



July 1, 2013

Human Rights Monitoring Report

January 1 – June 30, 2013

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Odhikar believes that 'democracy' is a form of the State and not merely a process of electing a ruler. Democracy is the product of the peoples' struggle for inalienable rights, which become the fundamental premise to constitute the State and to define collective aspirations and responsibilities. Therefore, the individual freedoms and democratic aspirations of the citizens – and consequently, peoples' collective rights and responsibilities - must be the foundational principles of the State. The States failure to recognise this at the founding moment is a continuing curse that people are forced to carry. A State cannot be 'democratic' if the people do not realise and participate as 'citizens' in all sectors of the functioning of the state. The democratic legitimacy of the State is directly related to its commitment and capacity to ensure human rights, such as right to life and livelihood, right to environment and health; and the dignity and integrity of citizens. If all these are not ensured by the State, it cannot be called a 'democratic' state. These civil and political rights, as the foundational principles of the State, must remain inviolable; and accordingly, the Parliament, Judiciary and Executive

cannot and should not have any power to abrogate them through any legislation, judicial verdict or executive order. The people's inviolable rights are the foundational principles of the State.

Odhikar, being an organisation of human rights defenders in Bangladesh, has been struggling to ensure these civil and political rights. Odhikar stands against all forms of human rights violations and accordingly participates and remains directly involved in the human rights movement in Bangladesh. Odhikar brings to the movement the strategic perspective that in its demand for civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, the human rights movement not only endeavours to protect the victims, but also, in countries like Bangladesh, is constitutive of a democratic state.

The movement to establish the rights and dignity of every individual is part of the struggle to constitute Bangladesh as a democratic, political community. As part of its mission, Odhikar monitors the human rights situation of Bangladesh to report violations and defend the victims. In line with this campaign, an account of the human rights situation of Bangladesh, from January to June 2013, is presented here.

30 persons killed extrajudicially every month

1. During the period of January – June 2013, according to information gathered by Odhikar, 184 persons were killed extrajudicially by law enforcement agencies. This means that an average number of 30 persons were killed extrajudicially every month.

Types of extrajudicial deaths

Crossfire/encounter/gun fight:

2. Among the 184 persons extrajudicially killed, 31 were killed in 'crossfire/encounters/ gun fights'. Among the deceased, 15 were allegedly killed by the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) and 16 by the police.

Death due to torture:

3. During the first six months of 2013, six persons were allegedly tortured to death. Among the deceased, five were tortured allegedly by the police and one by RAB.

Shot and killed:

4. Among the deceased, 142 persons were shot and killed during this period. Of them 104 were reportedly killed by Police, 28 were by Police-BGB, seven by Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB), two were by RAB and one by RAB-Coast Guard.

Beaten to death:

5. Among the deceased, four were beaten to death during this period. Of them three were by police and one by RAB.

Strangled to death:

6. During this period one was allegedly strangled to death by police.

Identities of the deceased

7. Of the 184 deceased persons killed extrajudicially, 10 were alleged leaders and activists of BNP, seven were members of Hefazate Islam, a Madrassa teacher, an activist of Awami League, a member of Islamic Shramik Andolon, a leader of Purba Banglar Communist Party (ML Jonojuddho), a member of Gono Mukti Fouz, 61 were members of the student wing of Jamaat-e-Islami (Shibir), two were businessmen, a member of Liberal Democratic Party, a tailor, three were drug traders, a fisherman, a fish trader, a land broker, an electrician, a vegetable vendor, a tea stall attendant, a bus helper, two were garment workers, five were students, a husk trader, a day labourer, four farmers, a hawker, two were drivers, two were rickshaw van pullers, a brick field worker, 28 were alleged criminals and 40 persons were unknown.
8. The Foreign Minister, Dipu Moni, on April 29, 2013, during the second cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) session on Bangladesh at the UN Human Rights Council, denied the incidents of extrajudicial killings. Dipu Moni, stated that extrajudicial killings have no legal basis. She also said that if any allegations of human rights violations are made against any law enforcement agencies, the government takes action.
9. However, Odhikar statistics show that until June 2013, 619 persons were killed extrajudicially after the current government assumed power. Not a single case was investigated independently or in an unbiased manner or any kind of action taken against the members of law enforcement agencies.

Torture in custody

10. According to Odhikar's documentation, 18 persons were reportedly tortured by different law enforcement agencies between January – June 2013. Among them 12 persons were allegedly tortured, but did not succumb to their injuries. Six persons were allegedly tortured to death.¹ Of them 17 were allegedly tortured by police and one by RAB. Some instances of torture are as follows:
11. On June 5, 2013 at around 7.00 pm Mohammad Shamim Sarkar (33) and Mohammad Saiful Islam Khan (25), residents of Hemayetpur, Savar were arrested by the police of Savar Model Police Station, led by Assistant Sub Inspector (ASI) Akidul Islam. ASI Akidul Islam called Shamim Sarkar's younger brother Biplob Sarkar at 12:00 midnight to meet him with Taka two lacs. Since the family was unable to give the money, Shamim and Saiful were taken to Savar Tannery Police Outpost and tortured all night by SI Md. Emdadul Huq of Ashulia Police Station, ASI Akidul Islam, constables Md. Mofazzel Hossain, Md. Ramjan Ali and Md. Yusuf. At one point, Shamim fell seriously ill and the police took him to

¹ This has been mentioned in the previous section on 'Extra-judicial killings'.

Sir Salimullah Medical College Hospital, Dhaka where the doctors on duty declared Shamim dead.²

12. On May 14, 2013 Shamim Reza (28), a resident of Sonargaon upazila in Narayanganj district, was arrested by police as a suspect in the murder of the wife of Pirozpur Union Parishad Chairman, Rafiqul Islam and three others. Shamim Reza was allegedly tortured for six days by Sonargaon Police Station Inspector (Investigation), Arup Tarafdar and others after detaining him at the police quarters. On May 22, Shamim died in hospital while under treatment.³
13. On April 11, 2013, a third semester student of Chittagong Polytechnic Institute, Mohammad Mohsin of Borohatiya Union in Chittagong; and Md. Alauddin of Noakhali's Shuboronochor Union and a third semester student of Shyamoli Ideal Polytechnic College, were shot by the police of Pachlaish Police Station. The police pointed a gun at their legs and shot three rounds. As a result their legs have been amputated.⁴
14. Odhikar believes that torture during remand or interrogation is a serious violation of human rights. Despite the claim of 'zero tolerance' on torture, the Government has not taken steps or effective measures to curtail torture and other forms of custodial violence and acts of impunity by law enforcement officers. Such lack of action against perpetrators only encourages human rights violations.
15. Odhikar once again urges the Government to implement the recommendations given by the High Court Division of the Supreme Court in the 2003 judgement of BLAST vs. Bangladesh.⁵

NHRC Chairman advises victim to withdraw his case filed against RAB

16. On June 23, 2013 Limon, who lost his legs after being shot by RAB⁶, came to Dhaka for treatment and also went to meet the Chairman of the National Human Rights Commission, Dr. Mizanur Rahman, with his parents Henoara Begum and Tofazzel Hossain. Dr. Mizanur Rahman suggested that he cease his fight against the Government and asked him to withdraw the case filed against six RAB members, considering his financial and security issues.⁷ Limon's father said, "We thought that perhaps we will get justice one day. After hearing Mizanur Rahman sir, we understood that there is no justice for the poor in this country. If a Sub Inspector of Police can be arrested for killing a youth in Savar, why not RAB?"⁸
17. Odhikar condemns this matter. Odhikar believes that the role of the NHRC Chairman was to stand beside the victims and be vocal against state repression

² Fact finding report of Odhikar

³ Fact finding report of Odhikar

⁴ Fact finding report of Odhikar,

⁵ Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust and other vs. Bangladesh and others. 55 DLR (2003) 363.

⁶ For a full report of the incident visit www.odhikar.org and see the fact finding reports of 2012

⁷ The Daily Star, 24/06/2013

⁸ The daily Prothom Alo, 24/06/2013

and human rights violations. However, he has become a middleman on behalf of the perpetrators. It is to be noted that the government, being satisfied with Dr. Mizanur Rahman's 'work', has extended his tenure on June 23, 2013, for another three years.⁹

Death in jail

18. Between January to June 2013, 31 persons reportedly died in jail. Among them 30 persons died allegedly due to 'illnesses', one person allegedly committed suicide.

