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Human Rights Monitoring Report

September 1 – 30, 2014

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Odhikar update

Odhikar believes that 'democracy' is a form of the State and presupposes that freedom and human rights are its foundations. Democracy is not merely a process of electing a ruler. Democracy is the result of the peoples' struggle for inalienable rights, which become the fundamental premise to constitute the State defining 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 State's failure to recognise this at the founding moment is a continuing curse that people in Bangladesh are forced to carry. A State cannot be 'democratic' if the people do not realise and participate as 'citizens' in all sectors of the functioning of the state. The democratic legitimacy of the State is directly related to its commitment

and capacity to ensure human rights, such as right to life and livelihood, right to environment and health; and the dignity and integrity of citizens. If all these are not ensured by the State, it cannot be called a 'democratic' state. These civil and political 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. The people's inviolable rights are the foundational principles of the State.

Odhikar, being an organisation of human rights defenders in Bangladesh, has been struggling to ensure these civil and political 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 is also constitutive of a democratic state. In recent times, Odhikar's human rights defenders have been persecuted for their work and beliefs. However, this has only strengthened the organisation's resolve to fight for human rights, with no discrimination whatsoever.

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, Odhikar prepares and releases monthly situation reports. Odhikar has released this human rights monitoring report for September 2014, despite facing persecution and continuous harassment and threats to its existence since August 10, 2013.

Political violence persists

1. According to information gathered by Odhikar, in September 2014, 13 persons were killed and 617 were injured in political violence. 24 incidents of internal violence in the Awami League and three in the BNP¹ were recorded during this period. In addition to this, three persons were killed and 292 were injured in internal conflicts of the Awami League while 38 persons were injured in conflicts within the BNP.
2. Criminalisation of politics by Chhatra League² and Jubo League³ started after the Awami League (AL) reassumed power through controversial

¹ BNP: Bangladesh Nationalist Party

² Student wing of Awami League

³ Youth wing of Awami League

Parliamentary Elections⁴ on January 5, 2014. Most of the criminal activities are linked to vested interest and mainly occur by using political influence; as a result the violence continues. Furthermore, clashes have taken place between political groups belonging to ethnic minority communities, UPDF⁵ and PCJSS⁶ in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. Some examples of political violence in September 2014 are as follows:

3. On September 1, 2014 an altercation took place between activists of Chhatra League and Jubo League over the waste material of Nitol Tata factory at Mouchak area under Kaliakoir Upazila in Gazipur. 10 people were injured in this incident and on September 3, one Selim Hossain (30) succumbed to his injuries at Dhaka Medical College Hospital. Police arrested the President of Gazipur City Chhatra League, Masud Ershad from the spot during the clash.⁷
4. On September 4, 2014 three persons were killed and one was injured during a violent altercation and gun-fight between supporters of UPDF and JSS occurred in Bongoltoli and Khedarmara Unions under Baghaichhori Upazila in Rangamati Hill District. Toofan Chakma, who was a member of UPDF was one of the men reported killed.⁸
5. On September 18, 2014 altercations took place between supporters of Dr. Fazle Rabbi Hall⁹ of Dhaka Medical College Hospital unit Chhatra League President, Humayun Kabir Sumon and its General Secretary, Mohammad Fahad. At least 10 people from both groups were injured during clash. The college authority ordered the students to leave the residential hall after this incident.¹⁰
6. Odhikar expresses grave concern as political violence continues. Odhikar believes that a free, fair and impartial election with participation of all political parties under an independent and neutral government is a significant contributor to political stability. Odhikar demands that the

⁴ The Awami League-led Government came to power through landslide victory in the 9th Parliamentary Elections on December 29, 2008. However again came to the power on January 05, 2014 through controversial 10th Parliamentary Elections, boycotted by almost all opposition parties including Bangladesh Nationalist Party and its alliance. 153 candidates from the ruling Awami League and its alliance were elected uncontested out of the 300 constituencies, even before the elections were held. As a result, a total of 40,802,739 voters out of 91,948,861 voters could not cast their votes. Among the rest of the voters, only 12-15 percent could cast their votes on Election Day, as reported by various newspapers and election monitoring organisations.

⁵ United People's Democratic Front

⁶ Parbottya Chottogram Jono Songhoti Somity

⁷ The daily Manabzamin, 05/09/2014

⁸ The daily Prothom Alo, 05/09/2014

⁹ Residential hall for students

¹⁰ The daily Inqilab, 19/09/2014

government take legal action against its party activists who are involved in criminal activities, in order to stop criminalisation of politics.

Hartal

7. On September 22, 2014 the Twenty-party Alliance called dawn-to-dusk hartal¹¹ in protest of a Bill allowing Parliament to impeach judges, through the Sixteenth Amendment to the Constitution. Hartal was observed in a peaceful manner across the country, including in Dhaka, but a few isolated incidents of violence occurred. Police opened fire at a procession when Sobujbagh Thana unit Swechchasebok League¹² brought out a procession from Madartek in Dhaka. Eight people were shot during the incident.¹³ Police also arrested one Hanif, a Swechchasebok League activist from Sobujbagh area during a procession in support of the hartal. BNP¹⁴ alleged that police shot at his leg after taking him to the police station. Hanif is under medical treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital. BNP also claimed that police arrested 353 leaders and activists in connection with the hartal.¹⁵
8. Odhikar believes that the state has to fulfill its obligations in order to ensure civil and political rights without judging political parties – the ruling and the Opposition – through political doctrine. The State has also the responsibility to bring disciplinary politics amongst political parties. Odhikar is anxious as there is no scope of meaningful dialogue among political parties.

Extrajudicial killings

9. According to information gathered by Odhikar, a reported total of seven¹⁶ persons were extra judicially killed in September 2014.
10. Incidents of extrajudicial killings have put the country's laws and criminal justice delivery system in question. Moreover, the principal accused in some crucial murder cases were killed in 'gun-fight'. This has created doubt among people as to whether these killings occurred in order to save high profile persons who are allegedly involved.

¹¹ General strike

¹² Voluntary wing of Awami League

¹³ The daily Inqilab, 23/09/2014

¹⁴ Bangladesh Nationalist Party, which leads the Twenty-party Alliance.

