

**Press Statement****The Government Must Stop its Security Forces' Killing Spree  
The Home Minister should Resign  
The Government Must Immediately Resolve this Crisis through Dialogue**

Odhikar expresses serious concern over the violence and one of the most heinous killing sprees in the history of Bangladesh since independence. At least 98 persons, including political activists, women, children and ordinary citizens, were indiscriminately shot and killed by police and other law enforcement agencies on the pretext of controlling the violence between February 05 to March 04, 2013. A vast number of people were injured and five policemen were killed by the protestors during this period as well. Odhikar is aggrieved by the killings; and concerned at the widespread acts of violence across the country. It has created a serious, country-wide security threat and the law and order situation has deteriorated alarmingly. Human rights are being grossly violated. As this statement is being released, the news of more deaths are coming in.

Odhikar is also extremely concerned over the acts of burning down homes and temples belonging to the Hindu community. Odhikar demands that the Government and all the political parties ensure the life and security of the Hindu community immediately. Odhikar urges all non-communal and peaceful people and human rights defenders of Bangladesh to step forward and protect their Hindu neighbours from attacks.

On February 5, 2013, a gathering at Shahbagh in Dhaka congregated to demand the death sentence for war criminals who were under trial at the International Crimes Tribunal for crimes against humanity, perpetrated during the 1971 war of liberation. These war criminals on trial are mostly members of the Jamaat-e-Islami political party. The protest gathering was called by bloggers. Blasphemous statements insulting Allah, Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (SM) and Islam on some of their blogs, resulted in violence and a reported 22 people were killed by the police, up to February 26, 2013. During this span of time, women and children also fell victim to violence. The violence took an extreme turn on February 28, 2013. On that day, the International Crimes Tribunal-1 sentenced Jamaat leader Delwar Hossain Sayedee to death for crimes against humanity during the liberation war in 1971. Jamaat-Shibir activists initiated a violent protest against the sentence which also involved acts of arson. Police and other law enforcement agencies used lethal weapons and killed many people, not just Jamaat-Shibir activists, to try and quell the violence. Due to this killing spree by the police, people

attacked the local administrative offices and police stations in protest. It has been learnt from the information sent by local human rights defenders associated with Odhikar, that among those who were shot dead by security forces, were students, farmers and members of the general public, who were not involved in any political parties. Moreover, on many television channels, police were seen opening fire at unarmed people.

Odhikar vehemently condemns this killing spree. It also expresses anger over the acts of violence and attacks on the Hindu community. Odhikar demands the Government stop the killings and human rights violations immediately and find a solution to this crisis by holding discussions with all sectors, irrespective of political belief, in order to resolve this present violent situation and defend human rights, democracy and the sovereignty of the country.

Odhikar also demands the resignation of the Home Minister for the killings perpetrated by the law enforcement agencies, otherwise the present confrontational situation will lead the country towards an extreme political crisis for which the government will be solely responsible.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Dr. C R Abrar".

Dr. C R Abrar  
President

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Adilur Rahman Khan".

Adilur Rahman Khan  
Secretary