Public lynching

19. From January to June 2013, 61 people were allegedly killed due to public lynching by mobs. Some examples are as follows:
20. On April 11, 2013 Awami League and Chhatra League activists brought out an anti-hartal procession, led by former upazila chairman and Awami League leader ATM Peyarul Islam, against the hartal called by Jamaat-e-Islami in Chittagong. The procession passed across various areas of Fatikchhari, chanting slogans against Hefazate Islam and Jamaat-e-Islami. A scuffle occurred between them and some local people. The Officer-in-Charge of Bhujpur Police Station and other policemen, baton charged the local people and dispersed them. Later the procession marched to Bhujpur Police Station via Kazirhat Bazaar where some locals threw bricks at it. Awami League and Chhatra League activists also threw bricks at the locals. A window of the Kazirhat Central mosque broke. Soon after this incident, an announcement came out of the mosque by megaphones, that Awami League and Chhatra League activists had attacked the Kazirhat mosque. The same announcement came from other local mosques. As a result, thousands of villagers put up barricades on roads and attacked the procession with local weapons. Boktopur union Sechhasabok League President Farooque Iqbal Bipul (35), Chhatra League activist Jamaluddin Rubel (23) and Jubo League leader Forkan of Jafatnagar and about 300 more activists of Awami League and Chhatra League were injured. As a result of this incident, about 50 villagers were shot by police and BGB.¹⁰
21. On January 21, 2013 a mentally disabled man was beaten to death by mob suspecting him of being a member of a dacoit gang, at Konabari Industrial area in Gazipur. A mentally disabled woman was burnt to death by the same day. On January 19, a mentally disabled girl named Morzina was killed by a mob who suspected her of being a child kidnapper at Kaliakoir, Gazipur.¹¹
22. Odhikar believes that due to the weak criminal justice system, the tendency of taking the law into one's own hands is increasing, as people are losing their confidence and faith in the police and judiciary.

⁹ The daily Jajaidin, 24/06/2013

¹⁰ Fact finding report of Odhikar

¹¹ The daily Kaler Kantho, 22/01/2013

Allegations of enforced disappearance after making arrests by law enforcement agencies

23. On April 29, 2013 during the second cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) session on Bangladesh, at the UN Human Rights Council, the Foreign Minister, Dipu Moni denied the allegations of enforced disappearance. She stated that there is no scope for such under existing laws. She said that the Penal Code only punishes acts of abduction and kidnapping. She claimed that in many cases, criminals in the guise of law enforcement agencies commit crimes. However, the real facts are that a number of people have become victims of 'enforced disappearance' after the present government assumed power. Many people are 'disappeared' after being picked up by alleged members of the law enforcement agencies, as claimed by their families. The families of the disappeared report that it is the members of the law enforcement agencies who are making such arrests; and the whereabouts of the persons are unknown. From January 2009 to June 2013, 89 people have allegedly been 'disappeared' by persons claiming to be state agents; many of the disappeared were members or supporters of the opposition or persons belonging to alternative political beliefs.¹²
24. According to information gathered by Odhikar, from January to June, 2013, 14 persons have been disappeared allegedly by the members of law enforcement agencies. Some incidents are as follows:
25. On May 11, 2013 at around 7.00 pm Mohammad Fakhrul Islam (30), a resident of 323/A Moghbagar, Dhaka, was allegedly picked up by RAB-3 from Segun Bagicha, Dhaka. The family of Fakhrul did not get any information about him by inquiring at various places, including RAB-3, Ramna and Shahbagh Police Stations. Fakhrul's family alleged that RAB members have 'disappeared' Fakhrul.¹³
26. Abdullah Omar Nasif Shahadat (26), of Kazla village under Motihar Police Station in Rajshahi was arrested by RAB-3 on May 4, 2013 between 2.00-5.00 pm, from residence no. 707 at Moddho Monipur at Mirpur-2 in Dhaka. His whereabouts have been unknown since his arrest. RAB also arrested Shahadat's friend Sabid, but later released him. The family of Shahadat alleged that members of RAB-5 shot him dead on May 12 at around 3.30 am in a field near Binodpur Radio Centre, near Rajshahi University, after keeping him 'disappeared' for eight days. One of his hands and one leg had also been broken.¹⁴
27. On April 4, 2013, the Rajshahi team of Rapid Action Battalion-5 picked up the Rajshahi Chhatra Shibir¹⁵ office secretary Anwarul Islam Masum from his maternal uncle's house located at the Notun Bilshimola Bondho Gate area of Ward 11 under Rajpara Police Station. When Masum was not taken in front of the

¹² Odhikar only documents allegation of enforced disappearance where the family members or witnesses claim that the victim was taken away by people in law enforcement uniform or by those who said they were from law enforcement agencies.

¹³ Fact finding report of Odhikar

¹⁴ Fact finding report of Odhikar

¹⁵ Student wing of Jamaate Islami

Court within 24 hours, family members rushed to RAB's local office and RAB's Railway Colony Camp, but they denied having any information with regard to the arrest.¹⁶

28. On April 4, 2013 at around 9:00 pm, Mofizul Islam Rashed (34), senior Vice-president of Chhatra Dal¹⁷ from Ward 10 under Darus Salam Police Station was taken away allegedly by men in plain clothes, claiming to be members of the law enforcement agency. His whereabouts are still unknown.¹⁸
29. On January 25, 2013 JSD¹⁹ leader Mohammad Ali Mohabbat, resident of Kumarkhali upazila in Kushtia, was picked up allegedly by men claiming to be from RAB, from in front of Garrison Cinema Hall built beside Captain Abul Bashar Market near Khulna Cantonment. He is still missing.²⁰
30. Odhikar expresses grave concern regarding the incidents of 'enforced disappearance' and the escalation of crime within the law enforcement agencies. It demands that the Government rescue or recover the victims of enforced disappearances and take stern action against perpetrator.²¹

Freedom of the media

Arrest and torture of the Acting Editor of the daily Amar Desh; government shuts down the newspaper

31. On April 11, 2013 the acting editor of the daily Amar Desh, Mahmudur Rahman was arrested and allegedly tortured in custody after taking him into remand. Furthermore, the publication of the daily Amar Desh had been stopped without any valid reasons.
32. On April 11, 2013 at around 9.00 am the Detective Branch (DB) of Police arrested the Acting Editor of the daily Amar Desh, Mahmudur Rahman from the news paper office. Mahmudur Rahman was taken to DB office after his arrest. Later DB police on the basis of three cases filed against Mahmudur Rahman at Tejgaon Police Station with regard to sedition and under sections 56²² and 57²³ of the Information and Communication Technology Act, 2006, he was taken to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court where police prayed for 24 days remand. The Court granted 13 days remand.²⁴ At 8:30 pm on the same day, a team of Metropolitan Detective Branch of Police went inside the press of the daily Amar

¹⁶ Fact finding report of Odhikar

¹⁷ Chhatra Dal – the student wing of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)

¹⁸ Fact finding report of Odhikar

¹⁹ JSD – Jatiyotabadi Shomajtantrik Dal, a nationalist Socialist Party

²⁰ Fact finding report of Odhikar

²¹ On June 24, 2013, the newspaper the 'New Age' published a news entitled "Crimes in police on rise", reconfirming the escalation of crime within the police force. see <http://www.newagebd.com/detail.php?date=2013-06-23&nid=54194#.UdEnNtjz6ho>

²² Section 56 of the Information and Technology Act 2006 refers to punishment for hacking with computer system.

