



1 August 2007

Odhikar Press Release

12 people killed by Law Enforcement Agencies, 8 people killed by BSF in July 2007

Extra-judicial Killing

From 1-31 July 2007, 12 people were reportedly killed by law enforcement agencies in Bangladesh. Of them, 8 were allegedly killed by the police and 4 by Rapid Action Battalion (RAB). Odhikar notes that of these 12 people, 10 were killed in so-called “crossfire”, 1 was tortured to death and 1 was kicked to death.

Incidents of So-called “Crossfire”

Of those 12 people who were reportedly killed by the law enforcement agencies, the police killed 6 people in so-called “crossfire” and 4 people were killed in so-called “crossfire” by RAB.

Torture

Of the 12 people killed, 1 was reportedly tortured to death by the police.

Police Brutality

Of the 12 people killed, the police reportedly kicked one elderly man when they entered his home. The kick caused the man to fall and hit his head on a bed, which killed him.

Political Allegiance of the Victims

It was reported that of the 12 people who were killed, 1 was a member of the Biplobi Communist Party, 2 were members of the New Biplobi Communist Party (Mrinal Group), 1 was a member of Gono Mukti Fouz (GMF) and 2 were members of Gonobahini.

Other Characteristics of the Victims

It was reported that of the 12 people who were killed, 1 belonged to the Matin Bahini, 2 were alleged criminals, 1 was an alleged dacoit, 1 was alleged extortionist and 1 person was described as an elderly man.

Death in Jail

From 1 to 31 July 2007, it was reported that 4 people died in jail custody due to illness.

Freedom of the Press

From 1 to 31 July 2007, it was reported that 1 journalist was arrested and jailed under the Emergency Power Ordinance 2007 as a result of his publishing a story. 1 other journalist was beaten-up as a result of his publishing a story on corruption. The Bangladeshi Rifles (BDR) forced 1 other journalist to sign a document to the effect that the journalist would not publish any stories without the BDR's permission.

Rape

From 1 to 31 July 2007, 30 women and girls were reportedly the victims of rape. Of the victims 13 were women and 17 were girls. Of the 13 women, 3 were killed after being raped and 6 women were the victims of gang rape. Of the 17 girls who were raped, 3 were killed after being raped and 6 were the victims of gang rape.

Acid Violence

From 1 to 31 July 2007 a total of 12 people were the victims of acid related violence. Among them were 7 women, 3 men and 2 children.

Border Conflict

Members of the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) were reported to have killed 8 Bangladeshi nationals in July 2007. In the same period 11 Bangladeshis were injured by the BSF. In addition, 7 Bangladeshis were reportedly abducted by BSF in July 2007. Another 1 man has been missing since an attack on him by the BSF in July.

Odhikar Expresses it's Concern About Human Rights Violations in Bangladesh

Odhikar expresses its deep concern at the number of deaths in incidents of so-called "crossfire" and urges the law enforcement agencies to change their tactics.

Odhikar reminds the law enforcement agencies and the Caretaker Government of their responsibilities under national and international law and calls upon the Caretaker Government to set-up an independent judicial inquiry into any incident of death as a result of torture or extra-judicial killing. If any evidence of wrong doing is uncovered the authorities should prosecute those responsible.

The actions of the BSF against civilians constitute a grave violation of international law. As such, Odhikar urges the Caretaker Government to raise the issue with the Indian Government

at the highest level. The Indian Government must take immediate steps to stop all cross-border killings.

In addition, Odhikar expresses its grave concern at the Caretaker Government's decision to evict slum-dwellers from their settlements in and around Dhaka without having made any arrangements to rehabilitate the people affected.

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Notes to the Editor:

- 1. Odhikar is a Bangladeshi human rights organisation registered with the NGO Affairs Bureau.*
- 2. Odhikar seeks to uphold the civil, political, social, cultural and economic rights of the people of Bangladesh.*
- 3. Odhikar documents and records violations of Bangladeshis' human rights by monitoring media reports in eleven daily newspapers.*
- 4. Odhikar conducts detailed fact-finding investigations into some of the most significant violations.*
- 5. Odhikar receives information from its nationwide network of human rights defenders.*