¹⁵ The daily Manabzamin, 23/09/2014

¹⁶ In September one person was extra judicially killed by the law enforcers due to political violence which is also included in the statistical part of the political violence.

11. On September 14, 2014 a youth named Mezbah Uddin Tareque was shot dead by Detective Branch of police at the Balur Math area of Mandra New Green Model Town in Mugdapara, Dhaka. The family of the deceased made this allegation. However, police claimed that Tareque was killed in 'crossfire' while they were carrying out an operation to arrest criminals and arms traders.
12. The father of Mezbah Uddin Tareque, Abu Zafar Shikdar informed Odhikar that on September 13, 2014 at around 3:00 am approximately 10 men came to his Dania residence and said they were from the Detective Branch (DB) of police from Mintu Road. They took away his son Tareque in the presence of his family. Tareque is the eldest of three sons. Abu Zafar claimed that there was no General Diary (GD) or case filed against Tareque in any police station. He also said that Tareque started his carrier with Adamzi Garments at EPZ as a store keeper after his Higher Secondary examination in 2010. Tareque left the job in August 2014 and he was trying to go to Malaysia with a student visa. For this purpose Tareque had submitted his passport to the Malaysian Embassy. He was supposed to leave Bangladesh soon. After arresting his son, Abu Zafar was waiting in front of the DB police office at Mintu Road from the morning of September 13. Failing to get any information about his son till dusk, Abu Zafar went to Mugda Police Station to lodge a General Diary. At that time, police informed him that an incident of crossfire took place in the morning under Mugda Police Station area. At around 8:00 pm, Abu Zafar saw the body of his son with bullet wounds at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue. Local inhabitants informed him that Mezbah Uddin Tareque was beaten with handcuffs on the road after he was arrested. At one stage Tareque became unconscious and he was taken by armed men in a white microbus. On September 14, 2014 at around 9:00 pm, Public Relations Department of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police sent a press release to various newspapers, which stated that on September 13 at around 2:30 am, a man named Tareque Masud had been arrested in allegations of arms trading. Later, an incident of gun-fight occurred between criminals at the Balur Math adjacent to Mandra New Green Model Town in Mugda, Dhaka, where police took Tareque in an operation to arrest his associates. During this time, Tareque Masud died in gun-fight. Abu Zafar Shikdar said that the name of his son is not Tareque Masud but Mezbah Uddin Tareque. He commented that the police had perhaps killed his son based on false information and were now staging a drama of 'gun-fight' in order to conceal the incident.¹⁷

¹⁷ Information collected by Odhikar

13. On September 14, 2014 at midnight, the main accused of the widely-reported Moghbazar triple murder case¹⁸, Shah Alam Khandker alias Kailla Babu was shot dead by DB police. The deceased's wife, Moriam Begum informed that at around 10:00 pm on September 14, Babu was picked up by plain clothed police from her father's house located at Bijoy Nagar area in Sonargaon under Narayanganj district. She did not get any news of him at night. She identified her husband's body at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue, after watching the news on television the next morning.¹⁹
14. Types of deaths and the identities of the deceased of seven persons as a result of extrajudicial killings and the perpetrators are stated below:

Types of extrajudicial Killings

- ***Crossfire/encounter/gun fight:***

15. Among the seven persons extra judicially killed, five were killed in 'crossfire/encounters/gun fights' by the police.

- ***Tortured to death:***

16. During this period, one person was allegedly tortured to death in police custody.

- ***Shot to death:***

17. During this period, one person was allegedly shot to death by police.

Identities of the deceased persons

18. Of the seven persons who were killed extra-judicially, one was a supporter of chairman candidate Hamidul Haq and six were alleged criminals.

19. Odhikar expresses grave concern over the incidents of extrajudicial killings. Odhikar demands the government bring all perpetrators to justice through impartial investigation of these deaths by forming an independent inquiry commission.

Torture

20. Bangladesh does not follow its obligations despite being a party to the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading

¹⁸ On August 28, 2014 criminals shot and killed three persons, including Ranu Akhter, Billal and Munna being failed to get extortion money. Source: the daily Prothom Alo, 29/08/2014.

¹⁹ The Daily Ittefaq, 16/09/2014

Treatment or Punishment. Odhikar has, for the last 19 years, documented and carried out fact finding missions on incidents of torture, highlighting the fact that this practice must stop. On October 24, 2013 the Parliament, through voice vote, passed the 'Torture and Custodial Death (Prevention) Act 2013'. Despite this, incidents of torture and custodial deaths continue in Bangladesh.

21. On September 9, 2014 a youth named Yusuf Ali, son of Ibrahim and an inhabitant of Jhapaipara village under Chapainababganj Municipality area, died while in the custody of Chapainababganj Police Station. Police arrested Yusuf Ali with five bottles of Phensidyl²⁰ in the evening of September 8, from Bottola Haat of the Municipal area. The mother of the deceased, Amena Begum informed Odhikar that Yusuf died due to torture inflicted by police after he was arrested. Sub Inspector (SI) Monirul Islam of Chapainababganj Police Station led this operation. She was informed by witnesses to the arrest that police beat Yusuf. Police put him into van at one point when blood was coming out of Yusuf's mouth. He was beaten again by police in the van. Due to severe beating Yusuf became seriously ill and on September 9, he died in Chapainababganj Sadar Hospital. She claimed that there were marks of injuries on Yusuf's body. The grandfather of Yusuf, Ahad Munshi said that police beat Yusuf soon after he was arrested. He was taken to hospital by the police. Police did not allow them to see Yusuf's body before the body was officially handed over to the family. Eyewitness of the incident, Mirza Ronju said that on September 12, at midnight, he was taken to the police station by SI Monirul Islam for disclosing the matter to the media, but was released the next morning as the incident of his arrest was exposed. He also said that SI Monirul Islam was threatening him and his family. They could not live at home in fear.²¹
22. Torture is a grave 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.

²⁰ Phensidyl is a cough syrup which contains glucose in high concentration for better taste. Its active ingredients include [codeine phosphate](#), [pseudoephedrine](#) and [chlorpheniramine maleate](#). It is often used as a recreational narcotic and/or antidepressant. Some people in Bangladesh are addicted to Phensidyl. The syrup is illegal in Bangladesh and related to various crimes and it produced only in India.

