



College student Sumaiya Sultana Shima and her mother Aleya Akhter were given electric shocks and physically tortured in six days of confinement in police custody at Kushtia

Fact finding Report
Odhikar

At around 3 am on September 9, 2012, Aleya Akhter (50) and Sumaiya Sultana Shima (18), respectively the wife and daughter of late Salam Molla, resident of 1 no. Beradanga area of Rajbari pouroshobha of Rajbari district was detained without any case by the police of Khoksha Police Station of Kushtia. The police of Khoksha Police Station and Detective Branch (DB) police physically assaulted the girl and gave both of them electric shock for 6 days in the name of interrogation. Then the DB police sent them to Kumarkhali Police Station. Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Kumarkhali Police Station, Mohammad Abdur Razzak sent them to Kushtia cognizance Court number 3 by showing them arrested under section-54 at around 11:15 am on September 15, 2012. They both were released on bail on September 18, 2012. This incident of torture was published in print media on September 25, 2012. On September 26, 2012, when both of them went to give their attendance at the court, the court discharged them. However due to the news being published in the newspaper police arrested them as suspects of a murder case on the same day and then the Court again sent them to jail.

During the fact finding it comes to our knowledge that Shima's father was a resident of Baroipara village of 9 no. Ambaria Union Parishad of Khoksha Police Station of Kushtia district. Moreover, he was an opponent of Mohammad Nurul Islam the chairman of Ambaria Union Parishad. Shima's father Salam Molla died four years ago in the hands of miscreants. Then her family settled to Beradanga of Razbari district near her grandparents (mother's parents) home. Shima is a first year student of arts of Dr. Abul Hossain College.

On August 28, 2012, Chairman Nurul Islam was killed by some unknown people. However, the police suspected that Shima, her brother Arif Hossain (14) and her mother were involved with the murder.

Odhikar conducted a fact finding mission into the matter. During this they interviewed:

- Victim Aleya Akhter and Sumaiya Sultana Shima
- Eye-witnesses and
- Members of law enforcement agencies.

Sumaiya Sultana Shima (18), the victim

Sumaiya Sultana Shima told Odhikar that the signs of torture on her could not be shown uncovering her cloths. Also, the police asked her to keep quiet. So she did not want to talk further about it. She suggested to talk with her mother to know details about the torture.

Aleya Akhter (50), Shima's mother and victim

Aleya Akhter told Odhikar that her husband was killed by some miscreants four years ago. Since then she is living in Beradanga area of Rajbari district near her parent's house with her daughter Ruma Akhter, Sumaiya Sultana Shima and son Arif Hossain.

At around 3am on September 9, 2012, a man asked her to open the door and identified himself as the police of Khoksha Police Station. Then she opened the door and saw 10/12 armed police were in front of her house with a microbus. One of them asked for her son, Arif. She asked the reason of looking for Arif and one of the police member said that her son killed Nurul Islam, Chairman of Ambaria Union Parishad, on August 28, 2012. Then they again asked for her son very offensively. Aleya said that Arif was not at home. Then the police messed up their house in the name of searching. When they did not find Arif, they asked Aleya with her two daughters Ruma Akter and Sumaiya Sultana Shimu to get into the microbus. As they did not move so they started dragging Ruma towards the microbus. Ruma cried out and begged them saying that she had a child and her husband would divorce her if she was taken to police station. Then the police left Ruma and dragged Aleya Akhter into the microbus.

Aleya Akhter's old mother Moriom Begum (70) tried to obstruct them from taking her but the police pushed her on the ground. Then they pull Aleya into the microbus and handcuffed her. After her they also dragged Shima in the microbus. One police removed Shima's *borkha* and *orna*. Two police sat with Shima on the back seat very closely. At first, they were taken to the Khoksha Police Station. At the day, the police gave them electric shock on their hands in the name of interrogation. They also beat them on their waist and leg with stick and slapped them constantly. Also, they took them to the police custody and sometimes took them to some unknown place in police van. The police used abusive words to them all the time. There was no system of taking bath, changing cloths, no arrangement to sleep, no pure water and no fan. She and her daughter used to drink water from the toilet and were irritated with the unbearable temperature of Khoksha police custody. Aleya said that she became weak for not getting enough food. There was no female police, so they could not share the personal problems. They used to give Shima electric shock in front of her. She recalled that Shima used to mourn calling her and fainted. They pushed niddles in the hand of Shima. Sometime, few police used to come to ask about Arif's whereabouts and they said that they would release both of them if they got Arif. On September 11, 2012, police brought her niece, Piari Khatun Priya from Baroipara, Ambaria to the police station. Priya and Shima were given electric shock in the same way. They even forced Priya to talk to different unknown boys selected by the police from her mobile phone. They used to bring each boy with whom Priya talked to the police station at night and release after torturing him. After two days, Aleya and Shima were taken to the DB office and Priya was left there in the police station.

Aleya Akhter added that they both were kept in a dark room beside the armory in the DB office. In another room, there was Husne Ara, wife of Altaf Hossain Master of Taherpur village. Aleya said that she was forced to sweep and clean the floors of the whole, wash the cloths of police and other household chores. Sometimes a police used to come and took

Shima with him and then after 3/5 hours Shima used to come back. Shima used to come back in an unstable condition and she used to scream calling her in pain of lower abdomen. She used to look very tired. Each time Shima came back, she requested her to help to commit suicide as she could not bear the torture. These happened three times that she tried to commit suicide. Aleya claimed that ASI Masud used to take Shima.

At the night on September 14, 2012, they both were taken to Kumarkhali Police Station. Police changed their method of torture there. They wanted to pour hot water into the nose but they did not when Aleya requested them. Then they tried to give chili in the sensitive parts of body.

