



## **Mohammad Rahmat Ullah, student of Dhaka University, was allegedly tortured by police**

### **Fact-finding Report Odhikar**

At around 12.00 pm, on March 6, 2011, Mohammad Rahmat Ullah (20), a First Year student of the Islamic Studies Department, University of Dhaka, was arrested by the police forces of Shahabag Police Station, Dhaka Metropolitan Police, after a large protest rally brought out by students of Dhaka University. The family of Rahmat Ullah alleged that after being detained, Rahmat had been severely tortured by police. The police of Shahabag Police Station denied this allegation. Odhikar could not interview Rahmat Ullah as he was detained in Dhaka Central Jail at the time of this fact finding; and Odhikar did not get permission to visit him there.

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

- Relatives of Rahmat Ullah
- Eye-witnesses
- Law Enforcement Agencies

#### **Mohammad Zahid Hasan (17), brother of Rahmat Ullah**

Mohammad Zahid Hasan told Odhikar that he and his brother Rahmat Ullah are from the village of Dhukundir Chor under Raipura Police Station of Norshindi District.. Zahid said that after being admitted into the University of Dhaka, his brother Rahmat Ullah had got himself involved in student politics and joined the Student League of Awami League. Though Odhikar found that his name was not in the organisation's list. At around 10.00 am, on March 6, 2011, Zahid met his brother Rahmat in Hazi Mohammad Muhsin Hall, room no. 431, University of Dhaka. At 11.00 am he left and at the same time, Rahmat Ullah went to F. Rahman Hall. Outside, Zahid saw that around 500 students of Dhaka University had moved towards Shahabag in a procession. They were demanding justice for the death of Redwan, who was allegedly killed by transport workers earlier. The police of Shahabag Police Station resisted the procession and tried to stop the students from going to the main road. As a result, students started damaging cars. Then the police began to chase the students. Seeing the situation, Zahid contacted Rahmat through mobile phone. Rahmat informed him that he had not joined the procession.

At around 8.00 pm, on March 6, 2011, Zahid was informed by the other students of Dhaka University that Rahmat was arrested by police from Shahabag during the violence.

Zahid went to Shahabag Police Station at around 10.00 am, on March 7, 2011. He learnt that the police as a complainant filed a case against Rahmat and was sent to Dhaka Central Jail. Zahid went there and met Rahmat. Rahmat informed him that he had been in front of Shahabag Police Station during the incident and was watching the procession. When police started chasing the procession, students ran. He was standing at the same place and from there police arrested him. After being arrested, he said he was severely tortured by police. During his detention in Shahabag Police Station, police beat him on his hands, legs, back and shoulder. He was also kicked by them. Rahmat showed his injuries to Zahid from inside the prison. Zahid told Odhikar that the Police broke Rahmat's right hand by beating him severely.

Zahid told Odhikar that his brother had been tortured by police forces after they had implicated him in a false case despite having no allegation against him.

**Mohammad Zobaer Ahmed, Student, Islamic Studies Department, University of Dhaka**

Zobaer told Odhikar that at around 11.00 am, on March 6, 2011, leaders of the Awami League backed Chharta League<sup>1</sup> gathered in front of the Arts Faculty at Dhaka University. Leaders from F. Rahman Hall called a meeting. The meeting discussed the death of Redwan, a Fourth Year Student, of Arabic Department, University of Dhaka on March 5, 2011. Redwan was beaten to death by a section of transport workers at Motijheel. The University authority, had not yet taken any measures. Students attempted to take the body of Redwan to the campus but the police sent it to Redwan's village, at Bhandaria under Polashpur in Barisal district. The meeting also decided that students would offer *janaza*<sup>2</sup> for Redwan's departed soul and demanded for justice for his death. After the end of the meeting, students brought out a procession and moved towards Shahabag. The police entered the campus and started throwing tear-shells. As a result, students started damaging vehicles. The police arrested Rahmat Ullah, a student of Islamic Studies Department at 12.00 pm when he was walking in the road. Zobaer said that after being informed about the arrest of Rahmat in the afternoon, he went to Shahabag Police Station. He met Rahmat in the police station and Rahmat informed him that police had beaten him severely. His right hand had been broken. Later on, the police brought Rahmat to Bangobondhu Sheikh Mujib University and Hospital for treatment.

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<sup>1</sup> Student wing of Awami League, the ruling party.

<sup>2</sup> Janaza is the Muslim prayer offered to the departed soul.

**Mohammad Shaon, Student, Department of Sociology, University of Dhaka**

Shaon told Odhikar that on March 5, 2011, students and transport workers clashed over fixing a bus rent at Shapla Chottor, Motijheel. At one moment, a student named Redwan was beaten to death by a section of the transport workers and his body was pushed under a truck. These transport workers tried to make the death of Redwan look like an accident. Some students of Dhaka University called for a meeting to protest this killing and at the end of the meeting they brought out a procession.