²¹ Report sent by human right defender associated with Odhikar from Chapainababganj

Death in jail

23. According to information gathered by Odhikar, in September 2014, two persons died in jail allegedly due to 'illnesses'. There were allegations that many prisoners died due to scarcity of proper medical facilities and the negligence of the jail authorities.
24. Odhikar believes that deprivation of medical treatment for any inmate in jail is a serious violation of human rights. Odhikar demands that the government provide sufficient medical facilities for inmates in every jail. It urges the authority to investigate allegations of medical negligence through an independent investigation and take appropriate action against the perpetrators.

Allegations of enforced disappearance against law enforcement agencies

25. According to information gathered by Odhikar from January 2009 to September 2014, 154 persons have disappeared; of them, 20 bodies have been found later. In September 2014, two people were allegedly disappeared.
26. Families of victims claim that members of law enforcement agencies are making arrests and then the victims have disappeared or their bodies are later found.²² Law enforcement agencies deny allegations of involvement. Enforced disappearance is a serious violation of fundamental human rights. It is an instrument of repression resorted to by the state. Victims of disappearance are often tortured and those who are found are scared about their lives and live in constant fear. They are deprived from all rights and even deprived of the protection of law.
27. Zahidul Islam Sohel (30), son of Yunus Ali and resident of 86/1 Battery Goli in Moghbazar, Dhaka, was picked up and allegedly disappeared by men claiming to be members of law enforcement agency. Sohel's wife Taslima Akhter Sathi made this allegation. Sathi informed Odhikar that on August 27, 2014 she and her husband went to the house of her elder sister Mahfuza Akhter Brishti at Badda, Dhaka. They stayed there till August 29. At around 11:00 am on August 29, her sister's door-bell rang. Her sister Brishti opened the door and three men with short hair entered the house, saying that they were from law enforcement agency and were looking for Sohel. Sohel came

²² Odhikar only documents allegation of enforced disappearance where the family members or witnesses claim that the victim was taken away by people in law enforcement uniform or by those who said they were from law enforcement agencies.

and identified himself. One of the men held him by the collar and the other one put handcuffs on him and asked him to go with them. The men slapped him when Sohel asked them why he was being taken. Brishti asked them for identification and why they were hitting Sohel as he was ill. One of them took out a pistol and said “we are from the administration. We will shoot you if you do not keep quiet”. Sathi also said that Sohel had cancer. Sohel returned to Bangladesh from Saudi Arabia in late 2013 after being diagnosed with cancer. He was under treatment in Green View Clinic at Dhanmondi, Dhaka. She said that he was not involved with any political party and there was no case or General Diary (GD) filed against him. Brishti further informed Odhikar that the men who claimed to be members of law enforcement agency had a mobile phone tracking machine with them. While entering the house, they told the security guard that they had come to check the mobile network. Brishti followed the men and Sohel upto the road. She saw 6 or 7 more men waiting there. They left with Sohel in two black minibuses - NOAH, Dhaka-Metro Cha 53-6402 and VOXY, Dhaka-Metro Cha 53-2532. After that, the family searched for Sohel at different places including Badda Police Station, Ramna Police Station, DB Office and RAB office; but did not find any trace of him. Police, RAB and DB denied arresting Sohel. Brishti informed Odhikar that she came to know from a news report on television in the morning of September 28, that five or six accused persons of a murder case that took place in Moghbazar, Dhaka, will be produced in front of journalists by DB police. Hearing this news, she assumed that her sister’s husband Sohel might be produced along with those accused persons. At around 5:30 pm, she and her sister Sathi went to the DB office at Mintu Road in Dhaka. There they saw Sohel. Sohel informed them that he was detained in RAB-1 office for a month after being arrested. Soon after his arrest, he was kept in a room with blindfolds and his hands and legs were tied for three days. He was untied only at meal times. After three days he was detained in a room that looked like lock-up. Brishti also said that the spokesman of the DB police, Monirul Islam informed her that RAB handed Sohel over to them after arrest. Monirul Islam also informed that Sohel might have been arrested due to mistaken identity. On September 29, 2014 DB police produced Sohel in Court showing him arrested under section 54 of the Code of Criminal Procedure²³. The Court ordered that he be sent to jail.²⁴

²³ Section 54 of the Code of Criminal Procedure lays down nine circumstances when police can arrest anyone without warrant.

²⁴ Information gathered by Odhikar

28. Odhikar believes that a democratic state needs to be constituted based on equality, human dignity and social justice; and there is no alternative way other than people's mobilization and fight against injustice. Thus human rights defenders have to be vocal against human rights abuses, including enforced disappearance. They have also to stand beside the families of the disappeared victims to build a strong resistance against the crime of disappearance.

Situation of ready-made garment workers

29. According to information gathered by Odhikar, in September 2014, 50 workers were injured during protests for increase payment at 'piece rate', bonus and for other reasons.
30. Garment manufacturing factories are a very large source of revenue for Bangladesh and the factory workers are one of the main contributing factors to this success. It is very important to save this industry by respecting the human rights of workers and ensuring they receive sufficient wages with which to live with dignity.

Meetings and assemblies prohibited

31. Banning and attacking meetings and assemblies imply the shutting down of democratic space. The right to freedom of assembly and the holding of peaceful meetings, rallies and processions are the democratic and political rights of every citizen, as enshrined in Article 37 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.
32. On the morning of September 16, 2014 thousands of women and men of Manikganj Municipal area gathered at the Manikganj Bijoy Mela field to surround the Titas Gas Distribution office. They were demanding an uninterrupted gas supply as they were extremely annoyed at the severe gas crisis. At around 10:30 am aggrieved people brought out procession, led by Manikganj Municipality Chairman Mohammad Ramjan Ali and marched towards the Titas Gas office. Police put barricade the road in Khalpar area to stop the procession; and baton charged people when they tried to break the barricade. At that time aggrieved people vandalized five auto rickshaws and one car. Later the rally marched to the Manikganj Bus Stand area where police put up another barricade. The people broke the police barricade and blocked the Dhaka-Aricha Highways. In order to disperse the angry mob, police fired rubber bullets and threw tear gas shells. More than 50 people,

including Municipality Chairman Ramjan Ali were injured during this attack. Many women were among the injured.²⁵

