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Human Rights Monitoring Report

February 1-28, 2013

Rally at Shahbagh calling for capital punishment for war criminals; blasphemous statements on some blogs instigate violence; deaths; attacks on journalists; and more issues regarding freedom of speech and expression.

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Odhikar believes that 'democracy' is a form of the State and not merely a process of electing a ruler. Democracy is the product of the peoples' struggle for inalienable rights, which become the fundamental premise to constitute the state and to define collective aspirations and responsibilities. Therefore, the individual freedoms and democratic aspirations of the citizens - and consequently, peoples' collective rights and responsibilities - must be the foundational principles of the state. The states failure to recognize this at the founding moment, is a continuing curse that people are forced to carry. The democratic legitimacy of the state is directly related to its commitment and capacity to ensure human rights such as rights to life and livelihood, rights to environment and health; and the dignity and integrity of individuals, including freedom of speech and association. These rights, as the foundational principles of the State, must remain inviolable; and accordingly, the Parliament, Judiciary and Executive cannot and should not have any power to abrogate them through any legislation, judicial verdict or executive order.

Odhikar, being an organisation of human rights defenders in Bangladesh, has been struggling to ensure these rights. Odhikar stands against all forms of human rights violations and accordingly participates and remains directly involved in the human rights movement in Bangladesh. Odhikar brings to the movement the strategic perspective that in its demand for civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, the human rights movement not only endeavours to protect the victims, but also, in countries like Bangladesh, is constitutive of a democratic state. The movement to establish the rights and dignity of every individual is part of the struggle to constitute Bangladesh as a democratic, political community.

As part of its mission, Odhikar monitors the human rights situation of Bangladesh to report violations and defend the victims. In line with this campaign, an account of the human rights situation of Bangladesh, in February 2013, is presented here.

Rally at Shahbagh calling for capital punishment for war criminals; blasphemous statements on some blogs, instigating violence; deaths; attacks on journalists; and more issues regarding freedom of speech and expression

1. On February 5, 2013 the International Crimes Tribunal-2 sentenced Jamaat-e-Islami leader Abdul Quader Molla to life imprisonment for committing crimes against humanity during Bangladesh's liberation war in 1971. In protest of the judgment and to demand the death penalty for Abdul Quader Molla, some bloggers called for a movement and initiated a mass protest at Shahbagh intersection in the evening the same day. From the very beginning the protest gathering was controlled by the Chhatra League¹ and this organisation also brought students from various residential halls of the University of Dhaka to take part in the protest.² From the third day of protests, as more and more general students and people began gathering at Shahbagh, it turned into a peoples' movement. A large section of the left-leaning student organisations played a significant role in drawing a massive gathering to the cause and shaping the movement. During this time, left-wing student leaders and people present at the mass-gathering stopped some prominent Awami League leaders from delivering speeches. In protest of this verdict they were demanding the death sentence to all war

¹ Student wing of Awami League, the ruling party.

² New Age Xtra, 15/02/2013 Page 14-19

criminals, including Quader Molla and a ban on Jamaat-Shibir.³ Initially the gathering was free of political influence and established as a student-general public movement in the first week. However, the '*Gonojagoron Moncha*' (mass uprising stage) erected to allow speeches, was seen to be influenced and controlled by the ruling party organisers from the following weeks. During this period of time, the Bangla language papers daily Amar Desh and the daily Naya Diganta and two teachers who were critical of the government and the rally, Dr. Asif Nazrul and Dr. Piyash Karim, of Dhaka University and BRAC University respectively; were labelled by the protest leaders as dissenters who must be ostracised. The International Crimes (Tribunals) Amendment Bill 2013 was passed in the Parliament on February 17, 2013. The amended law has been given retrospective affect. At the same time, a provision has been incorporated in the Bill that states that any organisation which is accused of crimes against humanity can be brought under justice.⁴ At least 33 people were killed between February 4 to 28, 2013 in clashes between police and protestors during hartals called by Jamaat-Shibir, against the demand for ban on the Jamaat-e-Islami and the death sentence for those who committed crimes against humanity during the liberation war. Among them 28 persons were shot dead by police, four were killed by Jamaat-Shibir activists and one by Awami league activists. Cases were filed against 43,203 people across the country.⁵ During this period, one blogger was killed by unknown assassins. Some instances are as follows:

