

Annual Activity

Report

2008



Contents

Secretary's Report

About Odhikar

Mission

Objectives

Odhikar's focus

Odhikar Activities in 2008

-Election Violence Education and Resolution

-Election Working Group

-Ending Impunity for Acid Attack and Rape Project

-Documentation, Fact Finding and Policy Advocacy to stop Human Rights Violations

-Strengthening Democracy through Empowerment of Human Rights Defenders at Sixty Years of Human Rights

Financial Accounts

Appendixes

List of Executive Committee Members

Networking Profile

List of Donors

Statistics of Human Rights Violations in 2008

Secretary's Report

I am pleased to present to you Odhikar's Annual Report for 2008.

Even though Bangladesh returned to democracy 17 years ago following a popular insurgency, constitutional liberties still face some challenges. In the absence of effective instruments and institutions defending the collective and individual rights of citizens, the overall situation shows symptoms that are alarming. The situation became worse after the proclamation of the State of Emergency on January 11, 2007.

The human rights situation deteriorated massively in Bangladesh after the caretaker government had seized national power and proclaimed the State of Emergency in 2007. The caretaker government then announced to the public that it was holding a democratic election in December, 2008. The 19th Parliamentary Election would be held on 9 December, 2008, freely and fairly, but human rights violations continued. Occurrences of confrontations between political parties, arbitrary arrests, custodial deaths, acts of violence against women, extra-judicial killings and torture by state and non-state actors hindered the enjoyment of civil and political rights.

Odhikar works to promote the quality of life, liberty and livelihood of the people of Bangladesh by promoting civil, political, economic, social, cultural and collective values of human rights including the implementation of obligations of the government as prescribed by the Constitution as well as by international instruments including the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights, the International Convention on Social, Economic and the Cultural Rights and the Convention against Torture.

The active participation of the grassroots community in Odhikar's working areas is always emphasised. Odhikar realises that empowerment is a precondition to establishing human rights work. With this in mind, in 2008, Odhikar continued working towards the vision of "a society where full enjoyment of human rights by every human being will be ensured."

Odhikar's biggest achievements in 2008 follow Odhikar's researching and monitoring of the human rights situation under the State of Emergency across and closely monitoring in 9th the Parliamentary Election. Odhikar has proved its neutrality and capability in being a dynamic human rights watchdog both nationally and internationally.

In 2008, Odhikar worked on five key projects - Election Violence Education and Resolution; Election Working Group; Ending Impunity for Acid Attack and Rape; Strengthening Democracy through Empowerment of Human Rights Defenders at Sixty Years of Human Rights; and Documentation, Fact Finding and Policy Advocacy to Stop Human Rights Violations.

I would like to thank all of Odhikar's staff, volunteers, and human rights defenders for their hard work. I would also like to thank like minded organisations, donors, and my fellow Executive Committee members for their support and cooperation.

Adilur Rahman Khan
Secretary
Odhikar

About Odhikar

Odhikar is one of the leading human rights organisations in Bangladesh, registered under the NGO Affairs Bureau. Since its inception in 1994, Odhikar has been striving to improve the human rights of people by holding account both state and non-state actors accountable for human rights violations. Odhikar was founded as, and will continue to be, a politically non-partisan organisation.

Mission

Odhikar seeks to uphold the civil, political, social, cultural and economic rights of the people of Bangladesh.

Objectives

- Fighting against torture and impunity and working for the promotion of international justice and the prevention of torture.
- Promotion human rights through awareness building, documentation, fact finding, monitoring and research on human rights abuses.
- Advocacy and lobbying for incorporation and ratification of various international instruments by the government and also for the enactment of human rights friendly laws and necessary amendments of existing laws.
- Fostering mass awareness on rights and duties.
- Creating a group of human rights promoters among the policymakers.
- Strengthening the human rights movement and establishing participatory democracy and good governance in Bangladesh.
- Incorporating gender sensitivity in strategic planning of all programmes and projects in consultation with human rights defenders and network members.
- Mobilising and networking between the activities of its members and enhancing institutional capabilities of individual groups, organisations and agencies on human rights issues.
- Advocacy, lobbying and campaigning for people's participation in governance and also for introducing participatory democracy in order to ensure good governance.

- Monitoring of national and local government elections for ensuring free and fair electoral process to ensure voter's right to participate;
- Facilitating mass awareness raising events on national and international days that create positive images of work.

Odhikar focuses on

Odhikar documents and records violations of human rights by monitoring the human rights situation through its nationwide network of human rights defenders, by scanning media reports, and by carrying out fact-finding missions. Where appropriate, Odhikar campaigns for bringing changes at the legislation.

It network with other human rights organisations nationally, regionally and internationally to share information and exchange practices.

Odhikar helps to ensure that elections are free and fair through a programme of election monitoring where it mostly looks into the human rights aspect of the elections.

The ethnic and religious minorities as well as human rights defenders from the grassroots level benefit from Odhikar's trainings which help them to understand their rights and how to mobilise for its realisation.

It has a nationwide network of more than 200 men and women trained as Human Rights Defenders. Their information and reporting helps Odhikar expands its working area to places not readily accessible to our fact-finding team.

Odhikar Activities in 2008

In 2008, Odhikar conducted the following five projects, including one new project and four continued projects from 2007 and 2006.

- Election Violence Education and Resolution (EVER)
- Election Working Group
- Ending Impunity for Acid Attack and Rape Project
- Documentation, Fact Finding and Policy Advocacy to Stop Human Rights Violations
- Strengthening Democracy through Empowerment of Human Rights Defenders at Sixty Years of Human Rights

Our Annual Report gives an overview of each of these projects and highlights the key findings, recommendations, and outcomes.

Further and more detailed information on each project is available on request.

Election Violence Education and Resolution

Background of the project

As a pioneer step towards the restoration of democracy, in 2008, Bangladesh held a number of elections which were largely free and fair. Bangladesh has been back to an elected system of government since the 9th Parliamentary Election was held successfully on 29 December 2008. However, in the run-up to ballots, election related violence has been common. That is why an Election Violence Education and Resolution (EVER) project, a joint project with the International Federation of Election Systems (IFES) - an international organisation that specialises in supporting elections in developing nations and providing technical assistance to democracies in the areas of election administration, civil society building, human rights, the rule of law and good governance - was launched with additional support from the Asia Foundation and DFID.

Odhikar implemented the EVER monitoring program to capture accurate information and data about incidents of election-related violence in a methodologically reliable manner so that stakeholders in the electoral process can use this information to design and implement effective electoral interventions in a country. This activity was intended to focus attention on the very serious issue of election violence in the country, and provide data that could be used to reduce the level of violence related to elections in Bangladesh.

Introduction

The project of the Election Violence Education and Resolution (EVER) was designed by IFES and implemented by Odhikar for the December 28, 2008 parliamentary election in Bangladesh. The program was primarily implemented from 14 to 28 December, 2008 by Odhikar. Odhikar focused the EVER monitoring activities in 40 districts under six divisions which had a history of election-related violence in Bangladesh. Two monitors worked in each of the 40 districts. Odhikar EVER monitors were responsible for identifying and gathering key information on incidents of election-related violence within each district, as well as tensions, potential for violence, and peace initiatives. The monitors were trained in the EVER methodology, which requires multiple sources to verify incidents of election-related violence.