Shaon said that all the students present were supporters of Chhatra League, the student wing of Awami League. At around 11.00 am, on March 6, 2011, all students came together in a procession and headed towards Shahabag. Before their arrival at Shahabag, police tried to stop the procession. As a consequence, students became agitated and a traffic-jam occurred. Police showed their anger on the students and as a reaction students started breaking cars. Police attempted to chase the students and they ran away. Police arrested Rahmat from the side of the road. During detention, Rahmat was severely beaten by police. Zobaer and others went to Shahabag Police Station to see Rahmat. He learnt that a police personnel, as a complainant, filed a case against Rahmat for damaging cars. Police informed him that, Rahmat had been arrested in that case and he had become injured when he attempted to flee. Rahmat was taken to hospital for some treatment and then he was kept in the prison.

Shaon informed Odhikar that on March 7, 2011, he went to Court and requested Advocate Sanaullah to move this case. He also said that almost 500 students had been involved damaging cars, but police arrested only Rahmat and tortured him.

**Mohammad Aminul Islam (39), Witness**

Mohammad Aminul Islam told Odhikar that at around 11.00 am, on March 6, 2011, he was working in his flower shop ‘Shefali Phool Ghor’, located at Shahabag. A procession of the students of Dhaka University moved towards Shahabag with rods, cricket bats, sticks and bricks. The students were shouting for justice for Redwan's death. The procession entered the main road and created a traffic jam. Students started vandalizing cars on the road. Police requested the students to stop vandalizing cars, but the students paid no heed. Police started throwing tear gas shells and as a result, students and police got into a clash for about an hour. Police arrested a student. He said that he did not know anything else.

**Iqbal Ahmed, Teacher, Islamic Studies Department, University of Dhaka**

Iqbal Ahmed told Odhikar that he was informed by the students that on March 6, 2011, Rahmat Ullah, a student of his Department, had been arrested by the police of Shahabag Police Station.

He told Odhikar that Rahmat, despite being a non-residential student, did stay at Mohsin Hall, room no. 431, because of his involvement in the student politics of the Student League. Though Rahmat did not hold any post in the Awami League backed Chhatra League, he worked actively in the organisation. Iqbal Ahmed was informed by the students that after being arrested, Rahmat had been tortured by the police. He stated that the authority of the University would take appropriate action.

**Sub Inspector (SI) Sheikh Muhsin Alam, Shahabag Police Station, Dhaka**

SI Sheikh Muhsin Alam told Odhikar that on March 6, 2011, twenty four police forces on the basis of GD no. 314 did their duty in order to defend law and order. At around 11.00 am, around 100/150 students of Dhaka University brought out a procession and moved towards the Shahabag main road. They had sticks, bricks and rods in their hands. They started vandalizing vehicles and police tried to stop them from doing that. As a result, students and police got involved in a clash and 15 policemen were injured. Constable Lutfur Rahman had his shield broken by a well aimed brick thrown by the students. Mohammad Tajuddin, an Ansar member<sup>3</sup>, was hit on his head by rod. He was admitted to Bongobondhu Sheikh Mujib University and Hospital. Students broke at least 50/60 cars including police cars. A student set a bus on fire (Dhaka Metro-Ja-14-1632). In order to control the situation, police threw three rounds of tear-gas shells. Police arrested Rahmat Ullah when he was setting the bus on fire.

He also opined that during arrest, Rahmat became injured as he tried to resist his arrest. He took Rahmat into the Police Station after providing primary treatment. At around 10.45 pm, he being a complainant, filed a case against 100/150 persons including Rahmat Ullah at the Shahabag Police Station. The case was numbered 13; dated 06/03/2011; sections 4(1)/5 of the Speedy Trial Act 2002 (Amended in 2008). The investigation of this case is assigned to SI Akter Hossain. He also informed Odhikar that Rahmat had not been tortured.

**SI Akhter Hossain, Shahabag Police Station, Dhaka**

SI Akhter Hossain told Odhikar that he is investigating the case no. 13 filed by SI Sheikh Muhsin Alam on March 6, 2011. He refused to say anything else as the case is still under investigation.

**Odhikar urges the government to investigate the incident of torture on Rahmat Ullah and the death of Redwan impartially; and punish the perpetrators. Odhikar**

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<sup>3</sup> Ansar -The Bangladesh Ansar (also known as the Ansar Bahini) is an auxiliary force for the preservation of internal security and law enforcement in Bangladesh.

**also condemns the damaging of vehicles belonging to people who have no connection with these incidents.**

-End of Report -