



BSF killed a 13-year boy and injured another teenager at the Sundrail border under Naogaon District

Fact-finding Report Odhikar

Name of victim-1 : Abdur Rakib (killed)
Father's Name : Abdus Samad
Age : 13
Address : District: Naogaon, Police Station: Shapahar, Union:
Silot, Village: Sonadanga
Name of victim-2 : Mohammad Omar Faruq (injured)
Father's name : Ainul Haque
Age : 15
Address : District: Naogaon, Police Station: Shapahar, Union:
Silot, Village: Horitokidanga
Border/Pillar (Bangladesh) : Sundrail Border, Pillar No- 248/1/R
Border/ Pillar (India) : Kandubati Border, Pillar no- 248/1/R
Date of Occurrence : 13 March 2009

The event took place on 13 March 2009 at 12.30 noon in the Sonadanga and Horitokidanga villages of Naogaon when the BSF opened fire on some young Bangladeshi boys. A BSF soldier had an argument with a boy fishing in the Dolakhari Lake situated 20 yards from the 248/1/R international pillar between India and Bangladesh. During the argument the BSF started to fire and hit two boys who were grazing their buffalos in the field about 50 yards from the border. Abdur Rakib and Omar Faruq were shot by the BSF and Abdur Rakib being shot in the chest, died instantly. What happened next can only be described as manifestation of cruelty and utmost disregard of law.

Witnesses stated that after the shooting everyone fled from the field and took shelter in a paddy field. Omar Faruq, who was shot in his right hip joint, managed to cross the ground but fell in a paddy field unconscious while the body of Abdur Rakib was lying in the field. The BSF soldier crossed the border and dragged Rakib's body by his right leg over the ground to the Indian side. Later the BSF soldier took two buffaloes from the field and walked them back to the border to create a scene that would suggest cattle trading rather than his crime. The BSF soldier then informed his camp and a few minutes later the body of Rakib was taken away.

Meanwhile, Omar Faruq was taken to Shapahar Sadar Hospital first and later transferred to the Rajshahi Medical College Hospital where he was admitted for one and half months. He had to walk with the help of crutches. A flag meeting was held between the BDR and the BSF over this incident on 14 March 2009 at 4.45 pm. In the meeting, though the BSF tried to push the argument that the victims were cattle traders, they finally gave up due to protest from the BDR. At 5.00 pm, the body of Abdur Rakib was returned after a post mortem was done in India.

The shooting had devastated both the families mentally and financially. The source of income, for a lot of the villagers like the two affected families was rearing buffaloes. Omar Faruq's family lost one buffalo and they could not afford further treatment for him. On the other hand Abdur Rakib's buffaloes were taken to India and later sold in an auction. The family of Rakib had lost not only their son but also their source of income.

Odhikar conducted a fact-finding mission into the incident on 26 February 2010. During the fact-finding mission, Odhikar spoke with:

- Omar Faruq
- The family members of Abdur Rakib and Omar Faruq

- Eye-witnesses
- Local residents
- Concerned members of the BDR
- Concerned police officers

Omar Faruq

One of the victims who survived this gruesome incident was Omar Faruq (15), a student of class VII. Odhikar spoke to Faruq to learn what had happened on the 13 March of 2009. According to him, on 13 March 2010 at around 11.00 am, he took their three buffaloes for grazing in the field where every one's cattle foraged. This field was about 50 yards from the nearest International Border Line between India and Bangladesh. A lot of other boys were feeding their buffaloes in the same field. There was a lake called Dohalkhari about 30-40 yards from that field towards the border. Faruq told Odhikar that a young boy was catching fish in Dohalkhari Lake. Everything was going on as usual when Faruq noticed a sound coming from the lake. One BSF soldier was standing on the 'no man's land' of the border and was having an animated conversation with the boy who was catching fish on the Bangladesh side. According to Faruq, apparently the BSF wanted the boy to give him some fish free. The confrontation between the boy and the BSF went for about half an hour and it started to become very heated. Faruq thought that the BSF soldier was drunk from his behavior. At around 12.30 pm, they started to verbally abuse each other and the BSF pointed the gun at the boy. Suddenly the boy ran and the soldier started to shoot. He recalled that about seven to ten rounds were fired. Faruq was hit by a bullet on his right hip joint and fell on the ground instantly. Everyone else around him was running to hide, leaving their buffaloes. Faruq crossed one paddy field to another by crawling and was waiting for help. He was rendered unconscious soon after and could not remember anything that happened next. He told Odhikar that he was later rescued by Babul and Toriqul who brought him to house at around 1.00 pm. On the same day at around 5.00 pm he

was admitted for fifteen days in Shapahar Sadar Hospital. He was later shifted to the Rajshahi Medical Collage Hospital for his further treatment where he spent one and half months.