The Odhikar EVER project provided accurate and timely data on patterns of election violence during the campaign period to the public, political parties, election and security officials, and other stakeholders in Bangladesh to help them develop strategies to mitigate such incidents. A total of 110 incidents of election-related violence were recorded and verified by EVER monitors during this period. The following districts were monitored:

Division (s)	Name of the District
Dhaka	Gazipur, Munshigonj, Narayanganj, Mymensingh, Rajbari, Kishoregonj, Tangail and Netrokona
Chittagong	Brahmanbaria, Comilla, Feni, Laxmipur, Noakhali, Chittagong, Cox's Bazar, Rangamati and Bandarban.
Rajshahi	Panchagarh, Thakurgaon, Dinajpur, Kurigram, Lalmonirhat, Gaibandha, Chapainawabganj, Naogaon, Rajshahi, Pabna and Sirajgonj.
Khulna	Khulna, Satkhira, Jessore, Jhenaidah and Kushtia.
Barisal	Barisal, Patuakhali, Jhalokati and Pirojpur.

Sylhet

Sunamgonj, Sylhet and Moulavibazar.

Key Findings

- A total of 110 incidents of election-related violence were recorded during the monitoring period. Most of the violence took place on 19 and 25 December. There were 13 incidents that occurred on each of these dates. Most of the violence observed was political party-related, frequently involving clashes between political party supporters and activists.
- Supporters/activists of the Awami League and BNP were the most active participants in the violence during the monitoring period. The Awami League was directly responsible for the violence in 42 incidents and was also involved as secondary perpetrator in two incidents, while the BNP was directly involved in 28 incidents as the primary perpetrator group and also responsible as secondary perpetrator in 19 incidents of violence recorded during the monitoring period.
- In addition to clashes between supporters and activists of the two electoral alliances, violence during this reporting period also involved various levels of property damage, both to private and political party property.
- Five individual districts had the highest number of incidents which occurred during this period: 11 incidents in Pabna, eight incidents in Kishorgonj, seven incidents in Brahmanbaria, six incidents each Barisal and Moulavibazar.
- In total, 336 people were wounded in the recorded incidents and there were no deaths in any incident report (in comparison to 2006, when 20 people were recorded as killed during the monitoring period). In 2008 monitoring period, a total of 89 persons were recorded as wounded in Chittagong division, 79 in Rajshahi, 57 in Dhaka, 47 in Barisal, 38 in Sylhet division, and 26 in Khulna division.
- It is notable that law enforcement agencies were recorded as perpetrators only in three incidents recorded during this reporting period (in comparison to 2006, when several incidents were recorded indicating law enforcement agencies as perpetrators during the monitoring period). Law enforcement agencies were found to be active and tolerant in the vast majority of the monitored areas. Police response to election-related violence seemed to have improved during the State of Emergency. It shows that police behaviour improved and they responded better while maintaining law and order during this reporting period.

Peace initiatives

In 24 of the monitored districts, peace initiatives were taken by the government, various non-political cultural groups, political parties and civil society. The peace initiatives undertaken by various social and cultural organisations, political parties and local administrations were mostly well-ordered rallies and processions. In many of these districts, such peace initiatives had some impact on reducing the potential for violence or level of tension.

One of the major peace initiatives was intended to discourage voters from voting for candidates who had been against the Liberation War of Bangladesh. Voters were also encouraged to stamp on the 'No' vote if it seemed appropriate. Moreover, various cultural

fronts organised campaigns for a voter education and awareness program. In the remaining 16 districts, there were no peace initiatives.

Place and Patterns of Violence

Under the EVER methodology, the place of incidents were identified as a significant indicator to measure the patterns of violence. Violence mostly happened when the electoral alliances came face to face in processions or rallies, and there were clashes over the delivering of provocative speeches. Because of this pattern of violence, the massive incidents of violence took place on the streets or open areas. Ten percent of the incidents took place in political party offices or facilities while eight percent of the incidents occurred on private property.

In districts that were more peaceful, monitors observed that the main factors contributing to the low levels of incidents were:

- The proactive role taken by police, as their presence during processions and rallies in many districts
- Non-violent political strategies followed by political parties observed in Feni, Bandarban, Panchgarh, Tangail, Munshiganj, Dinajpur, Laxmipur (In these districts the political party leaders urged their activists or supporters to be non-violent during processions.)
- Fear among political leaders that they will lose popularity if they resort to using violence

Perpetrators of Election-Related Violence

In more than 90 percent of the recorded incidents, the perpetrators were supporters of the political party and some were local level political party leaders. As for specific political groups, supporters and leaders of the BNP were more often the perpetrators of incidents than supporters and leaders of the Awami League.

In 38 percent of incidents, the recorded perpetrators were supporters of the BNP while in 35 percent of incidents the perpetrators were supporters of the Awami League. Supporters and activists of Jamaat-e-Islami were found to be perpetrators in nine percent of incidents, while in six percent of the cases the recorded perpetrators were supporters and activists of the Jatiyo Party (E). The security forces were much less likely to be perpetrators. The police and army were found to be perpetrators in four percent and two percent of cases, respectively.

Supporters and activists of the Four Party Alliance were perpetrators in 49 percent of all incidents of violence, while in 43 percent of the incidents the perpetrators were supporters and activists of the Grand Alliance. This data indicates that neither of the alliances was significantly more active in perpetrating violence than the other.

Victims of Election-Related Violence

The victims of electoral violence are likely to be more varied than the perpetrators of this violence. While the violence was being perpetrated for the most part by the supporters/activists of a political party or candidate, victims were comprised not only of political party supporters and leaders but also by voters, members of the media, government actors and property.

Types and Methods of Violence

The most widespread forms of violence during this monitoring period were repeated clashes and physical attacks between the supporters of the two rival political party alliances, with a large number of the incidents characterized by these types of attacks. In total, 49 percent of incidents were characterized by physical harm or torture. The destruction of property was also a frequent feature of the violence with 28 percent of incidents resulting in some destruction of property. Group clashes made up eight percent of the violence while six percent were recorded as intimidation or psychological abuse of the victims. There were also different types of violence observed, such as threats of physical harm, jail or arbitrary detention hounding, and verbal harassment during the monitoring period.

The most popular weapon used during the incidents of violence throughout the country was the *lathi* (heavy stick) with 37 percent of all cases documented. Bricks or stones and fists or physical means were often used during the violence. Lathi, bricks, and stones were used largely during clashes between rival groups of political party supporters as well as in the destruction of property. Few incidents saw the use of arson and firearms or explosives, a fact which could account for the fact that no one was killed in these incidents of violence.

Post-Election Violence after End of Monitoring Period

In the period after the announcement of the election results, a significant degree of post-election violence took place throughout Bangladesh. This violence was much more serious than the violence observed during the monitoring period for this report. According to Odhikar's documentation, 17 people were reportedly killed and over 500 people were injured in post-election violence in different places across the country. In most cases, activists and supporters of the Awami League (AL) led Grand Alliance, and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) led Four-Party Alliance were found to be involved in such clashes. In many districts, AL activists attacked the houses and shops of the BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami supporters and vandalised their property.

