarpal village, Porsha, Naogaon:**

Mohammad Shajeman informed Odhikar that on May 18, 2012 at around 11 am he was loading his truck after cutting the crops of his own field which is about 1 km away from 232/5 S number border pillar at the Katlamari Chor area. At that time, upon seeing a crowd in the distance, he approached the number 232/5 S pillar. He saw two BSF members beating up Shufol with a stick and a belt. Shufol was screaming for forgiveness and requesting them to let him go. The BSF members tortured Shufol for about one hour. At one point of the torture, a high official of BSF arrived there and the torture stopped. He saw that due to the torture by the BSF members, an inflammation had formed at the back of Shufol's head and there were bruises on his shoulders, chest, hands, legs and many other parts of his body. He along with a few other villagers carried the unconscious Shufol to his chambers and there he gave him treatment.

**Nayeb Subedar Rofikul Islam, Camp Commander, Hapania Border Camp, 46 batallion, Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB), Porsha, Naogaon:**

Nayeb Subedar Rofikul Islam told Odhikar that on May 18, 2012 at around 1 pm a man from Duarpal village informed him that BSF members had tortured a farmer called Shufol when he was cutting crops in his own field at Katlamari Chor near the number 232/5 S border pillar. He said that he informed Nitpur Camp Commander Subedar Aktar and Rajshahi Sector Commander about this matter. Other than that he was not willing to say anything more about Shufol's torture.

**Subedar Aktar, Camp Commander, Nitpur Border Camp, Border Guard Bangladesh, Porsha, Naogaon:**

Subedar Aktar informed Odhikar that on May 18, 2012 at around 11 am Hapania Border Camp's Commander Nayeb Subedar Rofikul Islam told him that the BSF members tortured a farmer named Shufol near the 232/5 S number border pillar at Katlamari Chor. As Shufol had not made any allegations regarding his torture by the BSF members, he could not take any steps to investigate the incident.

**Odhikar's view:** It seems that a life of insecurity and fear has become a regular matter for the Bangladeshi citizens living near the Bangladesh-India border. Odhikar demands that the government send a formal protest to India regarding the torture of Shufol Singho and arrange for his proper treatment. Odhikar thinks that unarmed Bangladeshis at the border are frequently becoming victims of killings, torture and kidnapping because of the weak foreign policies of Bangladesh. Odhikar urges the government to take stern actions regarding such matters.

-End of Report-