2. On February 4, 2013, a day before the hartal, Jamaat-Shibir initiated violence and vandalised vehicles. They also set fire to a bus at Azampur, Uttara in Dhaka and a banker named Rashel Mahmud was burnt to death.⁶
3. On February 5, 2013 four persons were shot dead and 30 people, including 16 policemen were injured in clashes between police and Jamat-Shibir activists during hartal in Chittagong. The deceased were: Imran (24), a second year student of the Chittagong Polytechnic Institute; Shafiqul Islam (25), an official of the company Yongone Group; Afzal Hossain (20), a shopkeeper; and one Abid.⁷
4. On February 14, 2013 a member of the Village Defense Police, Bahadur Mia succumbed to his injuries at Chittagong Medical College Hospital. He was

³ Ibid. It must be noted here that another 'Razakar' (collaborator) called Abul Kalam Azad, who is currently absconding, was awarded the death sentence by the ICT on January 21, 2013 for war crimes committed in 1971.

⁴ The Daily Ittefaq, 18/02/2013

⁵ The daily Jugantor, 24/02/2013

⁶ The daily Sangbad, 05/02/2013

⁷ The daily Prothom Alo, 06/02/2013

injured during a clash on February 6, 2013 between police and Jamat-Shibir activists at Lohagara in Chittagong.⁸

5. On February 12, 2013, a group of criminals attacked and set fire to the daily Naya Diganta office at Inner Circular Road in Motijheel, Dhaka. They also set fire to a microbus in front of the newspaper office.⁹ Furthermore, some bundles of newspapers were set on fire at different places in the country.
6. On February 14, 2013, a liftman of Agrani Bank Head Office, Zafar Munshi died in hospital while under treatment. He was injured during a clash between police and Jamaat-Shibir activists on February 13 at the Motijheel area in Dhaka. The family of the deceased alleged that Zafar Munshi died as a result of attacks by Jamaat-Shibir activists.¹⁰
7. On February 15, 2013 one of the leaders of the Shahbagh movement, blogger Rajib Haider Shovon (35) was hacked to death by unknown assassins near his residence at Mirpur, Dhaka. The deceased Rajib was attacked at around 9:00 pm while returning home from Shahbagh. His parents claimed that Jamaat-Shibir is involved in the murder.¹¹
8. On February 15, 2013 Jamat-Shibir activists brought out a procession under the banner 'Mukti Parishad' at Cox's Bazar town demanding the release of Delwar Hossain Sayedee, who was arrested for committing crimes against humanity during the 1971 liberation war. Clashes took place between police and Jamaat-Shibir activists when RAB and police tried to stop the procession. Four people were shot dead by police and RAB during this time. The deceased were: Ahmed Saleh (50), Tofayel Ahmed (22), Nurul Huq (45) and Farooq (22).¹²
9. On February 18, 2013 three persons were killed in Dhaka, Cox's Bazar and Comilla during dawn to dusk hartal called by Jamaat-e-Islami. A youth named Mohammad Iqbal died in an accident when hartal supporters attacked a vehicle at Middle Badda, Dhaka. Ibrahim was killed in a clash between police and Jamat-Shibir activists at Choddogram in Comilla. Jamaat-Shibir activists attacked a microbus which was transporting a patient in the Chainda area under Ramu upazila in Cox's Bazar. Hafiz Abdur Rahman (60) who was in the microbus, died due to this attack.¹³