The security forces seemed not to have taken significant action to stop the post-election violence. While the police authorities reported that there were only 13 incidents of violence in the whole country, 100 of incidents of post-election violence were reported in the media throughout the country.

In total, 17 people (nine people from BNP and eight people from AL) were reportedly killed and over 500 persons were injured due to retaliatory attacks by the supporters of the Four Party Alliance and Grand Alliance and, in particular, the Awami League and BNP. One aspect of the post-election violence was that it was highly concentrated in university and college campuses. Ignoring the instructions of the newly elected Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and concerns made by university teachers, the situation of unrest among students and political activists continued throughout the month.

Conclusions

Odhikar monitored the incidents of election-related violence in 40 districts on the basis of previous records of violence during the 2001 elections. Odhikar relied on its district monitors who collected updated information in the working areas. The aforementioned incidents were then verified from a number of sources including eyewitnesses, the media, hospitals, police reports and election officials. It is hoped that this kind of fact-finding can be used nationally and internationally in order to mitigate election-related violence.

One notable fact observed in the report is that the security officers and or police were very rarely recorded as being perpetrators or victims of the violence. While on the one hand this suggests that the security forces are not acting as agents fostering election-related violence, on the other hand this also suggests that they may not be playing a forceful role in trying to counter the violence (on the assumption that more security forces would have been recorded as victims if this was the case). This seems to suggest that the security forces should be more active in playing a constructive role in countering the violence, particularly in the case of reaction-counter-reaction types of violence observed between supporters of the two major political blocs.

Election Working Group

The Election Working Group (EWG) consists of 34 civil society organisations that undertake initiatives to promote electoral accountability and reduce election violence. On December 2008 parliamentary election, Odhikar, in collaboration with the EWG, planned a system of monitoring for the Election Day.

Ending Impunity of Acid Violence and Rape

Background to the Project

Violence against women is a serious of issues in Bangladesh. Unfortunately, it is often neglected by various agencies of the government. Despite special criminal laws for protecting women instances of violence against women- especially domestic violence and rape, have not decreased in any significant manner. The major reasons why women do not get justice are access to justice, police corruption, and mismanagement of vital evidence and ignorance of the law.

The emancipation of women can be seen in the market and economy, but unfortunately it has increased the violence against women both in the domestic and public sphere. The number of women who experience violence – including rape, beatings, torture and murder – is extraordinarily high in rural areas of Bangladesh, both in domestic situations and outside the home. They are largely from the poor and underprivileged sections of society, in many cases contrary to the perpetrators.

Acid violence is one common form of violence against women in Bangladesh. The first documented case of acid violence was in 1967 when a young girl had acid poured on her by her 'admirer' when his proposal of marriage was refused by the girl's mother. Although the government enacted the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act 2000, the offenders go unpunished either because of non-application of law or due to loopholes in it. It takes a long period of time to dispose of a case related to violence against a woman. As the perpetrators are not punished, the victims do not receive justice. Therefore, such incidents of rape, kidnapping, and acid attack are rampant throughout the country.

In order to eliminate rape and acid violence, Odhikar and ActionAid Bangladesh jointly designed a project entitled "Ending Impunity of Acid Attacks and Rape" in six districts which are Barisal, Khulna, Jessore, Satkhira, Kushtia and Jessore. The project was initiated in April 2007 to monitor the status of cases of acid violence and rape in the District Courts. Fact-finding missions are also carried out to highlight incidents of rape and acid violence.

Rationale

In March 2007, Odhikar and ActionAid Bangladesh collaborated in an awareness-raising programme on the issues of rape and acid violence and the laws involved. Also this year, that project entitled "Ending Impunity to Acid Violence and Rape" was continuously set up until September 2008. The goal of the project was to create an effective and friendly environment of support mechanisms for the victims of acid violence and rape by the relevant state officials. Odhikar and ActionAid Bangladesh (AAB) planned the program with specific purposes in mind – ensuring legal support and justice to victims and monitoring the implementation of the Acid Laws, including encouraging the setting up of DACCs (District Acid Control Committee) where there are none.

In order to do this, Odhikar conducted advocacy work with police, judges, lawyers and local administration about the consequence of acid and rape attacks and explored their cooperation to ensure punishment of perpetrators. Fact-finding missions were also carried out to highlight incidents of rape and acid violence. It organised collective action (social and legal) against perpetrators of acid attacks and rapists. Thus, the target groups aimed for were members of the district-level acid control committees, local government representatives, police officers, lawyers, journalists, judges/magistrates, doctors, Department of Women Affairs, teachers, and NGO leaders. Odhikar scans 12 newspapers every day to record related incidents occurring in the districts of Sirajgonj, Satkhira, Khulna and Barisal.

Goal of the project

To be able to create effective and friendly environments in support mechanisms for the victims of acid violence and rape by the state duty bearers.

Purposes of the project

- To carry out advocacy work with police, judges, lawyers and local administration about the consequence of acid and rape attacks and explore their cooperation to ensure punishment of the perpetrators
- To ensure access to legal support for the acid and rape victims availing district-level government and NGO legal aid fund
- To organize collective action (social and legal) against acid attackers and rapists

Major Activities

- Building the capacity of AAB SVAW members and AAB local partner staff, human rights defenders, and the local community
- Facilitate the formation/activation of district level acid control committees and monitor their functions on a regular basis
- Carry out workshops in association with Women's Directorate, Social Welfare Department, Police Department, Upazila and District Administration, Community Elites, Local Media and NGOs ensuring to reduce acid attack and rape
- Establish a network with victims, police stations, and district courts to ensure punishment of perpetrators by the SVAW campaign officer, human rights defenders, and the staff of AAB local partners

- Ensure monitoring, documentation and reporting of all the activities of the project

The project was based on below four objectives

1. Encourage the effectiveness of the DACC and Nari O Shishu Nirjaton Domon Committee
2. Collect complete information dealing with violence against women
3. Schedule workshops
4. Produce first-hand, detailed, fact-finding reports

1. Activities focused on an effective system:

- To meet and talk with the Deputy Commissioner to activate and or reorganize (where necessary) the District Acid Control Committee (DACC) and Nari O Shishu Nirjaton Domon Committee (NSNDC) and monitor activities initiated on the basis of the decision made in the meetings organized by the DACC and Nari O Shishu Nirjaton Domon Committee
- During the year 2008, meetings of District Acid Control Committee (DACC) and Nari O Shishu Nirjaton Domon Committee were also held in four working districts. The District monitors for the programme attended the meetings and informed Odhikar that the discussions at the meeting were effective, but the implementation of the decisions taken and written on the resolutions were lacking. Odhikar received some copies of the resolutions and minutes of the meetings.
- To organise district-wise awareness-raising workshops in collaboration of the district administrations

2. Listing Activities:

- To collect information regarding acid and rape cases i.e. number and types of cases, dates and sections of cases, concerned courts and public prosecutors, detailed information on victims and perpetrators
- To collect lists of acid users and sellers i.e. number and detailed information of those who have sales license and those who do not have any license but sell and use acid

Capacity Building Training Programme:

On 8 June 2008, Odhikar organised the three-day training workshop and refreshers programme on resisting acid violence and rape in Dhaka to strengthen the capacity of grassroots level human rights defenders of Odhikar and network partners of ActionAid in six districts. Md. Sazzad Hussain, a program coordinator of Odhikar, described the objectives of the training workshop and shared the activities carried out under the violence against women project. Odhikar Secretary Adilur Rahman Khan, Acting Director ASM Nasiruddin Elan, and Samia Ahmed of ActionAid spoke at the inaugural session of the programme. The workshop was designed to impart knowledge about the methods of working with victims, raising awareness in the society, and coordinating with the administration to challenge the

threats. An action plan was also chalked out in the workshop held at the Caritas Development Institute in Dhaka.