33. On September 21, 2014 activists of Chhatra League²⁶ and Jubo League²⁷ attacked and opened fire on a Munshiganj District BNP rally brought out in support of the dawn-to-dusk hartal called by the Twenty-party Alliance on September 22, in protest of the Sixteenth Amendment to the Constitution allowing Parliament to impeach judges. Chhatra League and Jubo League activists chased BNP activists and dispersed them before making a procession in front of the BNP office at Super Market Chottor in Munshiganj. BNP activists took shelter in their party office. Later in the evening, BNP leaders and activists organised a meeting in front of the party office where Chhatra League and Jubo League activists opened fire at the meeting in the presence of police.²⁸
34. Odhikar condemns the incidents of attacks and barriers to such meetings and rallies. Odhikar believes that this kind of prohibition and attacks on peaceful protest meetings and rallies are tantamount to interference with the democratic rights of the citizens of Bangladesh, which is also contrary to the perceptions laid down in our Proclamation of Independence.

Attack on journalists

35. In September 2014, according to information gathered by Odhikar, eight journalists were injured, two were assaulted, four were threatened and three journalists were sued. Incidents of attacks and threats on journalists occurred during the time of gathering news/information or due to publishing reports.
36. On September 1, 2014 Abdur Rahim Sardar, Upazila correspondent of the daily Amader Shomoy, was beaten and severely injured at Upazila Parishad Chottor by Uzirpur upazila unit Shromik League's Joint Convener, Shipon Mollah and his associates, for publishing a report in Uzirpur, Barisal. Hearing this information, other journalists rescued him and admitted him to Uzirpur Upazila Health Complex. Abdur Rahim Sardar was shifted to Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital in Barisal when his condition deteriorated.²⁹

²⁵ The daily Manabzamin, 17/09/2014

²⁶ Student wing of Awami League

²⁷ Youth wing of Awami League

²⁸ The daily Manabzamin, 22/09/2014

²⁹ The Daily Ittefaq, 02/09/2014

37. On September 10, 2014 a group of criminals, led by Habiganj Municipal unit Jubo Dal³⁰ Convener Shafiqul Islam Shitu attacked the local newspaper *Lokaloy Barta* office for publishing reports in Habiganj district. Criminals vandalized office furniture, vehicles and computers and stabbed and wounded four people, including the Acting Editor, Emdadul Huq Sohel and Acting News Editor, Shayel. Emdadul Huq Sohel who was under treatment in Sylhet Osmai Medical College Hospital informed Odhikar that on September 10, a report in relation to further investigation into the murder of former Finance Minister Shah ASM Kibria was published in a national daily. Jubo Dal leader Shafiqul Islam Shitu put pressure on him not to republish the news in his newspaper. He did not agree to this; as a result they attacked him.³¹
38. Odhikar expresses concern over the attacks, arrests, and threats on journalists while they carry their professional duty. Odhikar urges the journalists to report true information and be free from biasness.

Repressive Information and Communication Technology Act 2006 (Amended in 2009 and 2013) still exists

39. The repressive Information and Communication Technology Act, 2006 (amended in 2009 and 2013)³² (ICT Act) still exists. The latest amendment to the ICT Act was made on October 6, 2013. Section 57 of the Act as amended in 2013, states that publishing or transmitting in a website in electronic form, of any defamatory or false information is considered to be a cognizable and non-bailable offence. Moreover, punishment for committing this offence has been increased for a term of a minimum of seven years and maximum of 14 years imprisonment. This law has curtailed the freedom of expression and the present government is using this Act against human

³⁰ Student wing of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)

³¹ The daily Jugantor, 12/09/2014

³² In 2013, the amendment made to the Act made the offence mentioned in Section 57 non-bailable and cognizable. Section 57 of the ICT Act states: (1) If any person deliberately publishes or transmits or causes to be published or transmitted in the website or in electronic form any material which is fake and obscene or its effect is such as to tend to deprave and corrupt persons who are likely, having regard to all relevant circumstances, to read, see or hear the matter contained or embodied in it, or causes to deteriorate or creates possibility to deteriorate law and order, prejudice the image of the State or person or causes to hurt or may hurt religious belief or instigate against any person or organization, then this activity of his will be regarded as an offence.

(2) Whoever commits offence under sub-section (1) of this section he shall be punishable for a term of minimum of seven years' imprisonment and a maximum of 14 years or a fine of Taka one crore or both.

rights defenders, journalists, bloggers and people who have alternative beliefs.

40. On September 3, 2014 police arrested one Imran Hossain Arif (30) from Durgapur village under Kumarkhali Upazila in Kushtia, under section 57(2) of the Information and Communication Technology Act, 2006 (Amended 2009 and 2013). On August 20, 2014 Imran Hossain Arif posted this status on his facebook page: “if Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was the father of the nation, then Sheikh Hasina is my sister and Sajib Wajed Joy is my nephew”³³. For this reason, local Jubo League leader Anik Hossain filed a case against him with Kumarkhali Police Station under the Information and Communication Technology Act.³⁴
41. On September 23, 2014 a team from the Detective Branch of Dhaka Metropolitan Police arrested Sajjadul Huq, Associate Professor of Anthropology, Chittagong University, from Rampura area in Dhaka. He was arrested under a case filed with Kafrul Police Station on July 27, 2014 under section 57 of the Information and Communication Technology Act. The family of Sajjadul Huq claimed that he posted a photo of his female friend on his facebook account. Allegations were made against Sajjadul, as his friend had been socially harassed due to the posting of this photo. Police produced Sajjadul Huq before the Court of Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Alamgir Kabir and asked for remand, but the Court sent him to jail. The friend of Sajjadul, whose photo was posted on facebook, is married. Her husband is a Squadron Leader in the Bangladesh Air Force and currently under deputation in an intelligence agency. Sajjadul Huq is also the General Secretary of an organisation named South Asia Youth for Peace and Prosperity. On September 20, 2014 a discussion meeting on the situation of human rights in Bangladesh was organised by this Organisation.³⁵ Sajjadul’s family and friends alleged that he has been facing state oppression due to his human rights work.
42. On September 24, 2014 the Cyber Crime Tribunal Judge AKM Shamsul Islam sentenced one Tanmoy Mallik to seven years rigorous imprisonment and 10 thousand taka fine and six months of additional imprisonment for non-recovery of fine under the Information and Communication Technology Act. Tanmoy, of Gurkathi village under Dakop Upazila in Khulna, allegedly circulated a song mocking former President Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his daughter the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.³⁶

³³ Translation. Actual version was in Bangla.

