



Nurnabi of Feni Was Injured by Police Beating

Fact-finding Report

Odhikar

A man named Nurnabi (27) from the village of Dakshmin-Purba Char Chandia (south-east Char Chandia) under the Sonagazi Upazila¹ of Feni district alleged that he was called by a police officer of the Sonagazi Police Station at around at 5.30 pm on May 2, 2008 and injured him by beating in the police station. The allegation was also corroborated by the eyewitnesses.

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

- The man who claimed to be the victim of beating and his family
- Eye-witnesses to the incident
- The law enforcement authorities and
- The hospital authorities

Nurnabi (27), the injured victim

While talking to Odhikar, Nurnabi said that he has been living in the same house with his wife Ayesha Akhtar Kazoli, his son, his mother Sokina Begum and his younger sister. On April 21, 2008, his whole house was burned down in a fire. Nurnabi built a new house from his income as a day-labourer and by taking financial assistance from other sources. Due to a family feud, Nurnabi's mother told him and his wife and son to live elsewhere. However, Nurnabi was reluctant to leave the land his father had acquired. This was why Nurnabi's mother filed a General Diary (GD) at the Sonagazi Police Station on April 22, 2008, upon the advice of Md. Sirajul Islam alias Siraj Miah, a member of the Village Police² of that village. According to Nurnabi, Siraj used the GD as a means to scare him and said that if Nurnabi paid up Taka 4000, the police would not come after him. Nurnabi stated that on May 1, 2008 at around 6.00 pm, after he returned home, he heard from his wife that an Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) of the Sonagazi Police Station named Mohammad Ullah, accompanied by another police officer had come to their

¹ Upazila in Bangladesh is an administrative unit under a district.

² Village Police is a local security system under the Union Parishad, the lowest level of the local government in Bangladesh. The Village Police members assist in law enforcement activities.

house earlier that day at around 10.30 am and left a message to his wife Kazoli for Nurnabi asking him to meet him at the police station at around 5.00 pm. Since Nurnabi had arrived home after 5.00 pm he was unable to go to the police station that day. Nurnabi also told Odhikar that his mother informed the news of his unwillingness to leave his father's homestead to Khokon, the Chairman of Char Chandia Union Parishad³ and Sentu, the Chairman of Sonagazi Pourashabha⁴.

Nurnabi stated that at around 2.00 pm on May 2, 2008, Chairman Khokon called upon him and solved the dispute after a discussion. When ASI Mohammed Ullah of the Sonagazi Police Station called Nurnabi again, he informed Chairman Khokon of this. In turn, Khokon told Nurnabi that he would not face any problems if he meets ASI Mohammad Ullah at the police station.

Nurnabi on the basis of the assurance given by Chairman Khokon went to the Sonagazi Police Station at around 5.30 pm. Upon entering the police station, Nurnabi saw his mother, younger sister Nur Nahar (16), Village Police member Siraj, his Uncle Abu Taher and Salahuddin, a community leader from his village all sitting in front of ASI Mohammad Ullah. ASI Mohammad Ullah seeing Nurnabi immediately began to verbally abuse him and beat him with a wooden roller almost one yard long, on his right knee, left wrist, his fingers, left rib and back. At a point during the beatings, Nurnabi fell on the ground. Nurnabi said that he begged ASI Mohammad Ullah to stop beating him but he would not stop. Towards the evening at around 7.30 pm, Nurnabi returned home on a rickshaw-van with the help of his Uncle Abu Taher. He fell more ill as the night progressed. At 11.55 pm, his Uncle Abu Taher and his wife Kazoli took him to the Sonagazi Upazilla Health Complex and admitted him there. In the midst of his illness, Nurnabi went to meet Harun-Or-Rashid Hazari, the Superintendent of Police (SP)⁵ of Feni at his office at the district headquarters from the hospital at around 11.00 am on May 3, 2008. There he demanded justice for the demeaning treatment of ASI Mohammed Ullah towards him. Nurnabi returned to the hospital at around 12.00 pm and after recovery, he came home on May, 5, 2008.

Ayesha Akhtar Kazoli (20), wife of the injured Nurnabi

³ Union Parishad is the lowest level of the local government in Bangladesh.

⁴ Pourashabha is a form of local government in Bangladesh.

⁵ SP is the head of district police administration.