Chief Reporter of the New Age newspaper Shahiduzzaman, Deputy Director (Legal) of Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST) Advocate Farida Yeasmin, and Farhana Ferdous of Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum were the resource persons of the workshop. The objective of the workshop was to train the human rights activists at the grassroots level to facilitate the victims of acid violence and rape in maintaining a close association with the law enforcement agencies. The fundamental content of the training course and refreshers programme was:

- Social impact of acid and rape violence on victims has been analysed and discussed.
- Law & policy responses: Acid Control Act 2002 and Acid Crime Control Act 2002- the main features of the existing laws were discussed.
- Updating records and campaigning for justice with in-depth fact-finding and documentation of acid violence and rape was discussed among the participants.
- Definition of rape, social impact of rape and policy responses: to discuss the social and legal implications of the crime of rape and acid violence on victims and their family
- To identify the problems regarding the control of illegal acid selling and acid attacks
- Legal framework: General problems in investigation on acid attacks & rape and role of police; trials of victims of acid violence and rape; deficiencies in law and need to reform; preventive measures from the government & NGOs
- To develop the interviewing skills of the district monitors: Methods used to interview victims and stakeholders were discussed and group work was presented.
- Experiences have been shared among the participants regarding their views and ideas of the field work.
- Challenges and difficulties faced by human rights defenders and network partners: HRDs speak of the challenges faced and analyzed them. They also shared their experiences in solving the problems.
- To evaluate respective participant's work, progress and overall performance of the district monitor's reviewed
- Suggestions on improvement, expectation, and other matters were taken for achieving the goal of the project
- To analyze the legal framework of acid violence and rape initiatives of the government and NGOs to prevent/rehabilitate victims/survivors through the Acid Crime Controls Act, Acid Controls Act and Nari O Shishu Nirjaton Damon Ain
- HRDs/AAB network partners proposed concrete actions to help improve the quality of work. A future action plan was drawn for a more meaningful Odhikar-AAB partnership

Odhikar President Dr. C.R. Abrar, Secretary Adilur Rahman Khan, Acting Director ASM

Nasiruddin Elan, Executive Member Mohammad Ruhul Amin Bhuiyan, Naima Imam Chowdhury, and Samia Ahmed of Action Aid spoke at the concluding session of the workshop. They said the workshop could create a link between the victims and the legal and social support providers. They also encouraged the media reporters to work on these issues. Speakers said the human rights activists should be vigilant on acid trading in their neighbourhood and help the administration and the media to curb the violence. Md. Sazzad Hussain was the facilitator of the workshop.

Awareness-raising Workshops

On 22 January 2008, as part of the project activity, an advocacy workshop was held on stopping acid attack and rape. It was jointly organised by Barisal District Administration, *Barisal Nari Nirjaton Protirodh Andolon* and Odhikar, with the support of ActionAid Bangladesh. It was held at the conference hall of DC office, Barisal. Odhikar also gave technical support to organise this awareness-raising workshop regarding acid violence, rape, and relevant laws in Barisal. The District administrative bodies have been cooperative, as have been the local law enforcement agencies and local government bodies, including the judiciary, and civil society organizations, who all sent representatives.

The advocacy workshop was presided by Mohammand Monjur-E-Elahi Deputy Commissioner, Barisal and moderated by Advocate Abdur Faffar Khan, President of Bangladesh Legal Aid Services Trust (BLAST). Participants included government officials, NGO activists, lawyers, acid users and sellers, media, and acid survivors.

At the beginning of the workshop, a welcome speech and the objectives of the workshop were delivered by *Barisal Nari Nirjaton Protirodh Andolon*, and Odhikar talked about the project and its activity in the project. Odhikar also highlighted the legal and social impact of acid attack and rape. Besides, many issues were discussed among the participants. Of them, lack of law and policy implementation, roles and responsibilities of DACC and *Nari O Shishu Nirjaton Protirodh* Committee responses to the violence were crucial.

Speakers at the advocacy workshop commented that cases need to be studied with proper investigation and based on facts. Perpetrators are not being punished due to lack of implementation of existing laws and lack of proper investigation. The most common motives for acid attacks are perceived marital issues and land disputes, where women account for more than 60 percent of all victims. However, around a third of all victims of acid attack are not the intended victims.

In the past when victims went to file a case in the police station, the Officer in Charge of the police station refused to file the case on various grounds. However, at present, they take all cases to file. This is probably due to the fact that local government officials are aware of Odhikar's activities in Barisal, and they too are taking an interest in combating acid violence and rape. False cases are sometimes filed as a means of harassment. Investigations by the police must be done with extreme care so that innocent parties are not harassed.

The following recommendations emerged from the workshops:

Observations

- District Acid Control Committee and *Nari O Shishu Nirjaton Protirodh* Committee are not active enough.
- No specific records of acid sellers and users in Barisal

- No license was issued in the year 2007 for acid sellers
- Incidents of acid violence and rape are not properly recorded by District Acid Control Committee and *Nari O shishu Nirgaton Protirodh* Committee.
- Society is sympathetic to acid and rape victims, as awareness of the reasons behind the crime becomes more wide spread. But society also has a negative attitude towards rape victims.
- District authorities willingly propose organizing awareness meetings regarding these issues

Recommendations

- Mobilise people against acid attack and rape, and make them aware of the consequences
- Widespread social movement against these heinous crimes
- Take immediate measures to stop selling acid without a license
- Proper education at all levels
- Regular discussions on the issue of acid violence and its effects, to be held in religious and educational institutions
- Meeting with acid sellers and users regularly
- Establish a monitoring cell to observe sellers' register
- Maintain a strict control on the source of acid
- Proper implementation of laws and acid crimes to be tried by the Speedy Tribunals
- Ensure accountability of law enforcers and other government officers
- Ensuring quick medical support and aid to the victims
- Specialized acid burn units need to be opened in every hospital
- The acid thrower should be handed over to the law enforcement agencies
- Ensuring the complete implementation of the acid laws
- To ensure the victim's safety and security
- Taking measures to boycott a rapist by society and by his family
- Filling the case of rape as soon as possible
- The investigating officer has to work with dedication, giving free legal aid to the victim and ensuring quick investigation and sentencing.

In January 2008, after the district-level advocacy workshops, a national advocacy meeting was organised in Dhaka to explore the outcomes gathered from the working areas during the project period.