Ainul Haque (42), Father of Omer Faruq

Ainul Haque, a farmer and resident of the Horitokidanga village, told Odhikar that on 13 March, 2009 at around 12.30 pm he heard gun shots at the border. He was about to start for the mosque when Faruq was brought back wounded by Babul and Toriquil. On hearing about the shooting of his son, he asked Babul and Toriquil about his buffaloes. He was informed by them that they had been left in the field. He went there to search for them and found that one of his buffaloes was shot. After coming back from the field at around 5.30 pm, Faruq was taken to the Shapahar Sadar Hospital.

He stated that the incident had crippled him both financially and mentally. Each one of his buffaloes was worth 60,000-70,000 taka. He had sustained a loss with the death of one of his buffaloes. Moreover, Faruq's treatment had proved to be far more expensive than he could manage. About 30,000 taka had already been spent. Doctors have prescribed 20 medicines each costing 2,000 taka. After the first one Ainul could not afford the rest of the course. He told Odhikar that if all of the buffaloes were safe than he could have sold one and treated his son. As he was left only two, he was unable to sell any because they would have nothing to live on for rest of the year.

He also informed Odhikar that one of the BDR members at the Sundrail camp wanted to attack the Kandubati BSF camp because of the incident. When he was stopped he quit and left the camp. He also felt that if the BDR mutiny did not take place than the incident could have been avenged.

Toriquil Alam (22), Rescuer of Omar Faruq

Odhikar spoke to Toriqul Alam, a resident of the Horitokidanga village, who rescued the unconscious. Omar Faruq from the field. On the day of the incident Toriqul and Babul were working in their fields which were adjacent to the field, where the boys were tending their buffaloes. They were startled by the sound of some 10-12 rounds of fire. According to Toriqul, when they looked up, they saw that Faruq was lying at the end of the field and crying. They got Faruq and hid in the field for 30 minutes. From there they saw that Rakib was lying on the ground dead. One BSF member came to the field crossing the border and dragged Rakib's body by his right leg through the field and over a culvert to the Indian side. The BSF soldier returned again and fetched two buffaloes to that side and walked them back to the Bangladeshi side of the border so that it appeared that they were brought from India. After that he returned to the other side and called some one on a cell phone. After a while, about 10-12 BSF jawans came by in a pick up van and took the body with them. When the coast was clear he and Babul brought Faruq to his house at around 1.00 pm. Later on, Toriqul along with Faruk's father Ainul went to the spot to rescue their buffaloes and managed to fetch two of them, the third being shot.

Abdus Samad (45), Father of Abdur Rakib

Odhikar spoke to the parents of Abdur Rakib, a 13 year old boy, who was killed by irresponsible BSF soldier on 13 March, 2009.

Abdus Samad was so distracted at the time of the interview that he could not even talk at first about the death of his son. He was sobbing continuously. He stated that Rakib went to the field after lunch with the buffaloes as usual and at around 1.00 pm on 13 March 2009 he heard from his brother Abu Bakar that there had been shooting at the border near pillar 248/1/R and Rakib had been shot dead. He went to his house but not finding his wife home he went to the field. He searched for his son and buffaloes but he did not find them. Later he heard that his buffaloes had been auctioned in India and were sold to some one who lived in a village nearby. He went to that person also but could not bring his buffaloes back.

Abdus Samad spoke only about his lost buffaloes and did not want to talk about his deceased son. He was crying through the whole interview.

Razia Khatun (35), Mother of Abdur Rakib

She felt that if she told Odhikar everything then the person responsible would be brought before justice. At around 12.00 pm she heard gun shots at the border area on the day of the incident. But she could not find Rakib there. She was told that the BSF had taken the body of her son. On 14 March 2009, Rakib's body was handed over to them. It had a gun shot wound on the right side of his chest which had exited through the left side.

