

Odhikar Report on Human Rights Violations in Bangladesh

Political Killing 526. Cross Fire 149 and death by law enforcers 240

The year 2004 witnessed an alarming escalation in human rights violations. From 01 January to 31 December 526 people were killed, 6235 injured 2918 arrested and 28 abducted in incidents concerning political violence.

240 people were killed in the hands of law enforcers. Of them, 149 were killed in 'cross fire'. Last year, the figure was 81. 79 people were killed by RAB, 128 by police, 9 by two elite forces – Cheetah and Cobra and 24 by other enforcing agencies.

90 people died in police custody allegedly due to torture. Among them 80 persons died in jail and 10 died in police custody. Odhikar prepared the reports on the human rights situation in the country on the basis of reports published in 12 leading dailies.

Police and Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) arrested as many as 8,500 people between April 18- 30 in the run-up to the "April 30 deadline" given by the main opposition Awami League (AL) to oust the government. Of the arrested, 2000 were released after being questioned while the rest were sent to jail through the courts.

According to statistics given by the government, 6494 were arrested. Among them 4108 under Section 86 of the DMP Ordinance, 161 under Section 54 of Cr.PC, 324 under Section 151 of the same procedure, 819 under specific reasons and 1082 persons were arrested under regular cases. Mass arrest was criticized unanimously and, under order of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Police stopped the mass arrest scheme.

On 03 October , 2004 mass arrests were again started. According to a police source, from September 23 to 29, 5748 people were arrested across the country. But it must be noted here that during this period, although these arrests were politically motivated, there were some genuine arrests as well.

Journalists also fell victim to violence during the period examined. Among them, 5 journalist were killed, 111 were injured; 9 were arrested, 293 were threatened 120 sued, 2 abducted and 32 were assaulted.

Regarding violence against women and children, Odhikar reports that a total of 896 women and children were raped. Among them, 117 were killed, 13 allegedly committed suicide after the rape. A woman was gang raped by 14 Police in Chuadunga. 191 women, 65 men and 51 children were victimized by acid violence.

Furthermore, 270 women including one child were victimized due to dowry related matters. Among them, 166 were killed, 78 tortured, 14 victimized by acid violence and one was divorced and 11 committed suicide due to incessant dowry demands.

Other incidents of human rights violations, 41 people were killed, 199 people were injured and 127 were abducted, 3 were missing, one raped and 106 were arrested during the year in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

1579 children were tortured during this period. Among them, 373 were allegedly killed, 327 raped, 232 injured, 36 arrested, 267 kidnapped, 77 trafficked, 161 were missing, 55 children committed suicide; and 51 children were victimized by acid violence.

*** Rapid Action Battalion (RAB)**