5. Fact-finding Reports:

As regards fact-finding missions during 2008, Odhikar carried out the following fact-findings missions:

Month(s)	Fact Finding Subject	Source	Date of Occurrence
January	A young girl was gang raped in Satkhira.	Local daily Ajker Barta, 29 December 2007	28/12/2007
	A rape case of Ashura Begum at Satkhira	Local daily Ajker Barta, 27 December, 2007	29/12/2007
February	Four persons, including two children from the same family, fell victim to acid violence in Satkhira.	Local daily Ajker Barta, 12 February 2008	11/02/2008

	A young girl was gang raped in Satkhira.	HRD, Odhikar	28/12/2007
	A disabled girl was raped with alluring marriage proposal in Satkhira	HRD, Odhikar	15/06/2007
March	A woman and her seven-year-old grand daughter fell victim to an acid attack in Baluigachhi, Satkhira.	Local newspaper 16 February 2008	14/02/2008
	A house wife committed suicide after being raped in Daulatpur, Kushtia.	Local daily <i>Bajropat</i> , 28 February 2008	22/2/2008
	A minor girl was violated by a school clerk in Barisal.	Local daily <i>Ajker Barta</i> , 3 March 2008	02/03/2008
April	A rickshaw-van puller was attacked with acid in Kaliganj, Satkhira.	Human Rights Defender, Odhikar	12/4/2008
	A four-year-old child was raped in Kushtia.	Local daily <i>Andolaner Bazar</i> and daily <i>Joyjatra</i> 13 April 2008	12/4/2008
	A teenage girl was raped in Devhata Upazial of Satkhira District.	Local daily <i>Loksamaj</i>	15/4/ 2008
	A widow was raped in Keshabpur Upazila of Jessore District.	Local daily <i>Gramer Kagoj</i>	14/4/ 2008
May	A seven-year-old child wasraped with alluring food in Keshabpur, Jessore.	Local daily <i>Purbanchal</i> , 08 May 2008	06/05/2008
	A teenage girl was raped by a neighbour in Devhata, Satkhira.	HRD, Odhikar	15/04/2008
	A school girl was raped with an alluring marriage proposal in Keshabpur, Jessore.	Local daily <i>Spandan</i> , 22 May 2008	20/05/2008
	A woman was raped in a hotel at Sharsha, Jessore.	HRD, Odhikar	10/03/2008
	A school girl was raped with a marriage proposal at Debhata of Satkhira.	Local daily <i>Loksamaj</i> , 3 March 2008	14/04/2008
June	Miscreants threw acid on a family of four in Satkhira.	Local newspaper 16 February 2008	04/06/2008
	A man sustained burn injuries when miscreants threw acid in Barisal.	Daily <i>Sangbad</i> , 9 June 2008	06/06/2008
July	An adolescent was raped and became pregnant in Kushtia.	Local daily <i>Desh Tottho</i> , 3 July 2008	23/05/2008
	A ten-year-old girl was raped in Daulatpur, Kushtia.	Local daily <i>Andoloner Bazar</i> 28 May 2008	06/06/2008

	A young girl was gang raped in Jessore.	Local daily <i>Gramer Kagoj</i> , 27 July 2008	27/06/2008
August	A minor girl was abducted and raped in Sirajganj.	The Daily Star, 13 August 2008	03/08/2008
	A female child was raped at Abhoinagar, Jessore.	Local daily <i>Loksamaj</i> , 20 August 2008	18/08/2008
September	A minor girl died after rape in Sirajganj.	New Age 30 September 2008	25/09/2008
	An adolescent was raped with a commitment of marriage proposal at Abhoinagar, Jessore.	Local daily <i>Loksamaj</i> , 6 August 2008	02/08/2008
	There was an acid attack on housewife in Satkhira.	Odhikar HRD 3 September 2008	01/09/2008
	A husband and wife were attacked with acid in Sirajganj.	Odhikar HRD 16 September 2008	15/09/2008

Conclusion

It is sincerely hoped that law enforcement agencies should effectively act according to the mandates of the laws under which they were formed. Necessary measures must be taken to repeal or amend the prevalent loopholes and flaws in the Acts of 2000 and 2002 to ensure that ambiguity is kept to a minimum and justice is done. Journalists must also be sensitive in their reporting and follow up a case until its end. Only in that way will awareness be created as to whether justice is being done. False cases should also be made to public.

Women make up almost half of Bangladesh's population and grow up even in domestic life. At the present, their participation and contribution should not be neglected in the country's development progress as an integral part. The issue of violence against women should never take a back seat and must be seen not as a social issue but as a serious legal and economic problem that affects not only women but also the family and the nation. That is why violence against women is never acceptable, never tolerable, and never excusable.

Strengthening Democracy Through Empowerment of Human Rights Defenders at 60 years of Human Rights

Background

Despite being a State Party to various human rights treaties, governments in Bangladesh have not succeeded in conducting systemic investigations into human rights abuses, particularly human rights violations by the law enforcement agencies. Most victims come from vulnerable groups like women, girls, children, and religious and ethnic minorities. Poor people's access to the justice system is limited and often out of reach while the rich and powerful sometimes avail 'extra favour' from the legal system. Bangladesh has made commitments to the protection of human rights by being a party to a number of international human rights instruments. It has an obligation to implement the provisions of

those treaties by taking the necessary steps in the promotion and protection of human rights.

Odhikar is taking part to raise awareness of human rights and its abuses in order to create a wider monitoring system and to create a vibrant democratic system. The human rights monitoring activities contribute to eventual positive steps towards the creation of transparency and accountability in responsible sectors of government with the aim to improve Bangladesh's human rights record. Odhikar always emphasises the active participation of the grassroots community. It has realised that empowerment is the precondition to establishing human rights, which is based on a recognition and faith in people's own power and resources. With this realisation, Odhikar is working towards the vision of "a society where full enjoyment of human rights by every human being will be ensured".

Introduction

Odhikar's activities primarily focus on civil and political rights. These include: documentation, in depth fact finding and dissemination of information with regard to human rights violations, launching media campaigns to raise awareness, monitoring police stations, observing government activities at local and national level in respect of abuses, training human rights defenders, national and international election monitoring, lobbying and advocacy through local and regional networks, and organising seminars and workshops to discuss prevalent issues and raise awareness of them.

The present socio economic and political situation in Bangladesh demands professional human rights initiatives from the grassroots level to the national level. Women and children and people of ethnic minority communities, including the disadvantaged and marginalised people, are the most vulnerable and fall victim to human rights violence most often.

In order to promote human rights through empowering potential human rights defenders (HRD) at the community level, Odhikar has launched the project of Strengthening Democracy through Empowerment of Human Rights Defenders at Sixty Years of Human Rights. The project was supported by the Taiwan Foundation for Democracy from March 2008 to February 2009. The aim of the project was to develop the knowledge and skills of the participants in order to both monitor the infringement of human rights and to use the existing national and international mechanisms to seek effective redress.

Objective of the project

- To increase monitoring and observation skills and take necessary action against human rights abuses at the grassroots level by providing training to and developing community level human rights defenders
- Strengthen the capacity of HRDs to design human rights advocacy campaigns effectively and efficiently
- Develop a network of Human Rights Defenders and explore partnership on monitoring treaty bodies to further the cause of human rights
- To set up a human rights watch service at community level by a countrywide human rights defenders network.

Justification

Odhikar promoted a core team on training, who received Human Rights related training from organisations at both the national and the international level. With their learning and experience, the team has developed a three-day training course on human rights for community level HRDs.