²³ Section 57 refers to punishment for publishing fake, obscene or defaming information in electronic form

²⁴ The Daily Ittefaq/Prothom Alo, 12/04/2013

Desh in Tejgaon Industrial Area and took away a computer and some important and confidential documents and closed the publishing office.²⁵

33. On June 12, 2013 Mahmudur Rahman was brought to the Court of Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate, Mohammad Harun-ur-Rashid from Gazipur Jail-2 by a prison van. Sub Inspector Mir Rezaul Islam of Ramna Police Station appealed to the Court for a 10-day remand for the case against Mahmudur Rahman with regard to publishing provocative news, vandalising vehicles and arson attacks. Mahmudur Rahman decided to defend himself and did not appoint any lawyer. He told the Court, "I am not submitting any application for cancelling the remand order or for my release. I have not appointed any lawyer in this Court. Because you will not be able to give a verdict independently after hearing from both sides, even if I appoint hundreds of lawyers." The Magistrate granted a 3-day remand after hearing.²⁶
34. It is to be mentioned that on April 20, 2013 in a press conference organised by the daily Amar Desh, journalists informed that Mahmudur Rahman received cruel and degrading treatment during remand. When his physical condition was worsening, he was hurriedly taken to the Court on April 17, before the remand period was over and moved to jail. Afterwards, he was admitted to the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital. On April 19, having taken permission from the government, the family of Mahmudur Rahman visited him at hospital. At that time, the family members observed several circular wounds on his wrists and his knees. They came to know in consultation with specialised doctors, that the wounds were probably due to electric shocks.²⁷

Broadcasting of two TV channels, supported by the Opposition, shut down

35. In the early morning of May 6, 2013, a reported 10 thousand members of the police, Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) and Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB), attacked thousands of leaders and activists of Hefazate Islam Bangladesh, in order to disperse the Hefazat men who gathered at Shapla Chottor (square), Motijheel in the Capital. That night, the law enforcement agencies shut off the power supply in the area; and opened fire in the dark with live ammunition, rubber-coated steel bullets and threw tear gas shells and sound grenades indiscriminately at the leaders and activists of Hefazate Islam, many of whom were sleeping after the day-long programme. It was reported that many people were either killed or injured as a result of this attack. Two private television channels named Diganta TV and Islamic TV, owned by the opposition, were broadcasting the violence live that night. The Government closed down Islamic TV at 2.30 am and Diganta TV at 4.27am on May 6 due to their airing of the night time operation. The channels are still closed.²⁸

²⁵ The Daily Ittefaq, 13/04/2013

²⁶ The Daily Star, 13/06/2013

²⁷ Written information provided in the press conference organised by the daily Amar Desh family

²⁸ http://www.odhikar.org/documents/2013/FF_Report_2013/Hefazat_e_islam/Fact%20finding_Hefazate%20Islam_English.pdf

36. Between January – June 2013, according to Odhikar’s documented statistics, 94 journalists have been injured, 24 have been threatened, seven have been attacked, 30 have been assaulted, five have been arrested, one was tortured and 10 were sued. Some examples are as follows:
37. A female Ekushey Television journalist, Nadia Sharmin, was beaten by supporters of Hefazate Islam at Bijoy Nagar on April 6, 2013 during the long march called by them. The alleged reason behind the assault being that she was not wearing a hijab and was filming footage of a programme that included the presence of only men.²⁹
38. On April 6, 2013 students belonging to Gonojagoron Moncho of Jahangirnagar University, to protest the programme called by Hefazate Islam, blocked the Dhaka-Aricha highway in order to bar the Hefazate Islam members from marching and entering towards Dhaka from that route. When journalists tried to get footage of the protest, members of the Gonojagoron Moncho harassed Nazmul Huda of Ekushey Television and Abdul Halim of Boishakhi Television and snatched away Ekushey Television’s camera.³⁰
39. On January 5, 2013 Chhatra League³¹ activists beat and illegally detained Reuter’s reporter Andrew Biraz; New Age reporter Sony Ramani; Bangla News photo journalist Harun-ar-Rashid Rubel; and Prothom Alo correspondent Hassan Raja when they were taking photos of cocktail blasts at the Dhaka University campus. Chhatra League activists held the journalists captive after beating them and deleted the photographs after taking away their cameras.³²
40. Odhikar strongly condemns the arrest of journalist Mahmudur Rahman and his inhuman treatment in custody; the banning of the daily Amar Desh newspaper; shutting down of Diganta TV and Islamic TV; and the attacks on journalists. Odhikar demands immediate release of Mahmudur Rahman and the lifting of the ban on the media and press. Moreover, criminals involved in attacking the journalists should also be arrested and tried in the Court of Law for their crime.

BUET teacher sentenced for allegedly threatening to murder the Prime Minister on Facebook

41. On June 27, 2013, Dhaka Metropolitan Session Judge Mohammad Johurul Hoque ordered seven years imprisonment to Hafizur Rahman, Lecturer, Mechanical Engineering Department, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET); accusing him of threatening to murder Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on a social networking website, Facebook. The Court sentenced him to five years imprisonment under section 57 of the Information and Communication Technology Act³³ 2006 and two years under section 506 of the Penal Code³⁴

²⁹ The Daily Ittefaq, 07/04/2013

³⁰ The daily Naya Diganta, 07/04/2013

³¹ Student wing of Awami League

³² The daily Manabzamin, 06/04/2013

³³ Section 57 of the Information and Communication Act refers to punishment for publishing fake, obscene or defaming information in electronic form.--

1860, a total of seven years imprisonment. In 2012, Hafizur Rahman gave a status on Facebook, where he wrote '*Hyena, Oi Hyena. Tui desh ke kheyechis ekhon BUET ke khabi- parbina! Amra tor pet, tarpor matha kete BUET-er geter samne taniye rakhbo, jate kore ar kono hyenar akromone BUET akranto na hoy*'³⁵. The Bengali daily 'Bhorer Kagoj' publishes the news on April 19, 2012. Based on that news, A B Siddiqui, President of a sister organisation of Bangladesh Awami League, Bangladesh Jononetri Parishad, filed a General Diary at Shahbagh Police Station. Later on June 17, 2012, Detective Branch of Police submitted an investigation report against Hafizur Rahman. At that time, five persons were presented to the court as witness. A B Siddiqui said that, he thought the status was given indicating the Prime Minister. However, Hafizur Rahman told to the court that, he had not pointed to any individual and that the term "hyena" was used to indicate corruption and mismanagement. When the verdict was declared, Hafizur Rahman was not present in the court.

Political violence

42. According to information gathered by Odhikar, from January to June 2013, 322 persons were killed and 10,730 injured in political violence. 155 incidents of internal violence in the Awami League and 44 in the BNP were also recorded during this period. In addition to this, 15 persons were killed and 1792 were injured in internal conflicts of the Awami League while two were killed and 501 were injured in BNP's internal conflicts.
43. After the current government assumed power in January 2009, most of the violence and intra-party clashes occurred due to criminalization and clashes over establishing supremacy among party activists. As a result, many people were killed. Most of the clashes occurred due to gaining personal interest using political influence. Some examples are as follows:
44. June 24, 2013 was the last date for submitting tender bids of Chittagong Eastern Railway for 1.5 million Taka. A clash took place at CRB Head Office between two groups, one led by Assistant Secretary of Chhatra League Central Committee Saiful Alam Limon and the other led by Chittagong Metropolitan unit Jubo

(1) If any person deliberately publishes or transmits or causes to be published or transmitted in the website or in electronic form any material which is fake and obscene or its effect is such as to tend to deprave and corrupt persons who are likely, having regard to all relevant circumstances, to read, see or hear the matter contained or embodied in it, or causes to deteriorate or creates possibility to deteriorate law and order, prejudice the image of the State or person or causes to hurt or may hurt religious belief or instigate against any person or organization, then this activity of his will be regarded as an offence. (2) Whoever commits offence under sub-section (1) of this section he shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to ten years and with fine which may extend to Taka one crore.

³⁴ Section 506 of the Penal Code refers to punishment for criminal intimidation. "Whoever commits the offence of criminal intimidation shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to two years, or with fine, or with both; and if the threat be to cause death or grievous hurt, or to cause the destruction of any property by fire, or to cause an offence punishable with death or ¹⁶⁸ imprisonment for life], or with imprisonment for a term which may extend to seven years, or to impute unchastity to a woman, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to seven years, or with fine, or with both."

³⁵ 'Hyena, hey hyena, you have eaten up the country, now you want to eat BUET. You cannot! We will cut your stomach and hang your head on the main gate of BUET, in order to stop any other hyena from attacking BUET.'