On September 15, 2012, they both were sent to the court showing arrested under section 54. On September 18, they were released on bail and then went home. The next attendance date was September 26, 2012.

Moriom Begum (70), Shima's grandmother

Shima's grandmother told Odhikar that at around 3 am on September 9, 2012, police came to their house and wanted to take her daughter Aleya and grandchild Shima with them. When she asked them the reason of taking them, the police officer used abusive words and pushed her. She fell on the ground and they took them away on a microbus. Shima was wearing *Borkha*¹ then. A police removed the *Borkha* and her *Orna*². She also saw two police sitting both side of Shima in the microbus.

Piyari Khatun Priya (18), Shima's cousin

Piyari Khatun Priya informed Odhikar that at around 2 am on September 11, 2012, police from Khoksha Police Station took her to the police station to know about her aunty, Shila. She saw that police arrested few people from different villages (including Baroipara, Taherpur) as the suspected in the Chairman Mohammad Nurul Islam murder case and they were released after interrogation.

She also saw her aunty Aleya and cousin Shima in the cell. They were taken out and returned to the cell for interrogation again and again. At around 10 am on September 11, 2012, police interrogated Shima in front of her. They tied her hands with the handles of chair and asked her the name of the murderers. When Shima told them that she did not know anything, they gave her electric shock in her both hands. Then Shima mourned in pain. To stop her, they pressed her mouth and used abusive words towards her. The torture continued for few hours in front of her. Police asked for Arif's whereabouts to Shima. They threatened Shima to kill in crossfire if they did not get Arif. Priya said that they tortured Aleya Khatun in the same way.

¹ An outer garment worn by some Muslim women to cover their bodies when in public

² A long scurf

Priya was also threatened to torture in front of Aleya and Shima. After two days, DB police took both of them to another place. Police threatened her to torture again if she disclosed the torture, Priya added.

Husne Ara (50), wife of Altaf Hossain Master, Taherpur village, Khoksha Police Station, Kushtia

Husne Ara told Odhikar that police came to their house looking for her brother, Tofazzel Hossain Tofa as suspect of Chairman Mohammad Nurul Islam murder case. However, they arrested Husne Ara after not finding Tofazzel in the house. She was kept in Khoksha Police Station for one day and then taken to DB police office without any accusation against her. In the DB office, she saw her relative Aleya and her daughter confined there. Police used to give them electric shock and slapped them often. Sometimes they used to take Shima outside the DB office and took her back after few hours. After coming back, Shima looked very unstable. Shima also wanted to commit suicide for the torture on her. She saw Aleya sweeping the floors and washing the cloths sometimes. Police used abusive words towards them always. She denied to say anything more about the police torture. She said she had the fear to get arrested again and get killed in crossfire. She added that she was moved to police line and since then she did not meet them.

Mohammad Sohel Hasan, Upazila Nirbahi Officer, Khoksha Upazila Parishad, Kushtia

Mohammad Sohel Hasan told Odhikar that on September 13, 2012, he came to know from an acquaintance that the police of Khoksha Police Station confined few girls in the police station without any reason in the name of searching for suspects in the murder case of Nurul Islam, Chairman of 9 No. Ambaria Union Parishad.

Horendro Nath Sarker, Officer-in-Charge, Khoksha Police Station, Kushtia

Horendro Nath Sarker told Odhikar that on September 11, 2012, Additional Superintendent of Police, Mohammad Zoinul Abedin came to the police station and started bringing suspects of the Chairman Nurul Islam murder case to the police station from different villages. He was in Rajbari then for some official work. He did not know whether electric shock was given to them or not. He came to know about Aleya and Shima when they were already taken by DB police. He suggested to contact with Mohammad Zoinul Abedin to know details about this matter.

Mohammad Abdur Razzak, Officer-in-Charge, Kumarkhali Police Station, Kushtia

Mohammad Abdur Razzak informed Odhikar that police of Khoksha Police Station and DB police interrogated Aleya and Shima in their custody. They were sent to Kushtia Cognizance Court no. 3 for interrogation after arresting them under section 54 on September 15, 2012. He also suggested to contact with Mohammad Zoinul Abedin to know details about this matter.

Mohammad Zoinul Abedin, Additional Superintendent of Police, Kushtia

Mohammad Zoinul Abedin told Odhikar that he did not know anything about torture on anyone. However, in Chairman Nurul Islam murder case, a woman and a girl was arrested and just interrogated. He claimed that son of that woman was the murderer and that mother

and daughter were hiding the murderer. That way why, they both were arrested. He sent them to Kushtia Cognizance Court no. 3. He did not torture anyone, he added. He also suggested Odhikar not to involve in this matter which could hinder the police investigation.

N.B: Odhikar conducted the fact finding mission into this matter on September 21 and 22, 2012. Then on September 25, the news was published in the newspaper. On September 26, both mother and daughter went to Court to give the attendance. The Court released them. However, the police appealed that they would not release them unless the investigation of Mohammad Nurul Islam, Chairman of 9 no Ambaria Union Parishad murder case was over and then court again sent them to Kushtia District Jail.

On October 1, 2012, a bench comprised of Justice Naima Hayder and Justice Muhammad Khurshid Alam Sarkar passed an order on suomuto to know why they should not be directed to take action against those who were responsible for torturing Sumaiya Sultana Shima and her mother Aleya Aktar. The Secretary of the Ministry of home affairs, Inspector General of Police, deputy inspector general of Khulna range of the police and Officer In-charge of Khoksha Police Station were asked to reply the rule in 10 days. Moreover, High Court ordered to officer in charge of Khoksha Police Station give attendance for the mother-daughter in the police custody. On October 30, 2012, Chief Judicial Magistrate Court granted bail to Sumaiya Shima and her mother.

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