The setting of legal standards in the field of human rights, and the establishment of UN mechanisms to monitor those standards, have been among the primary means of protecting and promoting human rights. Since the establishment of the UN, a good number of international human rights norms and standards have been set up under its system - such as declarations, principles, guidelines, conventions and covenants - to serve the purposes of protecting and promoting human rights.

The adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on 10 December 1948 was the first step that paved the way for the impressive development of human rights laws. Odhikar plans to celebrate 60 years of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a landmark of upholding human rights in Bangladesh.

The adoption by the United Nations of the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders on December 9, 1998 marks a historic achievement in the struggle towards better protection of those at risk for carrying out legitimate human rights activities. Odhikar considers the Human Rights Defenders Declaration as the basis for the training of human rights defenders for community human rights watch. It trained more than 200 defenders in June 2001 and held a National Conference of Human Rights Defenders in September 2001. Odhikar planned to utilise the trained human rights defenders and to provide reorientation for enhancing knowledge of democratic and human rights systems better at the grassroots level.

Activities conducted during project period

National Conference of Human Rights Defenders

A National Conference of Human Rights Defenders was organised before the district level trainings. The conference discussed critical challenges of human rights in Bangladesh. An endeavour was made to create a wider understanding of scopes, problems and prospects of the human rights movement among the participants of the programme. The conference also focused on specific challenges faced by human rights defenders in their relations with government institutions and law enforcing agencies in particular.

Training of Human Rights Defenders

To improve their understanding of human rights norms and skills - such as fact finding, report writing, advocacy and awareness-raising - 180 selected participants from the grassroots and community level were provided with training. Ten participants from each district were involved in each training programme. The participants were selected from eighteen districts based on performance and monitoring skills. Additionally, a gender balance was maintained. After the training programme, the participants have to conduct fact-finding and documentation in their community or locality and send a report to Odhikar and local authorities so that Odhikar can compile the information for media campaign.

Regional Conference of Human Rights Defenders

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted on 10 December 1948. To commemorate 60 years of defending human rights and to declare a Charter of Demand to serve as the roadmap of for the present government, a Regional Conference of Human Rights Defenders was organised. The conference focused on specific challenges faced by human rights defenders in their relations with state and non-state actors in the South Asian perspective. A total of 210 participants - including 180 trained human rights defenders from

18 districts, 20 distinguished guests from civil society groups and 10 persons from organisers - attended the regional conference. Furthermore, five veteran human rights defenders from South Asia (India, Pakistan, Nepal, and Sri Lanka) also participated.

Conclusion

It is clear that the people at the grassroots level, who are most vulnerable to poverty and abuse by state actors, will need to be monitored. Community and grassroots level human rights activists and defenders, who have at least a basic knowledge about the concept of human rights, will be given more training related to human rights violations in order to do fact finding, documentation, advocacy. A sustainable grassroots movement for the protection and promotion of human rights must be created.

Major systematic reforms are needed to improve the human rights situation - including police reform, prison reform, setting up of an independent Human Rights Commission, proper and effective implementation of laws, repeal of repressive laws, and access to justice.

The Government of Bangladesh has ratified most of the key international human rights instruments, including International Convention of Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and Convention Against Torture (CAT). Despite this, the human rights situation has been deteriorating, even under the present State of Emergency, and the country's democracy is being challenged. With the exception of some donor driven projects, there is no community and grassroots level human rights movement in Bangladesh. This lack of awareness has created a vacuum for effective investigation, fact-finding, documentation, campaigning, and advocacy. As a result, most of the perpetrators of human rights violations are roaming at large, and victims are deprived from their right to receive remedy. There is a necessity to develop future strategies to address the challenges faced by human rights defenders.

Documentation, Fact Finding and Policy Advocacy to stop Human Rights Violations

Background

Human rights are rights inherent to all human beings, regardless of nationality, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language, or any other status. These rights are all interrelated, interdependent, and indivisible. The human rights record in Bangladesh is not satisfactory. Extrajudicial killings, custodial death, and torture by different law enforcement agencies still continue. Vulnerable groups like women, children, ethnic and religious minorities, and people from the Chittagong Hill Tracts are victims in many ways. It is very important to monitor and keep statistics of human rights abuses and conduct fact-finding missions to understand the scenario of human rights abuses. In 2008, Odhikar continuously conducted a program initiated in September 2007, with the assistance of UNDP, until September 2008. Odhikar is committed to promoting civil, political, economic, social, cultural and collective values of human rights - including the implementation of obligations of the government prescribed by the Constitution as well as by international instruments including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), International Covenant on Socio, Economic and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), Convention against Torture (CAT), and CEDAW.

Program Goal

In order to stop human rights violations, the programme was designed to maintain documentation of human rights violations on specific issues and conduct fact-finding missions and disseminate information to the relevant national and international bodies.

In order to create awareness to stop human rights abuse and to uphold human rights, Odhikar released monthly reports and data on extra-judicial killings, violence against women and children, and freedom of expression. Odhikar also released a UN special rapporteur on extrajudicial, a summary of arbitrary execution, a special rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, a special rapporteur for Human Rights Defenders, a special rapporteur for the right to freedom of opinion and expression, and a special rapporteur for violence against women. Besides, national and international human rights organisations, national and international media also received regular information on human rights abuses. Fact-finding reports produced by the organisation are regularly sent to all relevant stakeholders to take further action.

Under this contract, Odhikar has continuously monitored the human rights situation and addressed human rights abuses to the concerned authorities and decision makers.

Documentation and fact finding of human rights violations

Documentation of human rights violations is one of the most important activities for Odhikar. The documentation team keeps the organisation updated with information on human rights abuses from the reports of the human rights defenders, fact-finders and reports from the major dailies. The work of the documentation team is to gather and document relevant information from a network of grass-root level human rights defenders and from the twelve daily newspapers. It is also their duty to electronically compile specific issues in order to prepare human rights violation reports and engage in advocacy to bring changes.

The major issues of human rights violations, as documented, are as below:

- Impunity of law enforcement agencies and misuse of power
- Human rights abuses perpetrated by law enforcement agencies
- Prison condition
- Political violence
- Violence against ethnic and religious minorities
- Violence against women and children (Rape, Dowry, Acid Throwing, etc.)
- Election and democratic institutions
- Use and abuse of the national security laws
- Freedom of expression
- Human rights violation in border areas
- Human rights situations in the CHT region and the peace process
- Human rights defender's activities

Fact finding

Odhikar conducted 30 fact finding missions in 2008. They are listed below:

- A man was killed in an alleged encounter with RAB in Agargaon, Dhaka.
- A man was allegedly killed by BDR at Feni.
- Three persons, including a BDR personnel, were injured during shooting by BSF at the Birampur border of Dinajpur.
- Indian Border Security Force (BSF) killed 3 people in Thakurgaon border.
- Police action was taken on protesting garment workers.