⁸ The daily Prothom Alo, 15/02/2013

⁹ The daily Amader Shomoy, 13/02/2013

¹⁰ The daily Prothom Alo, 15/02/2013

¹¹ The Daily Ittefaq, 16/02/2013

¹² The daily Jugantor, 15/02/2013

¹³ The daily Jaijaidin, 19/02/2013

10. On February 19, 2013 the local Udichi Cultural Group constructed a *Gonojagoran Moncha* (People's Uprising Stage) in Dharmapasha under Sunamganj district in Sylhet, in order to express solidarity with the Shahbagh movement for ensuring the death sentence to all accused persons of crimes against humanity in 1971. But the *Gonojagoran Moncha* was vandalised by local Awami League, Chhatra League¹⁴ and Jubo League¹⁵ activists. Joint Convener of Dharmapasha upazila unit Udichi, Chayon Kanti Das said, "on February 19 Awami League, Chhatra League and Jubo League activists vandalised the *Gonojagoran Moncha* and took the microphone away. Some Udichi activists were injured due to this attack".¹⁶
11. During this span of time some bloggers, including Rajib, wrote blasphemous blogs insulting Allah, Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (SM) and Islam, which resulted in angry reactions amongst the Islamists and Muslims in general. On February 22, 2013 clashes occurred between police and activists of an alliance of 12 Islamist groups, when they brought out protest rallies across the country against these blogs. Supporters and activists of the alliance marched towards *Gonojagoran Moncha* and the rally at Shahbagh after *Jummah*¹⁷ prayer. Clashes broke out at Paltan, Kataban and Chankharpool areas in Dhaka when police stopped their march. At least 300, including policemen were injured and over 50 people were shot during clashes between police and the activists of the Islami alliance across the country. Sylhet MC College student Mostafa Morshed; Madrasha teacher Abdus Salam at Jhenaidah; and Abdur Rahman Suhin were shot dead by police. Two men named Moznu Mia (26) and Yusuf Kokil (28) were killed in police firing in Polashbari under Gaibandha district. The protestors vandalised the *Gonojagoran Moncha* stages set up at various places including Chittagong, Sylhet, Rajshahi, Bogra, Feni and Chandpur and the Shaheed Minar¹⁸ in Sylhet was vandalised by Jamaat-Shibir activists.¹⁹

¹⁴ The student wing of the Awami League

¹⁵ The youth wing of the Awami League

¹⁶ The Amader Shomoy, 20/02/2013

¹⁷ Jummah (Friday prayer) is a congregational prayer that Muslims hold every Friday, just after noon in the place of midday. Muslims pray ordinarily five times each day according to the sun's sky path regardless of clock time.

¹⁸ The Shaheed Minar ("Martyrs Monument") is a national monument established to commemorate those killed during the Bengali Language Movement demonstrations of 1952. The main, Central Shaheed Minar is in Dhaka.

¹⁹ The daily Jugantor, 23/02/2013

12. It is to be mentioned here that on March 21, 2012, Associate Professor of the English Department of Dhaka University, Batul Sarwar and the Principal of Dhaka Central Law College, Nurul Islam filed a writ petition to a Bench of the High Court Division of the Supreme Court comprising of Justice Mirza Hossain Haider and Justice Mohammad Khurshid Alam, to stop Facebook comments and blogs which were disrespectful to Allah, the Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (SM) and the Qur'an. The Court, after its primary hearing based on the writ petition, issued a Rule and asked the Government as to why the blogs which affront religions would not be permanently stopped. The rule issued by the High Court Division is still waiting implementation.²⁰
13. On February 22, 2013 Machhranga TV reporter Abdulla Tuhin and ATN Bangla TV cameraman Imran Tuhin were attacked by the activists of the 12 Islamic Party alliance, when they were taking photos inside the south gate of the national mosque Baiul Mokarram during the *Khutbah*²¹ of the *Jummah* (Friday) prayers. Both the journalists were admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital. Moreover, the journalists were targeted by the protestors when clashes took place between police and protestors after the prayers. Ekattor TV cameraman, Arifuzzaman Piash and a BTV cameraman were shot and injured by police. A photojournalist of the daily Inqilab, Kutubuddin Ahmed was beaten by protestors while taking photos of the protest rally, which was brought out after *Jummah* prayer from Andorquilla mosque in Chittagong. Rajesh Chakraborty, photo journalist of the daily Jugantor; and Polash, cameraman of Banglavisision TV were injured during the attack. Furthermore, supporters of the *Gonojagoran Moncha* set fire to the daily Sangram and Naya Diganta offices and vandalised the Amar Desh office during the clashes between Islamic protestors and supporters of the *Gonojagoran Moncha* at Khastogir intersection near the press club in Chittagong. Police allegedly beat NTV cameraman Anis Rahman, Diganta TV cameraman Badrul Rahman Babar and Channel 'S UK' cameraman Alauddin when they took shelter in a shop during the clash between police and protestors in Sylhet.²² The protestors also beat cameraman of Channel 24 TV, Shafi Ahmed; photojournalist of

²⁰ The Daily Ittefaq, 23/02/2013

²¹ Religious narration (including sermons) may be pronounced in a variety of settings and at various times. The *khutbah*, however, refers to *khutbat al-jum'a*, usually meaning the address delivered in the mosque at weekly and annual prayer meetings.