League³⁶ leader Helal Akbar Chowdhury Babar over submitting tender bids. Both the groups used firearms during the clash. An eight year old boy, Arman, the son of a rickshaw puller and a Jubo League activist Saju Palit (32) were killed.³⁷

45. On March 29, 2013 three persons named Motiur Rahman, Rabiul Islam and Oliullah were shot and killed by 'combined forces' formed with police, RAB and Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) at Shyampur under Shibganj upazila in Chapainababganj district. At least 50 people, including a Magistrate and policemen were injured during the clash. On the same day, two men named Yunus Hossain and Faridul Islam were killed in a clash between police and BNP-Jamaat-Shibir activists over the arrest of a Jamaat activist at Belkuchi in Sirajganj district.³⁸
46. On January 31, 2013, incidents of vandalism and the burning of vehicles and clashes occurred in many districts, including Dhaka, during the hartal called by Jamat-i-Islami. Chhatra Shibir leader Abu Ruhani (20) and activists Abdullah (22) and Mizanur Rahman (28) were killed during a clash between the activists of Chhatra Shibir and Chhatra League and police in Bogra. An auto rickshaw driver, Mohammad Emon died in an accident when the picketers were chasing him in Feni. At least 20 Jamat-Shibir activists and seven policemen were injured during a clash in Jessore. Police Constable Zahirul Huq (55) succumbed to his injuries.³⁹
47. On January 4, 2013, clashes occurred across the country due to internal conflict in the Chhatra League over the 65th anniversary of Bangladesh Chhatra League. Biddyut Das, President of Ward 8 No. Chhatra League unit of Takerbazar Union under Sylhet district; Chhatra League activists Tanim Ahmed Munna and Sudeep Talukder were stabbed during the clash. The Convener of Chittagong South Chhatra League unit, Abdul Khaleq was attacked by his rivals, also belonging to Chhatra League. He was admitted to the hospital in critical condition. On January 8, 2013, Abdul Khaleq died at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital.⁴⁰
48. It is an all too familiar trend in Bangladesh that the leaders and activists of the ruling party, after being voted into power by a democratic process, become involved in crime under political shelter. Attacks, violence against women assaults, extortions and killing are some such crimes. In some cases, police were also seen standing silently or even assisting in such acts. The ruling party is also using the administration to save the criminals who are involved in political violence and cases filed against those criminals are withdrawn under 'political consideration'. This is also not a new trend.

³⁶ Youth wing of Awami League

³⁷ The daily Jugantor, 26/06/2013

³⁸ The Daily Ittefaq, 30/03/2013

³⁹ The daily Prothom Alo/The Daily Star, 01/02/2013

⁴⁰ The daily Samakal, 05/01/2013

Killing of Hefazate Islam activists during operation at night

49. Hefazate Islam Bangladesh started protests from February 19, 2013 for the punishment of bloggers who were engaged in defaming Islam and insulting its Prophet Mohammad (pbuh). Later on April 6, 2013 Hefazate Islam publicised a 13-point demand to the government and declared different programmes for its implementation. Its final programme would be on May 5, 2013 to seize Dhaka.
50. As per the schedule of the programme, activists of Hefazate Islam from various parts of the country started gathering at Dhaka from May 4. They observed the first stage of the 'seize' Dhaka programme on May 5 at six entry points to the capital. They started to enter Dhaka in order to observe a prayer meeting led by Hefazate Islam leader Allama Ahmed Sharif Safi at Baitul Mokarram mosque, after completing the blockade programme. Dhaka Metropolitan Police gave them permission to hold their meeting at Shapla Chottor at Motijheel from 3 pm until dusk. While coming to Shapla Chottor, activists of Hefazate Islam were attacked allegedly by armed activists of the ruling party, specially when Hefazate Islam activists were heading towards Motijheel, passing the Awami League Central Office. It has been alleged that during this time, police helped the ruling party supporters in attacking Hefazate Islam. At around 3.00 pm, Hefazate Islam started its meeting and was to continue with the programme until the next decision came from leader Allama Shafi.
51. On May 6, 2013 at around 12:30 am, the government shut down the power supply at Motijheel, darkening the area. During this time the megaphones used at the meeting were also disconnected. At around 2.15 am about 10 thousand members of the joint forces opened fire in the dark with ammunition, rubber-coated steel bullets and threw hot water, tear gas shells and sound grenades indiscriminately at the unarmed leaders and activists of Hefazate Islam, many of whom were sleeping after the day-long programme. According to the Odhikar fact finding mission⁴¹, 61 people were killed and many were injured during the incident took place on May 5 and 6. Police filed six cases at Motijheel Police Station, 12 cases at Paltan Police Station and one case at Ramna Model Police Station over the incident. Later, on May 7, four more cases were filed with Paltan Police Station. Police filed cases against at least 133,500/133,000 unknown persons welcoming the possibility of violating human rights through random arrests.
52. It is to be noted that many children and adolescents joined the meeting of Hefazate Islam. Most of them were students of Quami Madrassas. They were the children of poor people living in the villages. Several of them were orphans. These destitute children and adolescents were not spared from the brutal attacks on May 6. The exact number of missing or dead children and adolescents are still unknown.

⁴¹ http://www.odhikar.org/documents/2013/FF_Report_2013/Hefazat_e_islam/Fact%20finding_Hefazate%20Islam_English.pdf

53. Odhikar demands that an independent and neutral investigation committee headed by a retired Supreme Court judge be set up in order to bring society out of this violent situation. Odhikar urges the government to ensure peoples' security; find the missing children and adolescents; and publish the actual number of deaths and injuries that took place during the operation on May 6. The government is also urged to let the families of the deceased know where the bodies have been buried, because the victims' family has the right to observe the funeral rituals.

Human rights violations by BSF at the border

54. On June 12, 2013 the Indian High Commissioner, Pankaj Sharon said, "killing at the border has decreased and to my knowledge, not a single incident of killing took place in the last six months." He said this at a 'meet the press' organised at the National Press Club.⁴²

55. Odhikar rejects the statement of Indian High Commissioner. Odhikar reports show that incidents of human rights violations continue at the India-Bangladesh border areas. BSF kills unarmed Bangladeshi citizens either by shooting to torturing them. They also abduct Bangladeshis from the border. The violence at the border continued during the last six months.

56. According to information of Odhikar, between January and June 2013, BSF killed 15 Bangladeshi citizens. Of them 11 were gunned down, two were tortured, one was hit by a BSF speedboat and one drowned after falling into a canal when the BSF chased him. During this period, 53 Bangladeshis were injured. Of them 36 were injured by bullet shot, 15 were tortured and two were injured by BSF cocktail blast. 60 Bangladeshis were allegedly abducted by the BSF. Some cases:

57. On June 11, 2013 two Bangladeshi cattle traders, Habibur Rahman (35) and Faruk Hossain (26) were shot dead by the BSF members of Indian Angrail camp at Putkhali border under Benapole in Jessore district.⁴³

58. On February 16, 2013 Moksedul Mia, a student of Phulbari Degree College was shot by BSF of Kursharhat Outpost while he was helping cattle traders bring cows across the international pillar no. 939 at Thosh Bidyabagish border under Phulbari upazila in Kurigram district. He was admitted to Rangpur Medical College Hospital in a critical condition where he later succumbed to his injuries.⁴⁴

59. On January 1, 2013 two Bangladeshi men named Nur Islam (32) and Muktar Dai (23) were shot dead by the BSF near main pillar 361/5 at Bujruk border under Haripur Upazila in Thakurgaon district. The next day, on January 2, BSF shot and killed two more Bangladeshi citizens named Mohammad Masud (22) and Shahidul Islam (23) at Bibhishon border under Gomostapur Upazila in Chapainawabganj district.

⁴² The daily Manabzamin, 13/06/2013

⁴³ Report sent by local human rights defender, Sundar Saha associated with Odhikar at Jessore,

⁴⁴ Report sent by local human rights defender, Ahsan Habib Nilu associated with Odhikar at Kurigram,

60. Indian BSF are killing Bangladeshi citizens shooting at anyone seen near the border or anyone trying to cross the border; and illegally entering Bangladesh, which is a clear violation of international law and human rights. It was seen in the past that BSF killed, tortured and abducted Bangladeshis from Bangladesh territory. The Bangladesh government has yet to protest strongly and Border Guard Bangladesh has constantly failed to protect Bangladeshi citizens at the border areas.

