

Doctor Mizanur Rahman Tutu alias Tutul Shot Dead by Police at Naogaon

Fact-finding Report Odhikar

It was alleged that at around 4.15 am on July 27, 2008, Doctor Mizanur Rahman Tutu alias Tutul (49) was shot dead by the police at the Eidgah¹ of Dighir Para² of Kaligram of Raninagar Upazila³, Naogaon. Odhikar's fact-finding mission discovered that Tutu was the head of Rajshahi-Natore-Naogaon-Chapainawabganj region of Purbo Banglar Communist Party- M.L. [Red Flag]. According to Tutu's mother, as per the report in the daily Jugantor, Tutu was arrested at around 10.00 pm on July 25, 2008, from Dhaka and taken to the RAB-1 office at Uttara in Dhaka. After hearing this news, in order to prevent Tutu from being killed in so-called 'crossfire', Tutu's mother tried to place a written plea to the Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Jhenaidah district on July 26, 2008. In the event of the plea not being accepted by the DC, Tutu's mother organised a press conference, where she urged the Government to ensure that her son would not be killed in the name of 'crossfire' and if there were any allegations against him, he should then be tried before the court under the operant laws of the country. On the other hand, it was stated from the district police of Naogaon district that on the night of July 27, 2008 they received information from a secret source that Tutu and his colleagues from his 'extremist' political organisation were holding a meeting at the Eidgah of Dighir Para of Kaligram, Raninagar. It was on the basis of that news that a team of police officers led by the Superintendent of Police (SP) of the Naogaon district went on a special mission to the area where they cracked down upon the 'extremists'. During the 'shootout', Tutu was killed in 'crossfire'.

On the basis of the allegations made by the deceased's family, Odhikar conducted a fact-finding mission into the incident. During the fact-finding, Odhikar spoke with:

- the relatives of the deceased Mizanur Rahman Tutu alias Tutul
- the witnesses of the deceased's body
- the Doctor who had performed the post-mortem of the deceased
- the concerned law enforcement agency officers

Nobera Khatun (70), Mother of Doctor Mizanur Rahman Tutu, Kotchandpur, Jhenaidah

Nobera Khatun told Odhikar that at around 11.00 am on July 26, 2008, she learnt from Sub-Inspector (SI) Osman of the Kotchandpur Police Station and from a report published in the daily Jugantor that at around 8.15 pm on July 25, 2008, her son Tutu had been arrested at Mirpur in Dhaka by RAB. She and all her relatives began to search for Tutu over the telephone. At around 12.00 pm that day Tutu's ex wife Luchi Begum informed her over the telephone that Tutu had been arrested by RAB in Dhaka. Nobera feared that Tutu would probably be killed in 'crossfire' which prompted her to submit a written appeal at around 7.00 pm before the Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Jhenaidah district urging the trial of Tutu under the existing laws of Bangladesh. In the written plea Nobera wrote that her son Doctor Mizanur Rahman Tutu was an MBBS doctor and was involved in radical politics. She stated that Tutu had given up everything in order to serve the common people. Thus she urged that her son not to be killed in so-called 'crossfire'. If there were any allegations against Tutu, Nobera urged that he be placed on trial under the existing laws of Bangladesh. The DC refused to accept the written plea and conveyed to Nobera to come again the following morning at around 9.00 am through his Personal Assistants (PA) Islam and Kamal. Nobera then organised a press conference at 7.30 pm at the Jhenaidah Press Club. At the press conference Nobera urged the Government to intervene so that Tutu would not be killed in 'crossfire' and to arrange for Tutu's trial under the existing laws of Bangladesh. On July 27, 2008, Nobera watched on television that her son had been killed in supposed 'crossfire' at Raninagar, Naogaon. Nobera said that her son had been killed in the name of 'crossfire' and demanded the Government bring those involved in the killing under justice.

¹ Eidgah is a place, generally an open field where the Muslim congregations say prayers on Eid days. Eid is the main Muslim festival.

² Para is a small part of a village in Bangladesh.

³ Upazila is an administrative unit under a district in Bangladesh.