Md. Abu Bakar (43), witness and victim's paternal uncle

Md. Abu Bakar, Rakib's uncle was present during the flag meeting that was held on 14 March 2009 and also witnessed parts of the incident. On 13 March, he was irrigating his fields when he heard gun shots. He ran to a paddy field nearby to hide, hearing the first shot. He saw that Rakib was shot by a BSF jawan. The BSF had a black cloth covering his mouth and there was gun in his right hand. He dragged Rakib's lifeless body by his right leg through the field over a culvert on the Indian side. The BSF soldier returned again, fetched the two buffaloes to that side and walked them back to the Bangladesh side of the border so that it appeared that they were brought from India. After that the BSF soldier returned to the other side and called some one through cell phone. After a while 10-12 BSF came by a pick up van and took the body with them. Later he informed Rakib's father about the incident at around 1.00 pm on 13 March 2009.

Atiq Hasan (17), a resident of Sonadanga village

Odhikar talked to Atiq Hasan, a resident of Sonadanga village who could not give any information about the incident but was, present at the flag meeting held between the BDR and the BSF on 14 March 2009 at 4.30.

He informed Odhikar that the BSF apologized for the incident in the flag meeting and ensured that the soldier responsible would be punished. There was one BSF soldier present in the meeting who broke in to tears.

Sundrail BDR Border Camp

When Odhikar went to Sundrail BDR Camp to interview the officials concerned, it was found that the whole battalion had been replaced. Subeder Lutfor Rahman was the Commander of the camp when the incident took place. He had retired and the battalion had been stationed elsewhere. However, in the BDR camp Odhikar found one Abdul Karim, a local villager who cooks for the BDR. He was interviewed by Odhikar.

According to Karim, a flag meeting was held on 14 March 2009 at around 4.30 which lasted till 5.00. In meeting, the BSF officials tried to prove that the whole incident was of cattle trading and the shooting ensued over that. In the face of furious protests from the BDR Commander Subeder Lutfor Rahman and others present there, they finally shifted and apologized for the event. The BSF also ensured that the one responsible will be punished in due time.

He stated that Rakib's body was handed over to the BDR in that meeting. A post mortem was already conducted on it by the Indian authorities. Abdul Karim also informed Odhikar that the BDR was angry about this whole episode.

Sub Inspector Aslam Khan, Shapahar Police Station

The investigating officer of the case of Abdur Rakib was out of station at the time of interview but Sub Inspector (SI) Aslam Khan, who was with him in that investigation had been interviewed. He confirmed that the shooting took place at 12.15 pm on 13 March 2009 in which Abdur Rakib was killed and Omar Faruq was injured. On 14 February the body of Rakib was handed over to the BDR by the BSF after a post mortem conducted in India. Further post

mortem in Bangladesh was not conducted as per Rakib's family's wishes. Neither did they want the police to have the body for inquest. Accordingly the body was returned to the family.

SI Aslam Khan said, however, two separate general diaries were filed on 13 March, numbered 438 for Omar Faruq and GD numbered 404 for the killing of Abdur Rakib. Higher authorities of police were also informed. He told Odhikar that between 2006-2010 (till February 26, 2010) there had been 15 incidents of BSF killings under this police station.

Dr. Debashish Roy, Consultant, Orthopedic and Traumatic Surgery, Shapahar Hospital

Dr. Debashish Roy told Odhikar that since the family of Abdur Rakib did not wish any further post mortem to be conducted; his body was not taken to the hospital. However, Omar Faruq who was shot twice was admitted to the Shapahar Sadar Hospital at first and later transferred to the Rajshahi Medical Collage Hospital.

Odhikar interviewed Dr. Debashish Roy in the hospital who treated Omar Faruq. He stated that Faruq was admitted in the male ward of the hospital on 22 March, 2009 and stayed there for almost 45 days. According to Dr. Debashish Roy, his main area of injury was the right hip joint and at first it seemed that he would never walk again. A series of various test were conducted and after an extensive treatment he, finally, was able to walk with the help of crutches. The doctors prescribed him a course of medicine for 20 days. Each tablet costs 2000 taka and after just one course, the family could not afford to continue.

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