- One individual was killed by police gunfire in Kushtia.
- A young man was shot dead by RAB in Narayanganj Bandar Upazila.
- One individual was allegedly beaten to death in the custody of Botiyaghata Police Station in Khulna.
- A man was allegedly tortured to death by the police of Kushtia.
- A young man was allegedly beaten to death by RAB at Shariatpur.
- A man was allegedly shot to death by police at Chuadanga.
- Two men were shot to death by RAB at Keraniganj, Dhaka.
- A man was shot dead by police at Mirpur in Kushtia.
- A man was allegedly tortured to death by police at Narayanganj.
- Nurnabi of Feni was injured by police beating.
- Shirajul, father of a victim of manpower agents, was killed by police beating in Cox's Bazar.
- Clashes occurred between police, army and agitated workers at Narshingdi.
- Abdul Mazid from Raninagar in Naogaon was shot dead by police.
- Tapan and Rikta from Jhenaidah were allegedly killed by RAB in Kushtia.
- Akash and Tikka were shot and killed by RAB at Khoksha, Kushtia.
- An Awami League Leader was killed by police at Mirpur, Kushtia.
- RAB allegedly shot and killed a Chhatra Dal Leader at Barisal.
- BDR Officers Abdul Hannan and Krishnapada Pal were shot and killed by BSF at Chapainawabganj.
- Doctor Mizanur Rahman Tutu alias Tutul was shot dead by police at Naogaon.
- Jahurul Islam Mithu was shot to death by RAB and Police at Ataikula, Pabna.
- Montu and Sayed were allegedly shot and killed by RAB and police in Kushtia.
- An apparent 'hermaphrodite' was slaughtered to death at Muksudpur, Gopalganj.
- A businessman died from police torture at Noakhali.
- Afsar Uddin alias Afsu was allegedly tortured to death by RAB in Munshiganj.
- Journalist Noor Ahmed was tortured and forced to stay away from his profession by RAB in Sylhet.

Work Plan and Activities - (from 16 January to 15 September 2008)

Sl. No.	Types of the initiatives		Number of initiatives for this period (16 January to 15 Sept 2008)	
			Planned	Actual
1.	Fact-finding missions	<i>Fact-finding on the incidents perpetrated by LEA</i>	<i>27 incidents</i>	<i>27 incidents</i>
2.	Newspaper clipping (daily basis) and also gather information from magazines	<i>Marking on specific human rights issues</i>	<i>12 newspapers</i>	<i>12 newspapers</i>
3.	Data entry	Issues on		
		<i>Extra-judicial killings</i>	✓	✓
		<i>Death in jail</i>	✓	✓
		<i>Acid attack</i>	✓	✓
		<i>Rape</i>	✓	✓
		<i>Freedom of expression</i>	✓	✓
		<i>Political violence</i>	✓	✓
		<i>Violence against ethnic</i>	✓	✓

		<i>minority</i>		
		<i>Violence against religious minority</i>	✓	✓
		<i>Cross-border violence</i>		
		<i>CHT</i>	✓	✓
4.	Training	<i>Training on fact-finding & documentation</i>	1	1
		<i>Training on databases/graph</i>	1	1
5.	Reporting	<i>Prepare monthly HRV graph/ statistics</i>	✓	✓
		<i>Prepare fact-finding reports</i>	27	20
		<i>Provide data support from documentation team</i>	✓	✓
		<i>computerized comprehensive report on extra-judicial killings 2008</i>	✓	✓
6.	Dissemination of information	<i>Dissemination of fact-finding reports</i>	27	20
		<i>Dissemination of press releases</i>	9	9
		<i>Dissemination of comprehensive data files/statistical chart/graph on human rights violations</i>	9	9
7.	Meeting	<i>Weekly staff meeting with documentation & fact-finding team</i>	28	28

Financial Accounts 1 January–31 December 2008

INCOME	2008	EXPENDITURE	2008
	Taka		Taka
<i>Fundraising</i>		<i>Odhikar Expenditure</i>	
Local Donations	80,101.00	Staff Costs	276,250.00
Membership Subscription	1,098,000.00	Office rent	168,000.00
Miscellaneous	75,352.00	Travel expenses	25,489.00
		Programme cost	178,570.00
		Stationeries/Office Supply	33,546.00
		Equipments	149,299.00
		Maintenance	26,635.00
		Entertainment	53,008.00
		Communication (Phone, fax, internet, postage & courier)	93,051.00

		Utilities	67,306.00
		Audit fee	10,000.00
		Contingency	92,195.00
Sub-total	1,253,453.00	Sub-total	1,173,349.00
Project Grants			
Gender Fund, CIDA	1,232,675.00	Gender Fund, CIDA	401,100.00
IFES	371,624.00	IFES	371,624.00
The Asia Foundation	400,030.00	The Asia Foundation	400,030.00
The American Center	1,692,860.00	The American Center	132,250.00
UNDP	1,909,414.95	UNDP	1,669,918.00
ActionAid Bangladesh	928,430.00	ActionAid Bangladesh	667,330.00
TFD	222,088.00	TFD	222,024.00
		Adjustment made during the year	307,684.00
		Depreciation	90,253.55
Sub-total	6,757,121.95	Sub-total	4,262,213.55
		Total Expenditure	5,435,562.55
		Operating Surplus/Deficit	2,575,012.40
Total Income	8,010,574.95	Total Expenditure & Revenue Surplus	2,575,012.40

Appendixes

Odhikar's Executive Committee

SI No.	Name	Position	Brief Description
01.	Dr. CR Abrar	President	Professor of International Relations and Coordinator of Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit of University of Dhaka.
02.	Mr. Adilur Rahman Khan	Secretary	Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh and founder member of Odhikar.
03.	Dr. Tasneem Siddiqui	Treasurer	Professor of Political Science and Executive Committee Member, Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU), University of Dhaka.
04.	Dr. Saira Rahman Khan	Member	Assistant Professor, School of Law at BRAC University. Freelance Researcher and founding member of Odhikar.

05.	Md. Ruhul Amin Bhuiyan	Member	Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh.
-----	------------------------	--------	--

Networking Profile

Odhikar is a member of the following organisations:

- World Organization Against Torture - OMCT, Switzerland
- Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development – Forum Asia, Thailand
- Asian Network for Free Elections – ANFREL, Thailand
- International Movement Against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism – IMADR, Japan
- International Commission of Jurists – ICJ, Switzerland
- International Federation for Human Rights – FIDH, France
- Coalition for the International Criminal Court – CICC, USA
- South Asian Network Against Torture and Impunity – SANTI, Bangladesh

Donor Agencies that provided support in 2008

SI No.	Name
01.	United Nations Development Program (UNDP)
02.	Action Aid Bangladesh
03.	International Federation of Election Systems
04.	The Asia Foundation
05.	The Taiwan Foundation for Democracy
06.	Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)
07.	The American Center

Documentation of Human Rights Violations

Odhikar’s documentation team collects data on human rights violations and publishes the resulting statistics as monthly reports. Odhikar uses information published in 12 daily newspapers and information from its nationwide network of human rights defenders. The aim is to inform Odhikar’s own work priorities, to provide both national and international press and NGOs with an accurate picture of the nature of human rights violations in Bangladesh, and finally to influence policy-makers to take action to tackle such violations. Copies of the reports on monthly human rights and the monitoring of the State of Emergency are available on Odhikar’s website (www.odhikar.org).