²² The Daily Ittefaq, 23/02/2013

the daily Uttar Purba, Nurul Islam; and cameraman of Shomoy TV, Dijen Singh and broke their cameras.²³

14. On February 23, 2013 two men named Alal Hossain (20) and Sirajul Islam (23) were killed and 30 people were injured in clashes between police and Jamaat-Shibir activists in Pabna during a half day hartal called by Jamaat-e-Islami.²⁴ On the same day Dr. Imran H Sarkar, member of Swadhinota Chikitsak Parishad (SACHIP)²⁵ and a blogger gave an ultimatum from the *Gonojagoran Moncha* at Shahbagh (on which he is a prominent figure) to arrest Amar Desh editor Mahmudur Rahman within 24 hours. It is to be mentioned that on February 22, five police officers filed four cases with Shahbagh Police Station and one case with Ramna Police Station against Mahmudur Rahman for instigating religious provocation against the initiators of the *Gonojagoran Moncha*, and the bloggers.²⁶
15. On February 24, 2013 four persons named Shah Alam (23) a Madrasah student, Nazim Uddin (28); Moulana Nasir (35); and Alamgir (35) were killed and 20 people, including policemen were injured in clashes between police and activists of the 12 Islami Party alliance during a hartal at Shingair in Manikganj district.²⁷
16. On February 25, 2013, a dawn to dusk hartal was observed in Manikganj protesting killings by police.
17. Jamaat-e-Islami, on February 28, 2013 called a dawn -to-dusk hartal - on the day when the International Crimes Tribunal delivered its verdict on Jamaat leader Delwar Hossain Sayedee who was accused for crimes against humanity during the liberation war in 1971. Clashes between police and Jamaat-Shibir activists were recorded in various places across the country including Dhaka during the hartal. It is to be mentioned here that in the afternoon of 28 February, the International Crimes Tribunal gave Delwar Hossain Sayedee the death penalty.²⁸
18. Odhikar demands a fair trial of war criminals for atrocities and crimes against humanity perpetrated in 1971 during our liberation war; and international and national legal standards to be maintained during the trial. People are losing their confidence in the Judiciary due to several bias orders of clemency given by the President under Article 49 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh²⁹; and the failure of

²³ Local human rights defender, Muhibur Rahman engaged with Odhikar at Sylhet

²⁴ The Daily Ittefaq, 24/02/2013

²⁵ SACHIP is an Association of Doctors backed by Awami League

²⁶ The daily Prothom Alo, 24/02/2013

²⁷ The Daily Ittefaq, 25/02/2013

²⁸ BDNews24.com, 28/02/2013

²⁹ See Odhikar Annual Report 2012 ' President's Clemency for Criminals' at pg 36. www.odhikar.org.

the criminal justice delivery system of the country. As a result, the demand to execute the death sentence by hanging all war criminals has flourished out of distrust. The Opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) have also claimed that the main organiser of the Shahbagh movement, blogger and online activist Dr. Imran H Sarkar is affiliated to the ruling party- backed doctor's association Swadhinota Chikitsak Parishad (SACHIP), and was engaged with Chhatra League during his student life.³⁰ BNP also claim that the Government is patronising and encouraging this movement in order to distract people from past and current incidents of corruption and misconduct.³¹

19. It is contrary to democratic system to suppress dissenting newspapers. Dr. Imran H Sarkar has also been giving offensive statements against dissenting voices and demanding the arrest of the Amar Desh editor Mahmudur Rahman, instead of sticking to the demand for punishment of war criminals and a ban on Jamaat-Shibir³². As a result, Amar Desh offices came under attack in various places. The Amar Desh published news about malicious statements against Islam and Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (SM) by some bloggers, who are engaged in the Shahbagh movement, which resulted in clashes between the police and Islamist groups and common people on February 22 and 24. The Government has not taken any steps against the defamatory bloggers, despite the Court orders³³.
20. Odhikar cautions the government that the human rights situation will fall under serious threat if the government fails to have a political solution to tackle this crisis and establish human rights and rule of law. The Government has to take the responsibility for any misconduct, including violence, killings and acts of criminalization committed by its party activists; and extrajudicial killings perpetrated by the law enforcement agencies. The Government cannot avoid this responsibility under any circumstances.