Photo: The dead body of Doctor Mizanur Rahman Tutu alias Tutul

Nurjahan Begum Baby (51), Tutu's sister, Adarsha Para, Jhenaidah

Nurjahan Begum Baby told Odhikar that at around 11.00 am on July 26, 2008, after hearing the arrest of her brother Tutu at the hands of RAB at Mirpur in Dhaka, she quickly informed her relatives. She telephoned RAB-1 and RAB-3 and on the condition that his name would not be disclosed was told by a previously acquainted RAB officer at RAB-1 that Tutu had been arrested by one Major Gazi and had been taken Tutu for interrogation to the RAB-1 officer at Uttara. That RAB officer also informed Nurjahan that after interrogation Tutu would be handed over to the Naogaon Police that very night. At 5.00 am on July 27, 2008, Nurjahan watched on the Banglavisision television channel that her brother Tutu had been killed in 'crossfire' at Raninagar, Naogaon.

Baby said that Tutu was involved in leftist politics but was not involved in any sort of criminal activities. She stated that Tutu had been killed by the police in a planned manner and she demanded justice against those involved in the killing.

Shahiduzzaman Selim (46), Tutu's paternal cousin, Elangi, Kotchandpur, Jhenaidah

Shahiduzzaman Selim told Odhikar that since Tutu was involved in radical politics he was hardly in contact with his relatives. At around 11.00 am on July 26, 2008, he learnt from Sub-Inspector (SI) Osman of the Kotchandpur Police Station that Tutu had been arrested by RAB from Mirpur in Dhaka on July 25, 2008. Selim stated that upon hearing this news he contacted RAB-1 and RAB-3 but was told by a previously acquainted RAB officer there that they had not arrested Tutu. On the morning of July 27, 2008, he learnt from the television news that Tutu had been killed in 'crossfire' by the police at Raninagar, Naogaon. Selim informed that after returning to Kotchandpur with Tutu's body from Raninagar at around 6.30 am on July 28, 2008, he saw numerous police officers at Tutu's house. The police urged them to bury Tutu's body quickly. After the completion of the burial the Police left at around 9.00 am. On July 31, 2008, while Odhikar engaged in its fact finding, the RAB and police were on guard around Tutu's house and his grave.

Afroz Akter (24), Owner of Khan Bhaban, House No. 17, Road No. 8, Block: D, Section: 6, Mirpur, Dhaka

Afroz Akter, the owner of the house where Tutu was allegedly arrested, told Odhikar that 11 months ago a man under the name of Sabbir Ahmed rented a flat on the ground floor of her house. She said that at around 8.00 pm on July 25, 2008, a large number of police officers lay siege to her house. When she telephoned Selina Akter, a tenant on the ground floor, from her flat on the 2nd floor and asked her as to what was happening there, Selina informed her that the police officers had come to arrest her neighbour, Sabbir Ahmed. Afroz said since there was no electricity at that time, she used a torch to see the police officers take Sabbir Ahmed, who was in handcuffs, around different places on the ground floor and talk to him. She said that she saw a large number of police officers moving on the roads surrounding her house for about four and

a half hours from around 8.00 pm on July 25 to 12.30 in the early morning of July 26. Afroz continued by saying that for about three hours following the appearance of the police officers, electricity was off in her house along with 8/9 other neighbouring houses, which was, according to her, unusual. Afroz said that at around 12.30 am on July 26, Selina informed her over the telephone that the police officers were leaving with Sabbir Ahmed in their custody. She said that she came to know through newspaper reports and TV broadcasts on July 28 that Doctor Mizanur Rahman Tutul, a leader of the Purbo Banglar Communist Party-ML [Red Flag] had been killed in 'crossfire' at Raninagar in Naogaon district. At the sight of the photographs of Doctor Tutul's body in the newspapers and TV channels, she was confirmed that it was that Doctor Tutul who had been living as a tenant on the ground floor of her house under the name of Sabbir Ahmed. She informed Odhikar that when the police officers went away with Doctor Mizanur Rahman Tutu who had been a tenant in her house under the name of Sabbir Ahmed, they put the flat where Tutul had lived under lock and key. Afroz said that she had filed a General Diary [GD] with the Pallabi Police Station on August 15, 2008 with regard to the house being locked up by the police. She also said that the GD she filed was numbered 1445.