³⁴ Report sent by human right defender associated with Odhikar from Kushtia

³⁵ The daily New Age, 25/09/2014 and information collected by Odhikar

³⁶ The daily Prothom Alo, 25/09/2014

43. Odhikar urges the government to repeal this repressive law immediately as it is contrary to freedom of expression.³⁷

Public lynching

44. In September 2014, five people were reportedly killed due to public lynching.
45. On September 5, 2014 an unknown man (35) was beaten to death by a mob suspecting him for the thief of a CNG-run Auto rickshaw, in Rajabari area of Basta Union under Keraniganj Police Station in Dhaka District. Police informed that the deceased man was roaming around the area suspiciously before local people beat him. He died on the spot.³⁸
46. Incidents of public lynching are often taking place in various parts of the country. The tendency to taking the law into people's own hands is observed mainly due to the weak criminal justice system. Odhikar believes that this tendency is increasing due to lack of respect for law; distrust of law enforcement agencies; and instability in the country as people fear they will not get justice any other way.

Human rights violations in border areas by BSF

47. According to information gathered by Odhikar, in September 2014, seven Bangladeshis were killed by the Indian Border Security Force (BSF). Among them, one person was shot dead and four were tortured to death. The body of one person was found in the swamp after he was chased by the BSF and one suffered cardiac arrest when the BSF members chased him. Four sustained bullet injuries by the BSF. Six Bangladeshis were also abducted during this period, allegedly by the BSF.
48. On September 2, 2014 a Bangladesh-India joint meeting in relation to security was organised in Dhaka, in order to stop unarmed civilians of Bangladesh at the border due to criminal offences etc. Both countries decided to convey a rigid message to their border security guards that if anybody crosses the border illegally or for any unlawful reason, he/she will be handed over to his/her country; but should not be killed. The Additional Secretary of the Home Ministry of Bangladesh, Kamal Uddin Ahmed and the Joint Secretary of Indian Home Ministry, Shambhu Singh led the meeting on behalf of their respective countries.³⁹ Despite such message

³⁷ The ICT Act 2006 (Amended in 2009) is also the law under which the Secretary and Director of Odhikar have been charged.

³⁸ The Daily Ittefaq, 06/09/2014

³⁹ The daily Prothom Alo, 03/09/2014

given to the border guards of the two sides, killings at the border by BSF continue.

49. On September 8, 2014 at dawn, a Bangladeshi cattle trader named Aminur Rahman (48) of Moddhya Singhimari Village, was allegedly tortured to death by Indian BSF at Moddhya Singhimari border under Hatibandha Upazila in Lalmonirhat District. Local inhabitants said that some cattle traders, including Aminur Rahman went to India with the help of Indian cattle traders, through the main pillar 891 to bring cows. At that time, a patrol team of Phulbari BSF camp under Shitalkuchi Police Station in Koch Bihar, India chased them. Aminur Rahman was caught by the BSF though the others were able to escape. BSF left Aminur Rahman unconscious on the Bangladesh side after torturing him. Local people took him to the hospital, where the doctor on duty declared him dead. Local people also informed that there were marks of injury on the deceased's body.⁴⁰
50. On September 24, 2014, a patrol team of the Indian BSF chased 10 or 12 Bangladeshi cattle traders, while they were returning from India with cows, near sub-pillar no. 18 of the main pillar 61 at Kushumpur border under Kotchandpur Upazila in Jhenaidha District. After being chased, a cattle trader named Ziaur Rahman Raju (28) jumped into the Ichhamoti River. BSF members opened fire at him and Raju was shot dead.⁴¹
51. Odhikar believes that a sovereign state would never sit and watch its citizens being indiscriminately killed, tortured and abducted by another state. According to the Memorandum of Understanding and related treaties signed between Bangladesh and India, if citizens of either country 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 noticed that India has been repeatedly violating treaties, shooting at anyone seen near the border or anyone trying to cross the border; and illegally entering Bangladesh, which is a clear violation of international law and human rights.

Violence against minority communities

52. The government has to ensure the protection of citizens belonging to religious and ethnic minority groups; and ensure the right to perform religious and cultural practices. However, Odhikar has been observing with concern that influential and vested interest groups are attacking citizens belonging to religious minority communities over issues such as land and

⁴⁰ Report sent by human right defender associated with Odhikar from Lalmonirhat

⁴¹ The daily Manabzamin, 26/09/2014

for extortion. Incidents of attacks on minority groups are being politicised and thus action cannot be taken against the perpetrators. Such incidents are continuing, as the perpetrators are not punished.

53. A criminal case relating to an attack on the Hindu family of Subrata Das Samonto and vandalization of the temple at Shibpasha area under Nabiganj Upazila in Habiganj District has been withdrawn under political consideration. On July 2, 2014 this case was withdrawn from the Senior Judicial Magistrate Court-2 in Habiganj. This information was revealed on September 16, 2014 in perspective of an application to the district administration. On July 1, 2008 a group of 15-20 criminals led by UK expatriate, Mohammad Mohon Mia of Kadma Village under the same upazila, attacked the family of Subrata Das alias Poltu and vandalized their house and place of worship. Subrata Das filed a case accusing six persons in this regard. The case was under trial at the Senior Judicial Magistrate Court-2 in Habiganj for six years. On June 2, 2011 Mohon Mia applied to the Home Ministry for removing the case on the grounds that it was persecution. He claimed in the application that he is a leader of Awami League. His application was recommended by the ruling party MP of Habiganj-3 constituency, Mohammad Abu Zahid. Later the Home Ministry sent the case to the president of the District Committee of the Politically Motivated Cases Withdrawal Committee. The Home Ministry decided to withdraw the case on October 17, 2012 after the approval of the president of the Committee and Deputy Commissioner, Abul Qashem Talukder and the Deputy Commissioner was informed through letter. On May 12, 2013, Assistant Public Prosecutor Salehuddin Ahmed applied to the Senior Judicial Magistrate Court-2 in order to remove the case. On July 2, 2014, Magistrate Nishad Sultana granted the application.⁴²
54. On September 18, 2014 at night, criminals vandalized three idols, including an idol of Durga at Joari Sarbojonin Durga Mandir under Boraigram Upazila in Natore.⁴³
55. On September 19, 2014 at midnight, a group of criminals vandalized the idol of Durga which was created on the occasion of *Durga Puja* at Par Kodla Shri Shri Kalimata Mandir (temple) in Chondaikona Union under Raiganj Upazila in Sirajganj District. Criminals entered the temple and broke five arms of the Durga idol and left. The President of the temple committee, Bishwanath Das informed Odhikar that they were working to create idols for several days. On the night of the incident, idol makers had left after