Violence against religious minority communities

61. On September 29, 2012, 12 Buddhist monasteries and temples and 40 houses belonging to members of the Buddhist community were vandalised and torched by criminals with the help of local leaders of the ruling party in Ramu of Cox's Bazaar. 19 cases were filed accusing 15,182 persons in this regard. Local Buddhist monks alleged that "those people who led the attacks and processions are roaming around. However, innocent people are being arrested."⁴⁵ The government has not taken any steps against the criminals who were involved in this incident. Later in 2013, many vested interest groups attacked property belonging to religious minority communities and set fire to their temples, taking the opportunity of political unrest. Attacks on houses and temple belonging to the Hindu religious community also took place due to the violent political situation after the verdict given by the International Crimes Tribunal on February 28, 2013 against Delwar Hossain Sayeedi for committing crimes against humanity during the Liberation War in 1971. It is to be noted that the victims could not disclose the identity of the perpetrators for security reasons as they alleged that they were influential criminals.

62. On May 28, 2013, criminals set fire to a Buddhist family's house over a land dispute at Thakurpara in Comilla. It was reported that the house of Subrato Proshad Barua at Kandirpar near Thakurpara Buddhist temple, came under the arson attack. The victim-family claimed that the arson attack was conducted by supporters of the Zila Parishad's Administrator and Vice-President of the central committee of the Krishak League⁴⁶, Alhaj Omar Faruque.⁴⁷

63. On the night of May 12, 2013, criminals set fire to Shree Shree Sarbajanin Sanaton Harishobha Mandir of the Hindu community in Kanchanpur under Ramganj Upazila in Laxmipur. The President of Ramganj upazila Hindu-Buddhist-Christian Oikko Parishad, Apurba Kumar Saha informed Odhikar that five idols and the boundary wall of the temple were burnt, which amounted to approximately three hundred and fifty thousand taka worth of damage.⁴⁸

64. On April 5, 2013, criminals attacked and looted an ancient Hindu temple situated in Mirzapur, Tangail. The 'Shiblingo' was broken along with 11 idols.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ The daily Prothom Alo, 17/01/2013

⁴⁶ Peasant wing of Awami League

⁴⁷ The daily New Age and Naya Diganta, 29/05/2013

⁴⁸ Report sent by human rights defender affiliated with Odhikar, Masudur Rahman Bhutto from Laxmipur

⁴⁹ The Daily Ittefaq, 06/04/2013

65. On April 1, 2013, the Shree Shree Kali Mandir (a Hindu temple) situated in Folda village in Bhuapur in Tangail was set on fire by criminals at around midnight. A total of 20 idols were burnt. The criminals also looted the gold ornaments the idols wore. On April 5, 2013 the Shree Shree Kali Mondir Committee's President, Shree Smaron Dutta filed a case (No. 2, dated 05/04/2013) against Bhuapur's Awami Jubo League Adviser Taherul Islam Tota; Folda Union's General Secretary of BNP Abdul Hannan; BNP activist Nazmul Sharkar; Ershad Ali and many more under Sections 143/448/295/436/380/427/506/114/34 of the Penal Code^{50,51}
66. On March 3, 2013, at around 10:30 pm, criminals vandalized four idols of the goddess Kaali and set fire to the Kaali Mandir in Goalimandra Monipara village at Haldiya union under Louhajang upazila in Munshiganj district. Hearing this news, local people came and doused the fire.⁵²
67. On March 1, 2013 at around 1:00 am, criminals set fire to Boradi Garangol Durga Mandir (a Hindu temple) in Gouranadi under Barisal district. Police of Gouranadi Police Station informed Odhikar that Jamaat-e-Islami and BNP activists were involved in the act. Police arrested three persons in this regard.⁵³
68. On March 1, 2013 at around 1:00 am, criminals set fire to Dumuria Sarbojanin Durga Mandir in Dumuria village at Ramchandrapur union under Morelganj upazila in Bagerhaat district. The president of the Temple Committee, Arun Kumar was not willing to name the criminals due to security reasons.⁵⁴
69. Odhikar observes with concern that citizens belonging to the Hindu community are under constant threat of political violence and were attacked by criminals. Moreover, temples of the Hindu community were vandalised intentionally in many districts. Odhikar expresses serious concerns over these criminal acts of

⁵⁰ Section 143 of the Penal Codes states "Whoever is a member of an unlawful assembly, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to six months, or with fine, or with both."
 Section 448: Whoever commits house-trespass shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to one year, or with fine which may extend to one thousand taka, or with both.
 Section 295: Whoever destroys, damages or defiles any place of worship, or any object held sacred by any class of persons with the intention of thereby insulting the religion of any class of persons or with the knowledge that any class of persons is likely to consider such destruction, damage or defilement as an insult to their religion, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to two years, or with fine, or with both.
 Section 436: Whoever commits mischief by fire or any explosive substance, intending to cause, or knowing it to be likely that he will thereby cause, the destruction of any building which is ordinarily used as a place of worship or as a human dwelling or as a place for the custody of property, shall be punished with ¹⁴⁸imprisonment] for life, or with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years, and shall also be liable to fine.
 Section 380: Whoever commits theft in any building, tent or vessel, which building, tent or vessel is used as a human dwelling, or use for the custody of property, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to seven years, and shall also be liable to fine.
 Section 427: Whoever commits mischief and thereby causes loss or damage to the amount of fifty taka or upwards, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to two years, or with fine, or with both.
 Section 506: Whoever commits the offence of criminal intimidation shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to two years, or with fine, or with both;
 Section 114: Whenever any person, who if absent would be liable to be punished as an abettor, is present when the act or offence for which he would be punishable in consequence of the abetment is committed, he shall be deemed to have committed such act or offence.
 Section 34: When a criminal act is done by several persons, in furtherance of the common intention of all, each of such persons is liable for that act in the same manner as if it were done by him alone.

⁵¹ Fact finding report of Odhikar

⁵² Report sent by Arafatuzzaman, human rights defender associated with Odhikar in Munshiganj

⁵³ Report sent from human rights defenders

⁵⁴ Report sent by Mohammad Azad, Correspondent of the local daily Probaho, 04/03/2013

violence against religious minority groups and also condemns the government's failure to protect the life and livelihood of the citizens belonging to the Hindu community under these circumstances.

Meetings and assemblies prohibited

70. Many incidents of prohibition on meetings and assemblies occurred during the first six months in 2013. On May 19, 2013 the Home Minister Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, at a meeting in Chittagong, declared a prohibition on all kinds of political meetings and programmes for one month. Later, in the evening he said in an interview with BBC that "this prohibition will continue for an indefinite period".⁵⁵ The government imposed a prohibition on meetings and gatherings and even on 'human chain' programmes. However, police said that prior permission was required before organising meetings and programmes at specified areas. But police are now refusing permission. It was stated, on behalf of the police, that in some places meetings and political programmes will not be granted.⁵⁶
71. On March 11, 2013 BNP activists set fire to tyres and threw bricks at the buildings to protest against the cocktail explosions at a meeting on March 6, organised by BNP led 18-party alliance near the BNP office. Police stopped the meeting by firing rubber bullets and throwing tear gas shells on those gathered. Police initiated an operation at the BNP Paltan office after stopping the protest meeting.⁵⁷
72. On March 6, 2013 the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) organised a protest meeting in front of their party office at Paltan, Dhaka. During the meeting, cocktails were exploded and BNP leaders and activists worried. At that time, police marched towards the BNP office from Fakirapool and Nightingale Mor and fired towards the meeting point from an armoured vehicle. At the same time, police and RAB threw tear gas shells and sound grenades at BNP leaders and activists. As a result, the meeting stopped. During this time, 31 people, including BNP's Standing Committee member Nazrul Islam Khan, Joint Secretary-General Amanullah Aman and Dhaka Metropolitan City BNP's Member-Secretary Abdus Salam were shot and injured.⁵⁸
73. On January 10, 2013 police stopped a peaceful hunger-strike by protesting non-MPO registered school teachers at the Central *Shaheed Minar*⁵⁹ in Dhaka. The police obstructed their preparation for the programme in front of the National Press Club. During this time, police stopped the hunger-strike and scattered the protesting teachers by throwing pepper spray and tear gas shells. Over 100

⁵⁵ The daily Manabzamin, 20/05/2013

⁵⁶ The daily Manabzamin, 19/05/2013

⁵⁷ The Daily Ittefaq, 12/03/2013

⁵⁸ The Daily Ittefaq, 12/03/2013

⁵⁹ The Shaheed Minar ("Martyr Monument") is a national monument in Dhaka, Bangladesh, established to commemorate those killed during the Bengali Language Movement demonstrations of 1952.

teachers including Teachers Okkya Jote president, Professor Mohammad Ershad Ali were injured.⁶⁰

74. Odhikar believes that this kind of prohibition is an interference on the democratic rights and contrary to the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. Article 37 of the Constitution states that the right of assembly and holding of peaceful meetings are a democratic right of every citizen.