Selina Akter (25), Khah Bhaban (Ground Floor), House No. 17, Road No. 8, Block: D, Section: 6, Mirpur, Dhaka

Selina Akter, the resident living in the flat opposite the flat where Doctor Tutu had lived said that a large number of police officers surrounded the house Khan Bhaban at around 8.00 pm on July 25, 2008 and left it at around 12.30 in the early morning the following day taking Sabbir Ahmed into their custody. She said that she saw two people in black clothes like the RAB uniform with the police officers when the house was under police cordon. However, she could not confirm as to whether those people were RAB men due to the semi-darkness caused by the electricity being off.

Momin, Officer-in-Charge (OC), Pallabi Police Station, Dhaka

OC Momin stated that they had not arrested anybody from Mirpur on the night of July 25, 2008. However, he confirmed that Afroz Akter had filed a General Diary (GD) with regard to the flat where Tutu had lived, as it was locked up by police officers following the arrest of Tutu. He said that Sub-Inspector (SI) Abdus Salam was investigating the GD report.

SI Abdus Salam, the investigation officer of the GD filed by Afroz Akter, Pallabi Police Station, Dhaka

SI Abdus Salam refused to disclose any information concerning the GD.

Sergeant Latif, Compay 2, RAB-4, Payikpara, Mirpur, Dhaka

Sergeant Latif stated that RAB had not arrested anybody from Khan Bhaban at Mirpur on July 25, 2008.

Nilufa Begum (40), Kaligram, Raninagar, Naogaon

Nilufa Begum told Odhikar that at around 6.00 am in the morning of July 27, 2008, 6 police officers came and took her to the Kaligram Eidgah. When she arrived there she saw many police officers and villagers standing around a dead body. When the police asked her to identify the body, she said that she did not recognize it. The police made her and others stand beside the body and took photographs. The police officers then took her signature and that of the others on a sheet of paper and then left with the blood-stained body. Nilufa later on learnt from others that the body was Doctor Mizanur Rahman Tutu.

Md. Yasin (38), Kaligram, Raninagar, Naogaon

Md. Yasin told Odhikar that in the early morning of July 27, 2008, he heard the sounds of many bullets firing from the area of the Eidgah. At around 4.30 am when he went to the pond beside his house to feed the fish five police officers approached him and told him to go to the Eidgah. The police officers informed him that during a 'shootout' between the police and an extreme leftist group a man had been killed. The police officers told Md. Yasin to go to the field to see the dead body. When he refused to go there, the police officers shoved him by the neck and took him to the Eidgah. At the Eidgah he saw 50/60 police officers and many other people standing around a dead body. Blood was coming out of the body's mouth and from the places on his chest where he had been shot. The police told him that body was of Tutu who was a leader of an extreme leftist political organisation. Yasin stated that after taking his and others' signatures the police left the scene with the body.

Mofazzal Hossain, Superintendent of Police (SP), Naogaon

Superintendent of Police (SP) Mofazzal Hossain told Odhikar that on July 27, 2008, he came to know from a secret source that 50/60 members of an extreme leftist party was holding a meeting at the Eidgah at Dighir Para, Kaligram. A special force of 60 police officers led by himself consisting Additional Superintendent of Police (Additional SP) Aminul Islam, Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) Hafizuddin of the Sadar Circle of Naogaon police, Officer-in-Charge (OC) Ekramul Huq Sarkar of the Naogaon Sadar Police Station, OC Shamsul Huq of the Atrai Police Station, OC Tofazzal Hossain Khan of the Raninagar Police Station, was formed and left on a mission at around 4.15 am to the place of the meeting. Realising

the presence of the police, the members of the 'extremist' group opened fire. The police also fired and this forced the 'extremist' group to fall back. The Superintendent of Police (SP) informed that during the incident, OC Tofazzal Hosain Khan and 15 other police officers were injured. After the 'shootout' ended Doctor Mizanur Rahman Tutu alias Tutul was found hit by bullets on the Eidgah. When he was taken to the Raninagar health complex, the doctor there declared him dead. The police officer said that several cases were filed against Tutu with the Naogaon sadar police station. He suggested that Odhikar contact Naogaon sadar police station for details of the cases.