⁴² The daily Prothom Alo, 17/09/2014

⁴³ The daily Prothom Alo, 20/09/2014

finishing their work. In the morning of September 20, members of the temple committee found that the Durga idol had been vandalized.⁴⁴

56. Odhikar condemns the attacks on temples of the citizens belonging to religious minority communities; and the withdrawal of the case. Odhikar believes that if the criminal cases are withdrawn randomly out of political consideration, will be contrary to rule of law. This will further extend the culture of impunity in Bangladesh. Odhikar urges the government to ensure the protection of the citizens belonging to all minority communities.

Violence against women

57. Violence against women continues. In September 2014, many women became victims of rape, dowry related violence, acid attacks and sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment and stalking

58. According to information gathered by Odhikar, a total of 37 girls and women were victims of sexual harassment in September 2014. Among them, one committed suicide, three were injured, five were assaulted, one was abducted and 27 were sexually harassed in various ways. During this period, two women and two men were injured by the stalkers when they protested against such acts.
59. A student of class IX, Umme Kulsum Ritu was stalked by a local debauched youth, Shimul Chandra Mandol while on her way to and from school in Khilgaon, Dhaka. Later Shimul started to stand in front of Ritu's home. On September 6, 2014, Shimul Chandra Mandol and his associates came to Ritu's home in the absence of her parents and behaved indecently with Ritu. They also threatened her. After this incident, Ritu looked herself in her room and took poison. She was taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital in critical condition, where she died.⁴⁵ Shimul Chandra Mondol is yet to be arrested.
60. On September 4, 2014 a group of stalkers stabbed to death a youth named Basir Uddin for protesting against the stalking of his sister at Uttarpara under Debidwar Upazila in Comilla. It was learnt that Basir Uddin's younger sister was harassed on her way to and from school by a group of men including Oliullah, Mahbub, Arif and Sanaullah. Basir Uddin was stabbed as he had protested this crime.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Report sent by human right defender associated with Odhikar from Sirajganj

⁴⁵ New Age, 08/09/2014

⁴⁶ The daily Jugantor, 05/09/2014

Dowry-related violence

61. In September 2014, according to Odhikar documentation, 26 women were subjected to dowry violence. Of these women, it has been alleged that 15 women were killed because of dowry; and 10 were abused in various ways over dowry demands. Furthermore, one woman was committed suicide. Some incidents are as follows:
62. On September 6, 2014, a housewife named Habiba Akhter (25) was beaten, poisoned and killed by her husband Touhidur Rahman and his family over dowry demands, at Kabilganj of Mugdapara under Sonargaon Upazila in Narayanganj. Elder brother of Habiba Akhter, Shah Alam told Odhikar that Habiba married Touhidur Rahman on September 9, 2011. Touhidur was given one hundred fifty thousand Taka (USD 1940) at the time of the wedding. Touhidur used to stay in Saudi Arabia before the marriage. He married Habiba after coming to Bangladesh on leave. After six months of his marriage, Touhidur went abroad again. He returned Bangladesh for good after one year and opened a shop selling plastic furniture at Gazi Market in Mugdapara intersection in Sonargaon, Narayanganj. Touhid took Taka thirty thousand (USD 388) and sixty thousand (USD 776) from Shah Alam for his shop. He put pressure on Habiba to get more money. He started to inflict ill-treatment on Habiba after she could not bring back money. Habiba was brought back to her brother's house as the level of ill-treatment increased. An arbitration took place in this regard in Mugdapara Union Parishad, where Habiba's family said that they would not send Habiba back to her in-laws house and demanded the return of Taka two hundred fifty thousand given to Tauhid as dowry at different times. It was decided in the arbitration that Touhid would return the money. Tauhid's family later informed that they would not return money and would take Habiba back instead. They promised that Habiba would not be ill-treated anymore. A few days later they started to inflict ill-treatment on Habiba for money. The degree of ill-treatment increased from January 2014. Touhid and his family severely beat Habiba as she failed to provide money from her family. Habiba became seriously ill and at one stage they poured poison into her mouth. Habiba died in Dhaka Medical College Hospital while under treatment. After her death, Touhid's family publicized that Habiba had committed suicide.⁴⁷
63. A housewife named Mukti Rani (24) was beaten to death by her husband Anukul Chandra (30) over dowry demands in Gederpur village of Kaliaganj Union under Boda Upazila in Panchagarh. Five years ago Mukti Rani,

⁴⁷ Report sent by human right defender associated with Odhikar from Narayanganj

daughter of Goynath Chandra of Choujhpara village under Mirzapur Union in Atoari Upazila got married to Anukul Chandra of Gederpur village. Mukti Rani used to be ill-treated by her husband Anukul Chandra for dowry soon after the marriage. On September 19, 2014 in the evening, Anukul Chandra beat Mukti Rani for dowry money. She was hit with a stick on the head, which resulted in her death. Hearing the news, police recovered the body from the place of occurrence. Police also arrested Anukul Chandra. Later the father of the deceased, Goynath Chandra filed a murder case accusing son-in-law Anukul Chandra, his brother and the husbands of his two sisters. The Officer-in-Charge of Beda Police Station, Manjur Rahman, told Odhikar that the autopsy had been conducted after an inquest of the body. He said the main accused had been sent to jail through the court and the other accused persons are being searched for arrest.⁴⁸