Statistics of Human Rights Violations
(from 1 January to 31 December 2008)

Human Rights violations in relation to politics

Month(s)	Killed	Injured	Abducted	*Arrested	Total
January	2	19	0	7	28
February	5	197	0	2	204
March	5	79	0	19	103
April	3	106	0	22	131
May	3	113	0	7	123
June	4	61	0	*0	65
July	2	165	0	7	174
August	5	214	0	7	226
September	4	266	0	2	272
October	2	306	0	0	308
November	3	446	0	1	450
December	12	1213	0	0	1225
Total	50	3185	0	74	3309

Note: A month-long **mass arrest** was conducted by the joint forces starting from 28 May, 2008. The total number of arrests was **50,215**. Among them, most arrestees were affiliated with political parties.

India-Bangladesh Violence

Month	Killed	Injured	Arrested	Abducted	Rape	Looting/ snatching	Missing	Push in	Total
Jan	4	6	0	2	0	0	0	0	12
Feb	12	4	0	3	0	0	0	0	19
March	5	2	0	3	0	0	0	0	10
April	3	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	8
May	4	2	0	4	0	0	0	0	10
June	4	1	0	8	0	0	0	0	13
July	8	6	0	27	0	3	0	1	45
Aug	5	1	0	4	0	0	0	0	10
Sep	4	2	0	2	0	0	0	5	13
Oct	5	0	0	11	0	0	0	0	16
Nov	5	16	0	10	0	0	0	0	31
Dec	3	2	0	7	0	0	0	14	26
Total	62	47	0	81	0	3	0	20	213

Freedom of Expression related violence

Month	killed	Injured	Assaulted	Attacked	Arrested	Abducted	Threatened	Sued	Others	Total
Jan	0	4	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	6
Feb	0	1	0	0	0		2	0	0	3
March	0	0	0	0	2	0	6	0	0	8
April	0	13	2	0	0	0	1	0	2	18
May	0	5	7	0	0	0	3	0	0	15
June	0	0	4	0	0	0	4	0	1	9
July	0	3	2	0	0	0	4	0	2	11
Aug	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	5
Sept	0	6	0	0	0	0	8	0	1	15
Oct	0	1	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	5
Nov	0	0	6	6	0	0	0	0	0	12
Dec	0	2	3	1	0	0	2	0	0	8
TOTAL	0	38	25	9	4	0	30	2	7	115

Note:

- In January, the government asked TV channels to avoid all live talk shows.
- In April, two journalists were barred from their professional duty.
- In June, the journalists were barred from their professional duty.
- In July, one charge was framed against journalist Jahangir alam Akash.
- In July, one charge sheet was filed against journalist Abdul Mannan Vuiya.
- In September, the election commission (EC) did not allow journalists to cover political party dialogues on their registration. Political parties said that EC told them that it wanted to discuss some issues frankly, and this is why it decided not to allow newsmen to be presented there.

Dowry related violence

Months	Killed	Tortured	Suicide	Total Incident
January	17	0	1	18
February	10	10	0	20
March	21	8	1	30
April	12	7	2	21
May	17	7	2	26
June	19	7	0	26
July	16	10	0	26
August	15	6	0	21
September	28	2	2	32
October	16	8	1	25
November	12	3	1	16
December	5	3	0	8
Total	188	71	10	269

Acid Attacks

Month (s)	Women	Men	Children		Grand Total
			Girl	Boy	
January	6	1	1	2	10
February	5	2	2	1	10
March	9	1	1	0	11
April	3	1	0	0	4
May	9	6	1	1	17
June	5	6	1	1	13
July	7	4	1	2	14
August	9	6	4	1	20
September	9	3	1	3	16
October	3	2	1	0	6
November	7	0	0	0	7
December	1	2	2	0	5
Total	73	34	15	11	133

Rape

Month (s)	Total number of victims	Total number of women	Total number of children	Gang Rape		Killed after being raped		Committed suicide after being raped	
				Women	Children	women	Children	Women	Children
January	22	10	12	7	1	4	1	0	1
February	29	13	16	7	4	6	2	1	0
March	56	25	31	14	10	6	6	0	1
April	60	30	30	20	10	10	4	1	0
May	57	22	35	9	9	3	3	1	0
June	59	19	40	8	13	8	5	0	0
July	33	16	17	8	4	6	3	0	0
August	44	16	28	9	9	4	2	1	2
September	29	14	15	7	3	5	0	0	0
October	32	15	17	8	4	6	3	0	0
November	15	9	6	6	1	5	0	0	0
December	18	13	5	7	2	5	1	1	0
Total	454	202	252	110	70	68	30	5	4

Alleged Killed by Law Enforcement Agencies

Month (s)	RAB	Police	Army	Navy	Joint Force	Jail Police	RAB Police jointly	Narcotics Officers	BDR	Coast Guard	Forest Guard	Grand Total
Jan	3	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	8
Feb		4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
March	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
April	8	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13
May	6	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	11
June	13	6	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	26
July	8	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	17
Aug	3	6	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	12
Sept	6	12	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	19
Oct	6	6	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	14
Nov	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
Dec	7	2	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	13
Total	68	59	0	0	1	0	15	0	2	4	0	149

Killed in Crossfire/encounter/gunfight/shootout

Name	Alleged killed by								Total
	RAB	Police	Army	Joint Force	BDR	RAB-Police	Navy	Coast guard	
January	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	6
February	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
March	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
April	8	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	11
May	6	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	10
June	13	6	0	0	0	7	0	0	26
July	8	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	17
August	3	6	0	0	0	1	0	2	12
September	6	9	0	1	0	0	0	0	16
October	5	6	0	0	0	2	0	0	13
November	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
December	7	2	0	0	0	4	0	0	13
Total	65	50	0	1	1	15	0	4	136

Alleged tortured to death 2008

Name	Alleged killed by						Total
	RAB	Police	Army	Joint Force	Navy	BDR	
January	0	1	0	0	0	1	2
February	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
March	1	2	0	0	0	0	3
April	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
May	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
June	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
July	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
August	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
*September	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
October	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
November	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
December	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	3	8	0	0	0	1	12

**There was another one incident of police shoot in September.*

Death in Jail Custody and Police Station

Month (s)	Jail Custody
January	6
February	13
March	8
April	6
May	6
June	2
July	7
August	1
September	6
October	2
November	2
December	7
Total	66

Minority Statistics-2008

a. Ethnic Minority

Month (s)	Killed	Injured	Assaulted	Property Damage	Abducted	Arrested	Land Grabbing	Looted	Miscellaneous	Total
Jan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Feb	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
March	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
April	0	20	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	22
May	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
June	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
July	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Aug	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	7
Sep	0	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	20
Oct	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	3
Nov	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Dec	0	10	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	12
Total	8	57	1	1	2	0	3	2	1	75

** In July, 37 landless family faced threat from the local influencers in Rajshahi.*

b. Religious minority

Month (s)	Kill -ed	Injur -ed	Assault -ed	Abduct -ed	Arrest -ed	Grabbing		Case filed	Attack		Loot -ed	Miscell -aneous	Total
						L	H		Propert y	Religious Property			
Jan	0	6	0			0	0	0	0	4	0	0	10
Feb	0	45	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	49
March	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
April	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	4
May	0	6	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	9
June	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	2	0	5
July	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Aug	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
Sept	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	6	1	0	10
Oct	0	30	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	1	0	36
Nov	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dec	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	3
Total	1	90	1	0	0	7	0	0	2	24	6	0	131