37 persons killed extra judicially

21. In February 37 persons were killed extra judicially, allegedly by RAB and Police. The 28 killings occurred during the movement started in Shahabag, and in related incidents.

³⁰ The Financial Express, 24/02/2013

³¹ The Daily Ittefaq, 27/02/2013.

³² It must be noted here that Mahmudur Rahman has been arrested before, under the Anti Terrorism Act 2009 and for contempt of court, for publishing statements against members of the Prime Minister's family and corruption in the Judiciary. He was mentally and physically tortured while in custody.

³³ See item 12 of this report.

Shot to death:

22. Among the 37 persons were killed extra-judicially, 28 persons were shot to death by police.

Crossfire/ encounters/ gun fights:

23. In February 2013, according to information compiled by Odhikar till 4:30 pm on 28 February, 37 persons were killed extra-judicially. Among the crossfire/ encounters/ gun fights, seven were killed in 'crossfire/ encounters/ gun fights'. Among the deceased, four were allegedly killed by Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) and three by the police.

Beaten to death:

24. Among the deceased, one person was beaten to death by police.

Tortured to death:

25. Among the deceased, one person was tortured to death by Detective Branch (DB) police.

Identities of the deceased:

26. Of the 37 persons who were killed extrajudicially, 17 were Jamaat-Shibir activists, three were members of other Islamic parties, one was a BNP activist, one a garment factory worker, two traders, a security guard, a college students, a madrassah student, a farmer, one was a youth; one was a vegetable vendor; and seven were alleged criminals.

Public lynching continues

27. In February 2013, eight people were allegedly killed due to public lynching.

28. Many people are killed by mob violence in various places in the country. Odhikar believes that due to the weak criminal justice system, the tendency of taking the law into one's own hands is increasing, as people are losing their confidence and faith in the police and judiciary.

Imposition of Section 144 of the Cr.PC³⁴

29. According to Odhikar's statistics, in February 2013, a total of 10 instances of the imposition of Section 144 of the Cr.PC by the local administration,

³⁴ Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898 provides power to the Magistrate to issue orders to stop any meeting or gathering. See http://bdlaws.minlaw.gov.bd/sections_detail.php?id=75§ions_id=20789

were recorded across the country; mainly to stop political gatherings and rallies from occurring.

30. For example, on February 8, 2013 Alinagar Union unit Chhatra Dal³⁵ called a meeting at Kailganj field in Kalkini upazila under Madaripur district. The local Awami League, Jubo League and Chhatra League of Alinagar Union announced a meeting to demand the hanging of Abdul Quader Molla at the same place and time. As a result, the local administration imposed Section 144 of the Cr.PC.³⁶
31. Odhikar believes that stopping peaceful public gatherings by imposing section 144 is an interference on democratic rights and contrary to the Constitution of Bangladesh. The Government must stop declaring 'counter' programmes of the ruling political party in order to obstruct programmes of the Opposition and cause the imposition of section 144.

Human rights violations along the border by BSF

32. According to information compiled by Odhikar, it is noticed that several incidents of human rights violations on Bangladeshi citizens were committed by the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) in February 2013. During this period, BSF gunned down one Bangladeshi citizen. Furthermore, seven Bangladeshis were injured. Among them, five were shot and wounded, one was tortured and one was injured by explosives. Three were abducted by the BSF during this period.
33. On February 16, 2013 Moksedul Mia, a student of Phulbari Degree College was shot by BSF of Kursharhat Outpost while he was helping cattle traders bring cows across the international pillar no. 939 at Thosh Bidyabagish border under Phulbari upazila in Kurigram district. He was admitted to Rangpur Medical College Hospital in a critical condition where he later succumbed to his injuries.³⁷
34. According to the Memorandum of Understanding and related treaties signed between the two countries, if citizens of both countries illegally cross the border, it would be considered trespass and as per law those persons should be handed over to the civilian authority. However, we have repeatedly noticed that India and its BSF have been violating treaties and shooting at anyone seen near the border or anyone trying to cross the border; and illegally entering Bangladesh. This is a clear violation of international law and human rights.