Violence during hartals

75. According to information gathered by Odhikar, between January and June 2013, 33 hartals were observed nationwide and 126 were regional hartals, observed in various districts.
76. During the hartals, clashes occurred in many places, including Dhaka, between law enforcement agencies and hartal supporters. Several people were killed in police firing during this time. The day before the hartals and during the hartals, a number of vehicles, including buses were also vandalised and set on fire by hartal supporters. This also resulted in burn injuries. The BNP also claimed that the ruling party activists were also involved in these acts of violence. Some incidents are as follows:
77. In the hartal called by Islami Chhatra Shibir on April 11, 2013, a public transport driver named Monsur Ali Gazi (40) was shot dead in police firing while Jamat-Shibir activists were involved in 'picketing' in the Chedhuriya village of Dumuria Upazila under Khulna district.⁶¹
78. On April 9, 2013 a truck driver named Shahidul Islam Khokon (42) was killed in an attack by the hartal supporters in the Dhaka-Rangpur highway in Bogra during the 36-hour hartal called by the BNP-led 18-party alliance.⁶²
79. On March 18, 2013 truck driver, Nur Mohammad succumbed to injuries he sustained from hartal supporters in Dagonbhuiyan upazila under Feni district on March 17, the night before hartal.⁶³
80. On February 4, 2013, a day before the hartal, Jamaat-Shibir initiated violence and vandalised vehicles. They also set fire to a bus at Azampur at Uttara in Dhaka and a banker named Rashel Mahmud was burnt to death.⁶⁴
81. On January 13, 2013 the Democratic Left Alliance, Communist Party of Bangladesh and Socialist Party of Bangladesh called a half day hartal in protest of the increasing price of fuel. Police used pepper spray and blasted hot water through water cannons and baton charged the protestors during the hartal. Many people, including Democratic Left Alliance leader Khalequzzaman Bhuiyan; and Communist Party of Bangladesh leader Syed Zafar Ahmed were injured in Dhaka.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ The daily Jugantor, 11/01/2013

⁶¹ A report sent by Odhikar's human rights defender, Nuruzzaman from Khulna

⁶² The Daily Ittefaq, 10/04/2013

⁶³ The daily New Age, 20/03/2013

⁶⁴ The daily Sangbad, 05/02/2013

⁶⁵ The daily Amader Somoy, 17/01/2013

82. Odhikar expresses grave concern regarding the incidents of vandalising and setting fire to vehicles by hartal supporters before and during the hartals, bomb attacks at different places by pro and anti-hartal groups, the arrest of innocent people and use of pepper spray by police during hartals. Odhikar believes that the state repression and political violence has taken an alarming turn. If it is not controlled immediately, the country's unrest will amplify and the administration will collapse. In many districts, the local administration has lapsed into inefficiency and society has become divided. In order to overcome this division, the media and civil society have to disregard their bias and be united immediately to protect human rights.

Situation of workers' rights

83. On January 26, 2013 eight garment workers died due to a fire at Smart Export Garment factory at Mohammadpur in Dhaka. Later on April 24, 2013 Rana Plaza situated at Savar Bus Stand collapsed, resulting in the death of 1131 workers and about 3000 injuries. There were five garment factories at Rana Plaza from third to seventh floors.⁶⁶ Around five thousand workers were working during the building collapsed.
84. The price-hike of daily commodities, increasing living costs and house rent and a minimum wage of only Taka 3000 which is not always paid on time; and lack of facilities all sparked the workers' protests.
85. Garment manufacturing factories are a very large source of revenue for Bangladesh and the factory workers are one of the main contributing factors to this success. The workers need to be brought under synchronized security programmes and the infrastructure of the factories to be built systematically.

Meetings stopped by imposing section 144 of the Cr.PC⁶⁷

86. According to Odhikar's statistics, between January and June 2013, a total of 27 instances of the imposition of Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure by the local administration, were recorded across the country; mainly to stop political gatherings and rallies from occurring.
87. On February 8, 2013 Alinagar Union unit Chhatra Dal35 called a meeting at Kailganj field in Kalkini upazila under Madaripur district. The local Awami League, Jubo League and Chhatra League of Alinagar Union announced a meeting to demand the hanging of Abdul Quader Molla at the same place and time. As a result, the local administration imposed Section 144 of the Cr.PC.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Fact finding report of Odhikar

⁶⁷ Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898 provides power to the Magistrate to issue orders to stop any meeting or

gathering. See http://bdlaws.minlaw.gov.bd/sections_detail.php?id=75§ions_id=20789

⁶⁸ The daily Manabzamin, 09/02/2013

88. On January 24, 2013 the local BNP in Jhenaidah called a meeting at Chandipur Bishnupada High School grounds demanding the release of their leader Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir and restoration of the caretaker government system. The local Awami League of Ganna Union announced a meeting to demand the hanging of war criminals at the same place and time. As a result, the local administration imposed Section 144 of the Cr.PC.⁶⁹
89. Odhikar believes that stopping peaceful public gatherings by imposing section 144 is an interference on democratic rights and contrary to the Constitution of Bangladesh. The Government must stop declaring counter programmes of the ruling political party in order to obstruct programmes of the Opposition and cause the imposition of section 144.

Anti-Terrorism Act 2009 (Amendment) Bill 2013 passed in Parliament

90. On February 19, 2009, the Government, in a Cabinet meeting, approved the Anti-Terrorism Bill to be made into law, without due consideration or feedback from the people. Previously, the unelected, military-backed 'Caretaker' Government, on June 11, 2008 promulgated an Anti-Terrorism Ordinance 2008.
91. The Parliament passed the Anti-Terrorism (Amendment) Bill, 2012 on February 16, 2012, enhancing the maximum punishment to the death penalty, from 20 years imprisonment.
92. On June 11, 2013 the Anti-Terrorism (Amendment) Bill 2013 was passed in the National Parliament. According to the amendment, crimes committed abroad can be tried under domestic law. Due to this amendment, one can produce photographs, video, conversation on skype, facebook, twitter etc. as evidence before the Court. A proposal for further scrutinizing and judging the public opinion on the Bill was brought by the Opposition Parliament Members but was rejected by the ruling party MPs. New sections were included in the amendment. It was mentioned in the new provision that if any person takes shelter after committing a crime abroad, which would have been punishable if committed in Bangladesh, the said crime is considered to be committed in Bangladesh. It was also proposed in the Bill that Bangladesh Bank will have more power to investigate allegations of financing 'terrorist' activities.⁷⁰
93. Odhikar believes that the definitions of 'terrorism' and 'terrorist activities' under this Act are so wide that it leaves scope for the possibility of misuse and the violation of human rights even more vulnerable to the worst kind of abuses. The widening of the scope of crimes punishable by death carries tremendous risk of irreversible miscarriage of justice. The newest amendment is another change that is contrary to the Constitution of Bangladesh and it also violates the right to privacy. Article 43 of the Constitution states that "Every citizen shall have the

⁶⁹ The daily Manabzamin, 25/01/2013

⁷⁰ The Daily Ittefaq, 12/06/2013

right, subject to any reasonable restrictions imposed by law in the interests of the security of the State, public order, public morality or public health – (b) to the privacy of his correspondence and other means of communication.”