Ayesha Akhtar Kazoli told Odhikar that although there was a feud between her husband and her mother-in-law, there were no feuds between herself and her mother-in-law. Despite this, her name was also included in the GD her mother-in-law filed. It was on the basis of that GD that Village Police member Siraj demanded Taka 4000 as bribe on behalf of ASI Mohammed Ullah. She said that Nurnabi was beaten because he had not given that amount of money, which resulted in injuries on his hands, feet, back and left leg which was broken. Kazoli demanded justice for the wrongs done against her husband.

Sokina Begum (45), Nurnabi's mother

Sokina told Odhikar that she lives with her son Nurnabi and daughter-in-law Kazoli. However, since her husband Bahar Ullah lived abroad, her son and daughter-in-law would engage into dispute with her and ask her to leave the house time and again. On April 21, 2008, when the house where they all lived got burned down, Nurnabi again got into a quarrel with her and ask her to leave the house. Sokina, as a result was forced to complain about the behaviour of Nurbnabi to Siraj. When Siraj advised her to file a case, she went to the Sonagazi Police Station with Siraj and filed a GD against Nurnabi and Kazoli on April 22, 2008. Sokina believed that if the police beat her son, it would perhaps force Nurnabi to realise his misdeeds. This was why she had told ASI Mohammed Ullah to give Nurnabi a slight beating. On May 2, 2008, at around 5.00 pm Sokina went to the Sonagazi Police Station along with three to four people from her village as per the advice of ASI Mohammed Ullah. At around 5.30 pm, when Nurnabi arrived at the police station, the ASI began to beat him with a stick. ASI Mohammaed Ullah stopped beating Nurnabi upon her request. Sokina returned home after this. She informed that after Nurnabi's condition deteriorated at night, his Uncle and wife admitted him at the hospital.

Shamsuddin Khokon, Chairman, Char Chandia Union Parishad

Shamsuddin Khokon told Odhikar that he had heard of the feud between Sokina and her son. When he heard that Sokina had filed a GD against Nurnabi, he and Sentu, the Chairman of the Sonagazi Pouroshabha called Nurnabi to his office on May 2, 2008. After hearing Nurnabi's version of the story, he advised Nurnabi to live elsewhere with his wife until his father came back to Bangladesh. He also told Nurnabi that until his father returned, Nurnabi's mother Sokina would continue to live in the house they were all currently living in. According to Khokon, Nurnabi had accepted his proposals. Khokon told Odhikar that he contacted ASI Mohammad Ullah regarding the

calling off of the GD filed by Sokina and simultaneously sent Nurnabi to the police station. He said that Nurnabi, following his advice, went to the Sonagazi Police Station at around 5.30 pm on May 2, 2008. After a while, Khokon received news from Nurnabi's Uncle Abu Taher over the telephone that Nurnabi was being beaten by ASI Mohammed Ullah. The Chairman said that he immediately went to the police station and found Nurnabi lying on the ground after receiving beating. When Khokon asked the Officer-in-Charge (OC) as to why he was being beaten, the OC said he knew nothing. The OC told him to talk with ASI Mohammed Ullah regarding the matter. When Chairman Khokon asked ASI Mohammed Ullah as to why he had beaten Nurnabi, he failed to give an acceptable answer.

Sirajul Islam alias Siraj Miah, a member of Village Police, Dakshmin-Purba Char Chandia (south-east Char Chandia), Sonagazi

Sirajul Islam alias Siraj Miah told Odhikar that Sokina would often share words about the quarrels she had with her son and daughter-in-law with him. On April 22, 2008, he assisted Sokina in filing the GD against her son. He said that he had told Nurnabi to go to the police station as per the direction of ASI Mohammed Ullah. Siraj denied demanding any money from Nurnabi. According to Shiraj, ASI Mohammed Ullah had beaten Nurnabi so that he would never behave in an inappropriate manner with his mother.

Salahuddin Kabir (38), Eye-witness

Salahuddin Kabir told Odhikar that at around 5.00 pm on May 2, 2008, Sokina took him to the Sonagazi Police Station. He stated that Sokina had taken him to the police station for the purpose of retraction of the GD she filed against her son. He continued by saying that upon their arrival at the police station, ASI Mohammed Ullah without hearing either parties of the GD began to beat Nurnabi with a wooden stick. Salahuddin mentioned that although the OC of the police station was present in the room next where the beating was taking place, he did not come forward to refrain ASI Mohammed Ullah.