Acid violence

64. According to information gathered by Odhikar, in September 2014, eight persons became victims of acid violence. Among them, three were women, four were girls and one was a boy.
65. A student of class VII at Brahmongaon Mohila Dakhil Madrassa, Jony Akhter (13) was burnt with acid by one Ujjal Molla and his associates in Boktarpur Union under Kaliganj Upazila in Gazipur. Jony's mother, Morium Begum said that their neighbour, Ujjal was offering love proposals to her daughter for a long time. On September 7, 2014 Ujjal and his associates threw acid on Jony Akhter as she refused his proposal. Her eyes and one side of her body were burnt. Morium Begum filed a complaint with Kaliganj Police Station in this regard, but police did not arrest anyone.⁴⁹
66. A housewife named Ayesha Khatun (18) was burnt with acid by her husband Mizanur Rahman and mother-in-law Mini Begum over dowry at Nuton Modhupur area in Ward No. 5 of Damkura Union under Poba Upazila in Rajshahi. Ayesha's mother Nadira Begum said that Ayesha married Mizanur nine months ago. Ayesha was ill-treated soon after the marriage by Mizan and Mini Begum over dowry demands. At one stage, Ayesha's father Asaduzzaman bought some house-hold equipment worth one hundred thousand taka (USD 1293) for them. But they demanded an additional two hundred thousand taka (USD 2586) and sent Ayesha back to her father's home after failing to get the money. On September 6, 2014 Ayesha was taken back to Mizan's home and ill-treated again for dowry. At

⁴⁸ Report sent by human right defender associated with Odhikar from Panchagarh

⁴⁹ The daily Jugantor, 10/09/2014

around 1:00 am of September 13, 2014 Mizan and Mini Begum threw acid on Ayesha when she was sleeping, which burnt her face, hands and belly. Ayesha was admitted to the burn unit at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital. On September 15, 2014 Ayesha was transferred to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University in Dhaka as per doctor's suggestion, when her condition deteriorated.⁵⁰

67. Incidents of acid throwing are occurring due to lack of implementation of the Acid Crimes Prevention Act 2002 and the Acid Control Act 2002, as well as ineffective investigation and a weak criminal justice system.

Rape

68. In September 2014, Odhikar recorded a total number of 38 females who were raped. Among them, 13 were women and 25 were children below the age of 16. Of the women, two were killed after being raped; 10 were victims of gang raped. Out of the 25 child victims, nine were victims of gang rape and one was killed after being raped. Furthermore, eight females were victims of attempted rape. Some incidents are given below:
69. In the night of September 1, 2014 a girl student of class VIII was strangled to death after being raped in Sudin Village under Amoldighi Upazila in Bogra District. The family of the victim said that she went to bed and slept alone after finishing her studies and dinner. At around 1:30 am, criminals entered her room and strangled her with her scarf after violating her.⁵¹
70. In Borguna district, on September 2, 2014 a youth named Ismail took a girl to a room at Borguna General Hospital, tempting her with a love affair and marriage. At that time, hospital employee Azadur Rahman, as pre-planned, left Ismail and the girl in the room. Taking advantage of this situation, Ismail raped the girl and escaped. Police arrested Azadur Rahman in connection to this.⁵²
71. On September 22, a widow of Parkul Village under Nabiganj Upazila in Habiganj District went to doctor at Popular Hospital in Sylhet town. Her visit took a long time and it had become quite late in the day. As a result, she could not return home as it was unsafe to travel⁵³. She took shelter at the Hazrat Shah Jalal (Ra) shrine at night. At around 10:00 pm, two women came and told her that Nayek Kamal of the police camp asked her to go to the camp. Hearing this, the woman went to Nayek Kamal's room at Mazar

⁵⁰ Report sent by human right defender associated with Odhikar from Rajshahi

⁵¹ The daily Manabzamin, 02/09/2014

⁵² The daily Amader Shomoy, 05/09/2014

⁵³ In Bangladesh, it is unsafe for women (and men too) to stay out at late night due to the deteriorating law and order situation.

police camp where she was raped by Kamal. Later Kamal's associates; the clerk of the shrine Mosabbir; and security guards Selim, Dudu Mia, Selim (2) and Rubel raped her by turns. She was admitted to the One Stop Crisis Centre (OCC) of the Sylhet Osmani Medical College Hospital. On September 25, 2014, a police officer stationed at the OCC, took her signature on a first information report (FIR) and sent the FIR along with other documents to Sylhet Kotwali Model Police Station. A case was filed under the Prevention of Women and Children Repression Act, 2000 based on the FIR signed by the victim. On September 26, 2014 at night, the woman went to the police station and learnt that the main accused whom she mentioned in the FIR, had been replaced with 3-4 unknown persons. She started crying. At that time she saw the rapist Kamal at the police station and accosted him. She said "this man raped me, please arrest him"; but the police did not arrest Kamal and let Kamal free from her grip.⁵⁴

72. Odhikar expresses serious concerns over the increase in violence against women. Odhikar believes that women are being victimized mainly due to lack of implementation of laws; failure of the Judiciary; lack of victim and witness protection; corruption and criminalisation of the members of law enforcement agencies; economic instability; and weak administration. Odhikar believes that since the perpetrators of violence against women escape punishment, potential violators are encouraged and incidents of violence increase.

Odhikar update

73. The state repression on Odhikar, that commenced on August 10, 2013, continues. The case filed under section 57 of the Information and Communication Technology Act, 2006 (Amended 2009) against Odhikar's Secretary Adilur Rahman Khan and its Director ASM Nasiruddin Elan, has been stayed by the High Court Division. Human rights defenders who are associated with Odhikar are being watched and harassed. Apart from that, the NGO Affairs Bureau (NGOAB), which is under the Prime Minister's Office, has barred the release of all project related funds that were to be utilized by Odhikar for its human rights programmes.
74. The government has taken a strategy to stop Odhikar from functioning as an effective human rights watch dog. For example, activities of the two-year 10-month project on 'Human Rights Research and Advocacy', funded by the Netherlands Embassy was accomplished in June 2013 but the NGOAB

⁵⁴ The daily Manabzamin, 29/09/2014

has not released the last phase of funds. This project had been implemented mainly to document, research and advocate human rights violations by the Indian Border Security Force along the border, extrajudicial killings, political violence, rights of religious and ethnic minority communities and violence against women. In order to implement the project on time, Odhikar had to borrow money from its general funds. It is to be mentioned that the NGOAB had been barring the release of funds of this project since October 2010.