94. Odhikar demands the repeal of all existing repressive laws, including the anti-terrorism law.

Violence against women

95. Between January – June 2013, a significant number of women were the victims of rape, dowry related violence, acid and sexual harassment.

Dowry-related violence

96. Between January – June 2013, 255 women were subjected to dowry violence. Of these women, it has been alleged that 86 women were killed because of dowry, 163 were violated in various other ways for dowry demands and six women allegedly committed suicide. Furthermore, one man and one woman were killed and two men were injured in protest of dowry related violence during this period. Some examples:
97. On June 8, 2013 a housewife named Moyna Begum was beaten and strangled to death by her husband Rezabuddin over dowry demands in Kongshapotti village under Dhamrai upazila in Dhaka district.⁷¹
98. On April 9, in the Mistripara of Rangpur, Minara Begum Moyna (20) was beaten to death by her husband Milan Mia for not being able to pay the remaining Tk 5000/- of the total dowry of Tk 20,000/-. Locals caught him hiding after committing the murder and gave him up to the police.⁷²
99. On March 2, 2013, Nilufa (21) was beaten to death by her husband Rakib Hossain for failing to bring the motorcycle of his choice as dowry, in west Madhabnagar village under Sadar Upazila in Natore district. As per the dowry condition, Nilufa's father gave a Freedom motorcycle to his son-in-law, Rakib Hossain. But Rakib demanded a motorcycle from the 'Pulsar' range and beat Nilufa to death over the wrong model.⁷³

Rape

100. Between January to June 2013, a total number of 516 females were reportedly raped. Among them, 221 were women, 284 were children below the age of 16 and the age of 11 victims could not be ascertained. Of the women, 16 were killed after being raped, 78 were victims of gang rape and two were committed suicide. Out of the 284 child victims, 18 children were killed after being raped, 92 were victims of gang rape and three children committed suicide.
101. On June 8, 2013 a girl student of Rajdiya Abhoy Pilot High School was raped by Sub Inspector (SI) Zahidul Islam of Sirajdikhan Police Station in Munshiganj. SI

⁷¹ The daily Jugantor, 09/06/2013

⁷² The daily Jugantor, 11/04/2013

⁷³ The daily Naya Diganta, 05/03//2013

Zahidul was a tenant of the resident belonging to the girl's family. The parents of the girl went out keeping her at home alone. They requested the wife of SI Zahidul to keep their daughter to her home as they could not return at night. SI Zahidul raped her when the girl slept at his residence. A case was filed in this connection and SI Zahidul Islam has been suspended and arrested.⁷⁴

102. On April 3, 2013 a woman belonging to the Hindu community was gang raped by four men Mostafa Paik, Lal Mia Talukder Firoze Molla and Hossain Sheikh in Kotalpara area of Gopalganj district.⁷⁵
103. On January 13, 2013 a school girl of class five was raped by a criminal named Roich Sheikh in Gopalpur village under Mulghor union in Rajbari district. It is to be mention that Roich Sheikh was arrested on June 15, 2012 on the allegation of attempted rape of the same child. Roich was released on bail in the first week of December 2012.⁷⁶

Acid violence

104. According to information gathered by Odhikar, between January – June 2013, it was reported that 18 persons became victims of acid violence. Of these affected persons, 12 were women, four were men, one was a girl and one a boy.
105. On June 16, 2013 a garment worker Ayesha Begum (40) was burnt with acid by her husband Monju and his brothers when Ayesha tried to protect her daughter's chastity. It was learnt that the father attempted rape his daughter at Shukoni village in Demra, Dhaka. Ayesha Begum was under treatment at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital. A case was filed with Demra Police Station in this regard but police could not arrest anyone.⁷⁷
106. On May 3, 2013 a housewife Tazun Nehar (50) was burnt with acid by her step son Babul Hossain over an enmity on land dispute in Birol upazila under Dinajpur district. Tazun Nehar was admitted to Birol Upazila Health Complex first and when her condition deteriorated she was taken to BRAC's Acid Survivors Centre at Dhaka for better treatment.⁷⁸
107. On January 15, 2013, a 4th year honours student of the Dhaka Eden Women University, Sharmin Akhter Akhi was taken to the Kazi⁷⁹ office at Chankharpur, Dhaka at gunpoint by some criminals, including Monir and Masum, when she was on her way to the university. The criminals stabbed Akhi when she refused their proposal. They also threw acid on her face and body when she was shouting for help.⁸⁰
108. Incidents of acid throwing are occurring due to the lack of implementation of the Acid Crimes Prevention Act 2002.

⁷⁴ Fact finding report of Odhikar

⁷⁵ The daily Amar Desh, 05/11/2013

⁷⁶ The daily Prothom Alo, 14/01/2013

⁷⁷ The daily Manabzamin, 18/06/2013

⁷⁸ The daily Jugantor, 06/05/2013

⁷⁹ Kazi: a registrar of marriages and divorces

⁸⁰ The daily Manabzamin, 16/01/2013

Sexual harassment and stalking

109. According to information gathered by Odhikar, a total of 204 girls and women were victims of sexual harassment between January – June 2013. Among them, 10 committed suicides, four were killed, 13 were injured, 11 were assaulted, 10 were abducted, 58 suffered attempted rape and 98 were sexually harassed in various ways. Five men were killed, 49 were injured, one was assaulted and one woman was killed, three women were injured by the stalkers when they protested against such acts.
110. On June 5, 2013 a female garment worker, Khadiza Akhter Munni was sexually harassed by factory Supervisor Zahed, as she was absent earlier for two days due to illness, in Kachua Garments located in Fatullah under Narayanganj district. Khadiza committed suicide on June 6, 2013 because of the humiliation.⁸¹
111. On April 14, 2013 two female Master’s Degree students of Jahangirnagar University were riding on a rickshaw. As they reached Tarzan Point, paint was thrown at them from a rally brought out on the occasion of Bangla New Year. When the girls protested, some Chhatra League activists of the Kamaluddin Residential Hall of the University slapped them while pulling their clothes at the same time.⁸²
112. On March 12, 2013 a student of class 8, Trishna Rani Mandal, committed suicide by taking poison over incidents of sexual harassment in Joypurhat. While going to and returning from school, Trishna was stalked by Sajal Chandra of Chandrakola village under the adjacent district of Naogaon. Trishna’s father made a complaint to the school’s head teacher against Sajal Chandra. This annoyed Sajal and he with his friends Ershad and Gulzar tried to abduct Trishna on a motorcycle. Later Trishna committed suicide due to humiliation when the matter became public.⁸³

Odhikar observes elections in four city corporations

113. On June 15, 2013 elections were held in Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal and Sylhet City Corporation. Odhikar observed elections in four city corporations. Each observation team had five mobile observers. Although no major violations were marked, elections in four City Corporations concluded with some irregularities at the polling centres. It was learnt from the observer teams of Odhikar that polling agents of all candidates were not present in the polling centres observed by Odhikar. Adequate numbers of police force were deployed in the electoral area in order to control law and order situation.

Rajshahi City Corporation

114. Odhikar’s election observation team observed 20 polling centers out of 137 centers in Rajshahi City Corporation. In Shahid Nazmul Hoque Girls High School

⁸¹ The daily Jugantor, 07/06/2013

⁸² The daily Sangbad, 16/04/2013

⁸³ The Daily Ittefaq, 13/03/2013

center of ward no. 17, supporters of counselor candidate Ziyaul Hoque Tuku and Robiul Islam Milu got involved in clashes. One of the supporters of counselor candidate Rabiul Islam Milu was injured. At around 10.00 am in the morning, supporters of Mayoral Candidate AHM Khairuzzaman Liton and Mosaddek Hossen Bulbul tried to influence the voters. At that time, BGB had charged with batons and two persons named Moniruzzaman and Mukul were injured. Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) was used in seven polling booths of Lakkhipur Bohumukhi Adorsho High School centre of Ward 8. After 4.00 pm, one of EVM broke down.