Md. Amzad Ali, Second Officer, Sonagazi Police Station

Second Officer Md. Amzad Ali told Odhikar that Sokina Begum, the wife of Bahar Ullah from the village of Dakshmin-Purba Char Chandia (south-east Char Chandia), filed a GD against her son Nurnabi and Nurnabi's wife Ayesha Akhtar Kazoli on April 22, 2008. It was stated in the GD that Sokina's husband had been in Oman for many years. Her son and daughter-in-law always used to argue with her. This was why she had asked Nurnabi to live elsewhere but Nurnabi did not agree to this proposal. It was further stated in

the GD that the house where Sokina and her family lived was burned down on April 21, 2008. When Nurnabi tried to build another house on Sokina's ancestral land, she prevented Nurnabi from doing it. In response Nurnabi threatened to kill Sokina and it was following this threat that Sokina filed a GD on April 22, 2008, which bore the number 34. He stated further that the OC gave ASI Mohammed Ullah the responsibility to investigate into the GD No. 34.

Second Officer Amzad told Odhikar that May 2, 2008 at around 5.00 pm, the person who had filed the GD, namely Sokina, arrived with three other men at the police station. The accused party of the GD, Nurnabi, arrived at the police station at around 5.30 pm. He continued by saying that no sooner had Nurnabi arrived at the police station, than ASI Mohammad Ullah began to brutally beat up Nurnabi. When the SP of Feni asked him what had happened, he provided the SP with a written account of the incident on May 3, 2008. He finished his talks with Odhikar by saying that ASI Mohammed Ullah was later suspended from the Sonagazi Police Station following an order issued by the SP.

ASI Mohammed Ullah, Sonagazi Police Station, Feni

ASI Mohammed Ullah told Odhikar that after being appointed the Investigation Officer of the GD No. 34, he went to Dakshmin-Purba Char Chandia (south-east Char Chandia) village on May 1, 2008 and came to know of the feud between Sokina Begum and her son Nurnabi. He told Sokina Begum and Nurnabi to meet him at the police station towards the evening. However, none of them went to the police station that day. On May 2, 2008, he summoned through Village Police member Siraj so that Sokina and Nurnabi would come to the police station. He said that Sokina arrived with three men at the police station at around 5.00 pm on May 2, 2008. Mohammed Ullah stated that at around 5.30 pm, the accused party in the GD, i.e. Nurnabi arrived at the police station. He thought that he would give Nurnabi a mild beating to solve the dispute between Nurnabi and his mother. That was why he gave Nurnabi a few hits with a wooden roller. He said that after Nurnabi was beaten, he prayed for forgiveness by falling to his mother's feet. He added that at around 7.00 pm, they left the police station.

ASI Mohammed Ullah told Odhikar that on May 3, 2008, he received a piece of news that he was summoned by the SP. Towards the evening he came to know that he had been suspended from the Sonagazi Police Station. As per

the directives of the authorities, Mohammed Ullah went to the Feni Police Lines.

Harun-Or-Rashid Hazari, Superintendent of Police (SP), Feni

SP Harun-Or-Rashid told Odhikar that at around 10.00 am on May 3, 2008, three men from the Dakshmin-Purba Char Chandia (south-east Char Chandia) of Sonagazi, came to his office. One of the three persons was ill. The ill person introduced himself as Nurnabi. The SP stated that he came to know from the Sonagazi Police Station that Nurnabi's mother out of family feud filed a GD against her son. He also came to know from the police station that the Investigation Officer of the GD, ASI Mohammed Ullah demanded Taka 4000 as bribe and when Nurnabi refused to give, ASI Mohammed Ullah called him to the police station beat him inhumanely.

The SP further stated that the OC of the Sonagazi Police Station admitted the fact of the incident. He informed that ASI Mohammad Ullah had been suspended from office. He continued by saying that the Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) of the concerned Police circle had been appointed to investigate into the incident.

Dr. Saiful Islam, Residential Medical Officer (RMO), Sonagazi Health Complex, Feni

Dr. Saiful Islam told Odhikar that Nurnabi was admitted to the hospital at 11.55 pm on May 2, 2008 in a state of illness. He said that Nurnabi's wrists, fingers, various places on his legs and back bore injuries. Dr. Saiful said that since Nurnabi was seriously injured, he was given immediate treatment. He continued by saying that Nurnabi was released from the hospital on May 5, 2008, with a prescription for further treatment.

Uma, a nurse from the Sonagazi Health Complex

Nurse Uma told Odhikar that on May 2, 2008, at 11.55 pm, two or three men brought Nurnabi to the hospital. She said that Nurnabi was admitted to Bed No. 3 of the men's ward. Uma stated that the hospital entry number of Nurnabi was 2803/5. She further stated that when Nurnabi was admitted to the hospital, he was seriously ill.

-The End of Report-