75. After completion of the first year activities of the project 'Education on the Convention against Torture and OPCAT Awareness Programme in Bangladesh', funded by the European Union, Odhikar applied for the release of funds for the second year's activities on March 6, 2013. On May 15, 2013 the Bureau gave 50% of the funds for the second year, three months after the submission of Odhikar's request. On August 21, 2013 Odhikar submitted an application to the NGO Affairs Bureau for releasing the remaining 50% of funds, along with a project completion audit report of the first year. A year has passed and the NGOAB has not released the remaining 50% of the project funds.
76. The NGOAB has not released the second-year funds of the project 'Empowering Women as Community Human Rights Defenders' funded by the Finnish NGO Foundation for Human Rights (KIOS). The project was designed to take effective action in order to stop violence against women in four districts. The project will end in December 2014. In order to stop violence against women (VAW) Odhikar worked on dowry related violence, acid violence, rape and sexual harassment; and also monitored cases of VAW, conducted research and advocacy in coordination with trained women human rights defenders in first year. Odhikar cannot implement the project activities for the second year due to non-release of funds.
77. Human right activities of Odhikar face serious barriers due to non-release of funds and seven staff have already left the Organisation due to financial and security reasons.
78. As a human rights organisation it is Odhikar's duty to highlight human rights violations and take appropriate actions and measures to prevent future violations. The Government is harassing Odhikar, everyone associated with the organisation and victims of human rights violations; gagging their voices and hampering their activities.

Statistics: January-September 2014*											
Type of Human Rights Violation		January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	Total
Extrajudicial killings**	Crossfire	20	13	7	14	5	7	11	6	5	88
	Torture to death	0	2	1	0	2	2	1	1	1	10
	Shot to death	18	1	6	4	1	0	3	0	1	34
	Beaten to death	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	4
	Total	39	17	14	18	9	10	15	7	7	136
Disappearances		1	7	2	18	2	0	0	3	2	35
Human rights violations by Indian BSF	Bangladeshis Killed	1	1	2	2	4	4	0	6	7	27
	Bangladeshis Injured	4	3	3	2	1	10	6	13	4	46
	Bangladeshis Abducted	13	8	12	4	17	5	9	8	6	82
Death in Jail		1	5	4	7	5	4	3	8	2	39
Attack on journalists	Killed	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
	Injured	2	9	7	25	5	2	1	14	8	73
	Threatened	1	1	3	2	1	1	0	3	4	16
	Assaulted	0	1	0	2	15	0	0	1	2	21
	Arrested	4	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	6
Political violence	Killed	53	10	22	17	17	13	8	6	13	159
	Injured	1472	1166	1343	593	412	246	599	497	617	6945
Dowry related violence (including women victims, their children and relatives)		12	15	14	22	18	32	26	19	26	184
Rape		39	51	42	58	65	47	56	58	38	454
Sexual harassment /Stalking of women		14	12	29	25	22	12	22	20	37	193
Acid Violence		1	3	6	5	6	4	5	4	8	42
Public lynching		16	6	11	13	11	6	8	12	5	88
RMG Workers	Killed	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
	Injured	60	135	65	51	49	115	122	98	50	745

*Odhikar's documentation

**From January-September, 21 persons were extra judicially killed by the law enforcement agencies due to political violence which is also included in the statistical part of the Political Violence.

Recommendations

1. Political violence and the practice of confrontational politics must stop. The Government should also take legal action against criminal acts perpetrated by its party activists. Free and fair Parliamentary elections must be held immediately by ensuring participation of all political parties, under a neutral, interim government.
2. Incidents of extrajudicial killings and torture by law enforcement agencies must be investigated and the perpetrators be brought to effective justice. The Government should ratify the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture; and effectively implement the anti-torture legislation of 2013.
3. The Government has to explain all incidents of enforced disappearances and killings perpetrated by men claiming to be members of DB police or RAB. The Government must bring the members of the security forces who are involved in the incidents of enforced disappearance and killing to justice. Odhikar urges the government to accede to the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, adopted by the UN on December 20, 2006.
4. The Government and its party activists should refrain from attacking peaceful programmes and carrying out repressive activities condemnable by law.
5. The Government should investigate incidents of attacks on journalists and take legal measures to punish the perpetrators. The ban on the publication of Amar Desh and on the airing of Diganta TV, Islamic TV and Channel One should be removed. The detained Acting Editor of the daily Amar Desh, Mahmudur Rahman should immediately be released.
6. The repressive Information and Communication Technology Act 2006 (Amended in 2009 and 2013) must be repealed.
7. The Government should protest strongly against human rights violations on Bangladeshi citizens by the BSF and take initiatives to investigate and make the Indian Government accountable and compensate the families of the victims. The Government should also ensure the safety and security of the Bangladeshi citizens residing at the border areas.
8. The Government must revoke the authority given to the Parliament to impeach Supreme Court Judges.
9. The Government should take all measures to protect the rights of the citizens belonging to religious and ethnic minority communities and ensure their security. The Government has also to ensure their right to perform religious and cultural practices.
10. Human rights violations on readymade garment factory workers must be stopped. RMG factories need to be brought under synchronized security

programmes and the factories should be made with adequate infrastructural and other facilities.

11. The Government must ensure the effective implementation of laws to stop violence against women and the offenders must be effectively punished. The Government should also execute mass awareness programmes in the print and electronic media in order to eliminate violence against women.
12. The case filed against Odhikar's Secretary and Director under the Information and Communication Technology Act, 2006 (amended 2009) must be withdrawn. Harassment on human rights defenders associated with Odhikar must be stopped. The government should release the funds of Odhikar to let it continue its human rights activities.

Tel: +88-02-9888587, Fax: +88-02-9886208

Email: odhikar.bd@gmail.com, odhikar.documentation@gmail.com

Website: www.odhikar.org

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, with assistance from trained local human rights defenders.
4. Odhikar is consistent in its human rights reporting and is committed to remain so.