Khulna City Corporation

115. Odhikar's election monitoring team monitored 12 polling centers out of 228 in Khulna City Corporation. In Crescent Aliya Madrasa polling center, many voters, including Badsha Miah, Tarikul Islam Dobir and Md. Khalilur Rahman informed Odhikar that, at around 8.00 am, supporters of the Islami Shasontntro Andolon supported Counselor candidate Hafej Md. Shamsul Alam (symbol-Moon) were walking on the rail line. At that time, a team of RAB on duty charged with batons on them. As a result some people were injured and nine were arrested. At around 11.40 am, one of the injured men named Md. Shah Alam Sardar (worker of Crescent Jute Mills) died in a private hospital. Meanwhile, protest spread among Shah Alam's colleagues. Outside the No. 174 Provati Railway Government Primary School polling center of Khulna Sadar, clashes took place between RAB and voters. In this incident, two persons named Nazrul and Mujibur were injured. A person named Aziz was injured in a baton charge of police while he was trying to create a disturbance outside the Rupsha Bohumukhi High School polling center.

Barisal City Corporation

116. The election monitoring team of Odhikar observed 19 polling centers out of 100 centres in Barisal City Corporation. In Rumatoli Primary School center of ward 24, an in argument and clash took place between supporters of Awami League supported Mayor candidate, Shawkot Hossen Hiron and supporters of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) backed Mayor candidate, Ahsan Habib Kamal. Former Member of Parliament, Abul Hossen and Ahsan Habib Kamal were injured during the clash. It was learnt that a person with a fake election observer accreditation card was forcing the voters to vote for Ahsan Habib Kamal with the symbol 'Pineapple'. At that time the supporters of Shawkot Hossen Hiron protested and then a clash occurred between the two groups. Presiding Officer, Ashraful Kabir stopped polling at around 1.40 pm as the situation went out of control. It was learnt during observation that, Shawkot Hossain Hiron allegedly beat a polling agent of Ahsan Habib Kamal in Kawnia ward 2 and forced him to leave the polling centre.

Sylhet City Corporation

117. Odhikar's election observation team observed 43 polling centers out of 127 centers in Sylhet City Corporation. An Assistant Presiding Officer named Lutfunnesa was withdrawn from the polling centre for providing false ballot papers to the voters of Awami League backed Mayor candidate, Badar Uddin Ahmed Kamran in Khasdobir Government Primary School Center. In Ambarkhana Girls School center at ward 4, 10 voters could not cast their votes. One of them is Rubel Ahmed. His national ID no. is 9196204133295. Furthermore, allegations of distributing money was found against Ward 5 Counselor candidate, Juber Khan and others.

Human Rights Defenders

New NGOAB Law violates right to freedom of expression and association

118. The NGO Affairs Bureau (NGOAB), under the Prime Minister's Office, drafted a proposed Bill, named the Foreign Donations (Voluntary Activities) Regulation Act, 2012 that has been developed by amending the Foreign Donations (Voluntary Activities) Regulation Ordinance, 1978 (XLVI of 1978) and integrating the Foreign Contributions (Regulation) Ordinance, 1982 (XXXI of 1982), in order to regulate NGO activities. The proposed Law will establish more control on human rights organisations and NGOs and violate the right to freedom of association and freedom of expression.

119. Odhikar agrees that the proposed Law will violate freedom of expression and association; and will control human rights and voluntary organisations' activities which is contrary to the Bangladesh Constitution and the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

Government bars fund clearance of Odhikar's project

120. The NGO Affairs Bureau (NGOAB) under the Prime Minister's Secretariat has been repeatedly putting up barriers at giving fund clearance to human rights related programmes of Odhikar. The Bureau has not cleared a specific project even after two months and 26 days of its submission. According to the circular of the NGOAB, the Bureau has to make a decision on the project within 45 days of its submission. On April 4, 2012 Odhikar submitted the application for fund clearance for a project on 'Gender and Election Violence' to the NGOAB. But till date the bureau has not cleared the project.

Type of Human Rights Violation		January	February	March	April	May	June	Total
Extrajudicial killings	Crossfire	5	7	5	5	4	5	31
	Torture to death	0	1	0	0	3	2	6
	Shot to death	2	72	47	2	18	1	142
	Beaten to death	2	1	0	0	0	1	4
	Strangled to death	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Total		9	81	52	8	25	9	184
Torture (Alive)		4	3	3	2	0	0	12
Disappearances		2	1	1	8	0	2	14
Human rights violations by Indian BSF	Bangladeshis Killed	5	1	2	1	3	3	15
	Bangladeshis Injured	16	7	6	4	10	10	53
	Bangladeshis Abducted	12	3	16	12	10	7	60
Deaths in Jail		3	6	6	2	12	2	31
Attack on journalists	Killed	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Injured	20	18	21	17	13	5	94
	Threatened	2	3	7	9	0	3	24
	Attacked	0	7	0	0	0	0	7
	Assaulted	1	5	4	20	0	0	30
Political violence	Killed	18	86	76	26	107	9	322
	Injured	1643	2772	3055	1450	948	862	10730
Acid violence		5	3	2	4	1	3	18
Dowry related violence (including women victims, their children and relatives)		37	42	54	64	47	18	262
Rape		109	93	115	111	41	47	516
Sexual harassment /Stalking of women		44	31	51	46	11	21	204
Section 144 of Cr.PC		9	10	4	2	0	2	27
Public lynching		17	8	10	6	9	11	61
RMG Workers	Killed	8	0	0	1129	1	1	1139
	Injured	235	178	75	2683	361	267	3799

Note: Some monthly data has been updated after receiving information from previous month.

Recommendations

1. The Government must stop extrajudicial killings as per its commitment in its election manifesto and at the UN Human Rights Council during the 2009 UPR session. The Government must bring all involved in the acts of extrajudicial killings before justice, through proper and independent investigation.
2. Incidents of torture by law enforcement agencies must be investigated and the perpetrators be brought to justice under criminal law. The Government should ensure accountability of law enforcement agencies and also take action to put an end to their impunity. The Government must enact an anti-torture law and also accede to the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture.
3. The Government should rescue or recover the victims of enforced disappearances. Odhikar urges the government to accede to the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances, which was adopted by the UN General Assembly on December 20, 2006.
4. Interference on the media must be stopped. All acts of torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment on the Amar Desh Editor Mahmudur Rahman

should be stopped and he must be released immediately. Incidents of threats and attacks on journalists must be properly investigated and perpetrators of such acts must be brought to justice. The Government must withdraw the ban on Diganta TV and Islamic TV.

5. The Government must ensure accountability of law enforcement agencies and also take action to put an end to their impunity.
6. Political programmes should not be obstructed. The Government should refrain from exercising unconstitutional, undemocratic and repressive activities like attacking peaceful procession and rallies.
7. The Government must take effective action to stop all forms of criminalisation in the name of politics. The law enforcement agencies need to play a proactive role to stop political violence and to take legal measures against perpetrators and carry out their duty in an accountable and unbiased manner.
8. The workers need to be brought under synchronized security programmes and the infrastructure of the factories to be built systematically. Wages should be given to garment factory workers in due time and repression must be stopped by the factory authorities.
9. All repressive laws, including the Anti Terrorism Act 2009, should be repealed.
10. The Government should withdraw the proposed Bill initiated by the NGO Affairs Bureau for more control over NGOs, as it violates freedoms of expression and association.
11. The Government should protest strongly against human rights violations on Bangladeshi citizens by the BSF; and investigate all incidents and demand from the Indian Government adequate compensation for the families of the victims and trial and punishment for the perpetrators. The Government should also ensure the safety and security of the Bangladeshi citizens residing at the border areas.
12. The Government should protect the rights of the religious minority communities.
13. The Government must respond appropriately to stop violence against women and the offenders must be brought under the purview of the law to ensure that justice is served.

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Notes:

1. Odhikar seeks to uphold the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of the people.
2. Odhikar documents and records violations of human rights and receives information from its network of human rights defenders and monitors media reports in twelve national daily newspapers.
3. Odhikar conducts detailed fact-finding investigations into some of the most significant violations.
4. Odhikar is consistent in its human rights reporting and is committed to remain so.