Sub-Inspector (SI) Nurul Islam, the investigation officer of the case filed against Doctor Tutu with the Naogaon Sadar Police Station

SI Nurul Islam told Odhikar that on July 20, 2008, SI Nirendranath Mondal filed a case with Naogaon sadar police station against Doctor Tutu under sections 143/323/332/353 of the Penal Code for obstructing the police in the course of their duty. He said that the case was numbered 36. He went on to say that no other case was filed against him with the Naogaon sadar police station.

Md. Tofazzal Hossain Khan, OC, Raninagar Police Station

Md. Tofazzal Hossain Khan said that after receiving an order from the Superintendent of Police (SP) of Naogaon, a special force comprising of police officers from Atrai, Raninagar and Naogaon Police Stations went on a mission to arrest the members of an extreme leftist organisation at around 4.15 am on July 27, 2008 at the Eidgah of Dighir Para, Kaligram. During the mission there was a 'shootout' between the police and the 'extremist' group. After the 'shootout' the police retrieved the ammunition left behind by the group and also a dead body. When the residents of the area were brought to see the body they identified it as of Tutu's, the leader of the Purbo Banglar Communist Party- ML [Red Flag].

Md. Abu Syed Fakir, Deputy Commissioner (DC), Jhenaidah district

Md. Abu Syed Fakir told Odhikar that he had read the news of the arrest of a Purbo Banglar Communist Party- ML [Red Flag] member Tutu's arrest by RAB in a daily newspaper on July 26, 2008. He refused to admit that he had not accepted the written plea of Tutu's mother and said that she had never approached him with any plea. If she had done so, he could have taken the necessary legal steps.

Jahangir Hossain Matubbar, Superintendent of Police (SP), Jhenaidah district

The Superintendent of Police (SP) of Jhenaidah, Jahangir Hossain Matubbar told Odhikar that there was no case filed against Tutu in any police station in Jhenaidah. However he added that Tutu's name was on the list of criminals.

Mokarram Hossain, the Doctor who had performed Tutu's Post mortem

Doctor Mokarram Hossain, head of a three-member board that had been formed to carry out the Post mortem of Tutu's body told Odhikar that two bullets had struck Tutu on the chest while another bullet had struck the right side of his ribs. He also said that four of the deceased's ribs were broken and there was excess blood loss through his nose, mouth and ears.

Abu Hasan (53), the person who washed Tutu's body

Abu Hasan told Odhikar that while washing the body he found bullet stuck on Tutu's body. He said the skin of Tutu's right hand was scraped off and his wrists, elbows and arms showed signs of being tied up.

Notes:

Doctor Mizanur Rahman Tutu alias Tutul's mother Nobera Khatun and sister Nurjahan Begum Baby and his friends Doctor Hamidunnessa Pakhi and Latafat Hossain Montu confirmed that his nick name was Tutu. In the Higher Secondary Certificate of Doctor Tutu, it was found his name was written there as 'Mizanur Rahman Tutu'. However, Md. Murad Choudhury Selim from Raninagar, who is a reporter of the daily *Doinik Karotoa*, informed Odhikar that he was popularly known as Doctor Tutul, Doctor Mizan, Doctor Milon, Doctor Masud, Doctor M. Rahman and Dada Bhai to the people of Raninagar. Selim said that Doctor Tutu used to regularly visit various places of Naogaon, Raninagar and Damurhat upazilas to see patients sitting in various drug stores and leave again. However, he did not have any permanent clinic there. Selim continued by saying that Doctor Tutu used to take very small amount of fees from the patients and he was very popular as a physician in those three upazilas in Naogaon.

Conclusion:

Odhikar demands that there be exemplary punishment meted to those responsible for the death of Dr. Mizanur Rahman Tutu by the appropriate judicial means.

- End of Report-