



Police allegedly killed one at Dotterhaat of Sadar upazila and two others at Rajganj of Begumganj upazila of Noakhali district

Fact Finding Report

Odhikar

On February 28, 2013, Delwar Hossain Sayeedi was awarded death penalty (by hanging till death) by the International Crimes Tribunal-1 for committing war crimes during the liberation war of 1971. In protest of this judgment, supporters of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami observed 'hartal' (general strike) at Dotterhaat of Sadar upazila and Rajganj of Begumganj upazila of Noakhali. The police opened fire during the 'hartal' when a fish trader Shahid Ullah alias Liton (33) and a shop keeper namely Nuruddin (17) were killed at Begumganj. At Dotterhaat, a helper of a pick-up van namely Khokon (16) was killed due to police firing. Their families alleged that they were shot dead, despite having no affiliation with any political parties.

Odhikar carried out a fact finding mission into the incident. During the fact finding mission Odhikar interviewed:

- Victims' relatives
- Eye-witnesses
- Doctor who conducted the post-mortem and
- Members of the law enforcement agencies



Picture 1: Khokon



Picture 2: Shahid Ullah alias Liton

Nuruddin's photo could not be collected till date

Golam Mustafa alias Mustafa Master (deceased Nuruddin's employer – owner of the shop), Tongipar, Aladingor, Rajganj, Begumganj, Noakhali

Golam Mustafa informed Odhikar that Nuruddin's hometown was in Ram-Hori-Talu of Kholifarhaat of sadar upazila in Noakhali district. Since the end of the year 2009, Nuruddin worked both as domestic help in his house and at his shop in Rajganj bazar. In protest of the judgment awarding death penalty to Delwar Hossain Sayeedi by the International Crimes Tribunal-1 for committing war crimes during the liberation war of 1971, rallies in support of hartal called by Jamaat-e-Islami began in the Rajganj Bazar road from early morning on February 28, 2013. On that day, at around 12:30 pm, Golam Mustafa closed the shop and rode his cycle towards home, while Nuruddin followed walking. Twenty minutes after reaching home, an acquaintance had notified him that Nuruddin was shot near the sawmill shops at Rajganj bazar. From there he was taken to Mother-Land hospital in Noakhali and later due to his critical health condition; Nuruddin was admitted in the Noakhali Medical College Hospital where he died at around 6:00am on March 1, 2013.

Nur Alam Shopon (deceased Nuruddin's elder brother), Ram-Hori-Talu, Kholifarhaat, Noakhali Sadar, Noakhali

Nur Alam Shopon told Odhikar that due to their poor living, his younger brother Nuruddin used to live in Mustafa Master's house and worked at his shop. On February 28, 2013 at around 3:30pm, Mustafa Master informed him that Nuruddin got shot at Rajganj bazar due to police firing. Then he got to know that his brother Nuruddin was taken by the locals to the nearby Mother-Land hospital. He rushed there and due to deteriorating health condition, he was taken to Noakhali Medical College Hospital on March 1, 2013, where he was declared dead by the duty doctor. Nuruddin's body was buried near his house in Ram-Hori- Talu. Nur Alam Shopon further informed that Nuruddin was never affiliated with any political parties and thus there were no cases against him in any police station.

Shefali Begum (Wife of deceased Shahid Ullah alias Liton), Alampur, Rajganj, Begumganj, Noakhali

Shefali Begum informed Odhikar that Liton was a fish trader. On February 28, 2013, he caught fishes from a pond nearby their house and was weighing those. Their 12-year-old son Shahadat Hossain was sitting beside him. At around 4:00pm, there was a rally heading towards the road of the Rajganj bazar, demanding Delwar Hossain Sayeedi's immediate release. Shahadat ran towards the rally in order to have a good look. Liton asked Shahadat not to go near the rally and followed Shahadat running in order to stop him. Right after Liton grabbed his son's hand near Rajganj bazar, police opened fire and a bullet hit right in the middle of Liton's forehead. Liton died on the spot. After sometime when the police had left the place, locals brought Liton's dead body to his house. At around 9:00pm, after the bathing ritual when preparations were being taken to bury Liton's body in the nearby

graveyard, members of police of the Begumganj police station entered the house and took away the body to the police station. On March 1, 2013, at around 1:00pm, police took Liton's body from the police station to Noakhali Medical College Hospital and left the hospital premise without paying any hospital fees. At around 5.00pm Liton's father Mr. Mahmudullah brought his body back home and paid the hospital fees after post mortem examination was done. At around 6:30pm, the body was buried in the nearby graveyard. Shefali complained that despite the fact that Liton was never affiliated with any political party, he was murdered. Members of police further filed a case as being the complainant, where Liton was shown as accused no. 3. She seeks justice for what had happened to her husband.

Mohammad Ismail (deceased Khokon's maternal cousin), West Shahpur, Dotterhaat, Noakhali

Mohammad Ismail informed Odhikar that his cousin Khokon was employed as a helper of a pick-up van. On February 28, 2013, supporters and activists of Jamaat-e-Islami rallied at Dotterhaat demanding Delwar Hossain Sayeedi's release while observing 'hartal'. At the same time there were even protests against the 'hartal'. After lunch on that day, Mohammad Ismail and Khokon went for tea in Dotterhaat's Didar Restaurant at around 3:00pm. Hearing the noise of firing, Khokon rushed out in curiosity and got shot at his abdomen. Locals rushed Khokon to Noakhali Medical College Hospital, but the duty doctor declared Khokon dead. After post mortem examination, Khokon's body was buried near his house.