³⁵ Student wing of BNP, the main Opposition

³⁶ The daily Manabzamin, 09/02/2013

³⁷ Local human rights defender, Ahsan Habib Nilu engaged with Odhikar at Kurigram

35. Odhikar believes that the role of the Government of Bangladesh should be effective as an independent and sovereign state. Any independent and sovereign county would never accept the killing and torture of its citizens by another country. The Bangladesh government and Border Guard Bangladesh have constantly failed to protect Bangladeshi citizens at the border areas.

Death in jail

36. In February 2013, 6 persons reportedly died in jail due to 'illnesses'.

Tortured to death in Detective Branch police custody

37. On February 19, 2013 a vegetable vendor named Abdul Khaleq was arrested by a 5-member team of DB police led by Sub Inspector (SI) Jahangir and Assistant Sub Inspector (ASI) Santosh from his residence at Sadatkar area in Sylhet town. The family of Abdul Khaleq alleged that he was taken to the DB office at Naiorpukur and tortured there. Khaliq became unconscious due to torture inflicted upon him and was admitted to Ibne Sina Hospital by policemen including SI Jahangir. Later Khaleq was referred to Osmani Medical College Hospital when his condition deteriorated. He died there.³⁸
38. Odhikar believes that torture in custody during interrogation is a serious violation of human rights. Odhikar recalls that torture is a serious violation of human rights. Despite the claim of 'zero tolerance' on torture, the Government has not taken steps or effective measures to curtail torture and other forms of custodial violence and acts of impunity by law enforcement officers. Such lack of action against perpetrators only encourages human rights violations.

Situation of readymade garment factory workers

39. In February 2013 incidents of injuries occurred in readymade garment factories. At least 178 workers were injured in different incidents such as during protests against termination of workers and closing of factories; for the demand of due wages and bonus; and other reasons related to the factory and their jobs. Furthermore, a reported 193 factory workers were terminated during this period.
40. On February 10, 2013 the workers of the readymade garment factory under Azmat Group were protesting against late payment of due wages and vandalised property in Ashulia, Dhaka. Police threw tear gas shells,

³⁸ Local human rights defender, Muhibur Rahman engaged with Odhikar at Sylhet, 24/02/2013

fired rubber bullets and baton charged the workers to disburse them. At least 20 workers and some police were injured during this time.³⁹

41. The price-hike of daily commodities, increasing living costs and house rent and a minimum wage of only Taka 3500 which does not always come in time; and lack of facilities all sparked the workers' unrest.
42. Garment manufacturing factories are a very large source of revenue for Bangladesh and the factory workers are one of the main contributing factors for this success. Issues such as calling the police to physically assault workers; terminating garment factory workers without any valid reason; and keeping wages and overtime pay pending, amount to human rights violations. Odhikar express its solidarity with demands made by workers and also urges the authority to agree to those legal demands.

Human rights of religious minority communities

43. On February 6, 2013 local criminals set fire to a stage created for a three-day Islami Jalsa (religious meeting) organised by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat⁴⁰ at Mouchak Scout Training Centre in Kaliakoir upazila under Gazipur district. Though police were present, they did not come forward to take action.⁴¹
44. Odhikar expresses grave concern over this matter. Odhikar believes that some vested interest persons are active in such incidents. This incident proves again that the Government has failed to protect the life and livelihood of the religious minority communities.

Violence against Women

45. Currently acts of violence against women in Bangladesh are high. Odhikar believes that such violence increases when the perpetrators are not punished and potential violators are becoming perpetrators.

Dowry-related violence

46. In February 2013, 21 women were subjected to dowry related violence. Of these women, it has been alleged that 10 were killed because of dowry and 9 were ill-treated in various other ways. Moreover, one committed suicide over dowry demands during this period. Furthermore, a 40-day old girl child was killed in a clash over dowry demands.

³⁹ The daily Amar Desh, 11/02/2013

⁴⁰ Not to be confused with the Jamaat-i-Islami political party.