Officer-in-Charge (OC) S M Ahsanul Islam, Begumganj Police Station, Begumganj, Noakhali

S M Ahsanul Islam informed Odhikar that police had no clue that the protest, against the judgment delivered by the International Crimes Tribunal against Delwar Hossain Sayeedi, would be so destructive and dangerous. At around 9:30am in the morning, police vehicles patrolled the area. Near the Rajganj bazar when the police intervened to remove the barricade set by cutting off trees, they got into quarrels with protestors. Later, the protestors agreed to remove the barricades and police returned to their station. At around 2:00pm, upon hearing the news of vandalism in the area, 3 police cars with Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Mr. Nurul Haq had gone to the place of the incident. The protestors attempted to resist the police near the Rajganj bazar while entering. Police vehicles slowed down due to the barricade created by trees on the path. Although at first the protestors threw bricks and stones at the police, but later they had opened fire. Microphone was used by the UNO in order to calm the situation, however upon failure; the police had opened fire against the protestors in order to save lives and properties of citizens. The police had used 24 rounds of bullet from gas-guns, 215 rounds from shot-guns and 11 rounds of bullet from Chinese guns. Two persons died in the incident and S I Mizanur Rahman filed a case

regarding the incident on the ground of unnatural death. Case No. 1, Dated: 1/03/13. The case is being investigated by OC (investigation) Mr. Ibrahim Khalil.

Officer-in-Charge (Investigation) Ibrahim Khalil, Begumgani Police Station, Begumgani, Noakhali

Ibrahim Khalil stated that he is currently investigating the case regarding the Rajganj incident of February 28, 2013, filed by complainant S I Mizanur Rahman. 34 out of 71 persons mentioned in the FIR were arrested, and 29 suspected persons were also arrested. Police is trying to arrest the remaining accused persons.

Faisal, duty doctor, Mother-Land Hospital, Maijodi Court, Noakhali

Faisal informed Odhikar that on February 28, 2013, at around 5:00 pm, a person named Nuruddin was brought to the hospital. Nuruddin had bullet injuries and he was bleeding. He was given primary treatment. Since his health was deteriorating he was taken away on March 1, 2013 at around 5:30pm to Noakhali Medical College Hospital for better treatment.

Sub Inspector (S I) Srikanta Chandra Das, Shudharam Police Station, Noakhali

Srikanta Chandra Das informed Odhikar that on February 28, 2013 at around 2:00 pm, as many as 1200-1300 armed people of different ages rallied beside the road of UNO's office towards Dotterhaat in support of the 'hartal' called by Jamaat-e-Islami demanding release of Delwar Hossain Sayeedi. The protestors broke many shops while marching. The Al-Amin Bus depot of Uzzalpur was also set on fire. When the police tried to stop them, they used bricks and stones, iron rods, axe, curved knives and guns in order to attack the police. In order to bring the situation under control, the police upon permission from executive magistrate Mr. Hasan Sadi used 101 rounds of tear gas, 1039 rounds of shot-gun bullets, 30 rounds of bullets from Chinese gun and 1 round from Srikanta Chandra Das's own pistol. He was later informed that someone named Khokon near the Didar Hotel was shot and died at the hospital. He is responsible for investigating the case regarding the incident, filed by complainant S I Saiful. Case No. 25, dated 28/02/13.

Hasan Sadi, executive magistrate, Office of the Deputy Commissioner, Noakhali

Hasan Sadi informed Odhikar that on February 28, 2013, thousands rallied at Dotterhaat in support of the 'hartal' called by Jamaat-e-Islami demanding release of Delwar Hossain Sayeedi. The protestors broke out and damaged public property while they also attacked the police using lethal weapons. Many members of the law enforcement agency were injured and grievously hurt. Thus Hasan Sadi claimed to have no other choice but to order the police to open fire. A case was filed in this regard. The matter is under investigation, and therefore he was reluctant to say anything more regarding this matter.

Fariduddin Chowdhury, Resident Medical Officer (RMO), Noakhali Medical College Hospital, Noakhali

Fariduddin Chowdhury informed Odhikar that on February 28, 2013, police from Shudharam Police Station brought Khokon's body (of West Shahpur of Dotterpur) to the morgue for post mortem examination. His post mortem number was 26, dated 1/03/13. The same day, Begumganj police brought Shahid Ullah alias Liton's body (of Alampur) for post mortem examination. His number was 28, dated 1/03/13. Abul Fayez Bhuiyan, medical officer of the emergency unit of the hospital helped him during the post-mortem. Since the incidents related to police cases and were under investigation, he was reluctant to say anything else. However he confirmed that Nuruddin (who was also shot) from Rajganj was brought to the hospital on March 1, 2013 at around 6:00am, and he died while he was being treated.

Odhikar's Statement

Upon interviewing the family members of the deceased, it is clear that none of them were affiliated with any political parties. However, they were victims of political violence. Odhikar strongly condemns the fact that the police opened fire targeting the ordinary people. Odhikar believes that it is a human rights violation to the highest order when police fires and kills innocent citizens. Odhikar demands that the government should immediately take steps to bring the culprits to justice after proper investigation of the killing of innocent citizens and compensate the families of the victims.

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