⁴¹ The daily Samakal, 07/02/2013

47. On February 13, 2013, police recovered the bodies of Jhorna Akhter (22) and her 40-day old girl child at Fatulla in Narayanganj district. Jhorna's husband, Sadekur Rahman (30), who is an assistant on a long-distance truck, is absconding since the incident. It was learnt that Sadekur killed his wife and young daughter as he failed to receive Taka 60,000 as dowry.⁴²

Acid violence

48. According to information gathered by Odhikar, in February 2013, it was reported that two women became victims of acid violence.

49. Incidents of acid throwing are occurring due to the lack of implementation of Acid Crimes Prevention Act, 2002 and Acid Control Act, 2002

Rape

50. In February 2013, a reported total of 73 females were raped. Among them, 32 were women, 40 were children below the age of 17. Of the women, 5 were killed after being raped; 12 were victims of gang rape. Out of the 40 child victims, 28 were victims of gang rape.

Sexual harassment/stalking

51. According to information gathered by Odhikar, a total of 26 girls and women were victims of sexual harassment in February 2013. Among them, one was killed, 4 was injured, 11 were victims of attempted rape, 2 was abducted and 8 were sexually harassed in various ways. During this period, one female was killed and one was injured by stalkers and one man was killed and four were injured when they protested against such acts of harassment.

⁴² The daily Samakal, 14/02/2013

Statistics: January-February 2013*				
Type of Human Rights Violation		January	February	Total
Extra-judicial killings	Crossfire	5	7	12
	Torture to death	0	1	1
	Shot to death	2	28**	30
	Beaten to death	2	1	3
	Total	9	37	46
Torture (Alive)		4	2	6
Disappearances		2	0	2
Human rights violations by Indian BSF	Bangladeshis Killed	5	1	6
	Bangladeshis Injured	16	7	23
	Bangladeshis Abducted	9	3	12
Deaths in Jail		3	6	9
Attack on journalists	Killed	0	0	0
	Injured	20	17	37
	Threatened	2	3	5
	Attacked	0	7	7
	Assaulted	1	5	6
Political violence	Killed	17	38	55
	Injured	1643	2110	3753
Acid violence		5	2	7
Dowry related violence (including women victims, their children and relatives)		35	21	56
Rape		108	73	181
Sexual harassment /Stalking of women		44	26	70
Section 144 of Cr.PC		9	10	19
Public lynching		17	8	25
RMG	Killed	7	0	7
	Injured	235	178	413

* Odhikar's Documentation. Some monthly data has been updated after receiving last minute information in February 2013.

** 28 persons were killed by police firing. This number has been added to the political violence statistics.

Recommendations

1. The Government has to resolve the present political crisis by fostering and respecting human rights and rule of law. The government must ensure that police do not take any repressive action, including extrajudicial killing.

2. The Government must bring all involved in the acts of extrajudicial killings before justice, through proper and independent investigation. The Government should rescue or recover the victims of enforced disappearances. Odhikar urges the Government to accede to the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances, which was adopted by the UN General Assembly on December 20, 2006.
3. Incidents of torture by law enforcement agencies must be investigated and the perpetrators be brought to justice under criminal law. The Government must ensure accountability of law enforcement agencies and also take action to put an end to their impunity. The Government must ratify the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture.
4. The Government should protest strongly against human rights violations on Bangladeshi citizens by the BSF; and investigate all incidents and demand from the Indian Government adequate compensation for the families of the victims and trial and punishment for the perpetrators. The Government should also ensure the safety and security of the Bangladeshi citizens residing at the border areas.
5. Human rights violations against RMG workers should be stopped.
6. The Government must ensure proper trial and punishment of the perpetrators of violence against women under the purview of the law to ensure that justice is served. The Government should also execute mass awareness programmes, broadly including the media in order to eliminate violence against women.

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Notes:

1. Odhikar seeks to uphold the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of the people.
2. Odhikar documents and records violations of human rights and receives information from its network of human rights defenders and monitors media reports in twelve national daily newspapers.
3. Odhikar conducts detailed fact-finding investigations into some of the most significant violations.
4. Odhikar is consistent in its human rights reporting and is committed to remain so.