

## **Human Rights Monitoring Report**

1-31 July 2013

### **Political violence**

**Attack on students protesting against the quota system**

**Meetings and assemblies prohibited**

**Imposition of Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure**

**Human rights violations along the border by BSF**

**Extrajudicial killings continue**

**Information Ministry asks Odhikar for fact finding report data  
on Hefazate Islam Bangladesh**

**Government withdraws cases filed against Limon**

**Killings continue through public lynching**

**Freedom of the media**

**Situation of the RMG workers**

**Labour (Amendment) Act, 2013 passed in the Parliament**

**Violence against women**

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, in July 2013, is presented here.

## Political violence

1. According to information gathered by Odhikar, in July 2013, 31 persons were killed and 1253 injured in political violence. 26 incidents of internal violence in the Awami League<sup>1</sup> and 17 in the BNP<sup>2</sup> were recorded during this period. In addition to this, three persons were killed and 251 injured in internal conflicts of the Awami League while 215 were injured in BNP internal conflicts. Some instances are as follows:
2. On July 20, 2013, Chhatra Dal<sup>3</sup> activist, Mizan was stabbed to death during a clash between activists of Chhatra League<sup>4</sup> and Chhatra Dal at Jalalabad residential area in Sylhet. Chhatra Dal activists vandalised shops in the area in protest of the death of their fellow activist.<sup>5</sup>
3. On July 5, 2013, the Progotishil Chhatra Jote<sup>6</sup> was campaigning against diploma courses, alleging that education was becoming a business. That day, the leaders and activists of Progotishil Chhatra Jote, took their position at the Faculty of Arts and Music Department of Dhaka University, before the entrance examinations started. Activists of Chhatra League attacked the activists of Progotishil Chhatra

---

<sup>1</sup> Awami League – The ruling party

<sup>2</sup> BNP: Bangladesh Nationalist Party. The main Opposition party.

<sup>3</sup> Student wing of BNP

<sup>4</sup> Student wing of Awami League

<sup>5</sup> The Daily Ittefaq, 21/07/2013

<sup>6</sup> Progressive Students Alliance

Jote at that time. GM Jilani Shuvo, President of Dhaka Metropolitan Chhatra Union<sup>7</sup> and activist, Farhan Habib were injured.<sup>8</sup>

## Violence during hartals

4. On July 15 and 16, 2013 Jamaat-e-Islami called a dawn-to-dusk hartal against the verdict of its former Amir (President) Golam Azam for crimes against humanity committed during the liberation war in 1971. On July 15, the International Tribunal-1 sentenced him to 90 years of imprisonment. Meanwhile, Gonojagoron Moncho also called a country wide hartal on July 16, demanding the death penalty for Golam Azam. On July 17, 2013 Jamaat-e-Islami called another nationwide hartal during the day of the verdict of Jamaat-e-Islami Secretary General, Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mujahid. The Tribunal passed the death sentence on Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mujahid and Jamaat-e-Islami observed hartal on July 18, in protest of this verdict. Clashes took place between the law enforcement agencies and hartal supporters in different areas of the country, including Dhaka. Activists of Jamaat-e-Islami vandalised and set fire to vehicles, including public transport, the day prior to and during the hartals.
5. On July 15, 2013 clashes occurred in Shibganj under Chapainababganj district between the law enforcement agencies and hartal supporters. Two men named Nurul Islam and Ziaur Rahman were shot dead by police and Border Guard Bangladesh.<sup>9</sup>
6. On July 15, 2013, the General Secretary of ward unit Awami League in Satkhira district, Abdul Aziz (42) was beaten to death by Jamaat-Shibir<sup>10</sup> activists when he was going to the kitchen market to sell fish during hartal.<sup>11</sup>
7. During the hartal on July 16, 2013 Jamaat-Shibir activists blocked roads in Hajampara of Kushulia Union under Kaliganj Upazila in Satkhira district. A clash took place between the law enforcement agencies and hartal supporters when law enforcers were trying to lift the tree-trunk barricades. Arifuzzaman (17) and Ruhul Amin Gazi (32) were shot dead during the clash.<sup>12</sup>

## Attack on students protesting against the quota system

8. On July 11, 2013 police and Chhatra League activists attacked students who were protesting against the quota systems in all government services, including the

---

<sup>7</sup> Student wing of the Communist Party of Bangladesh

<sup>8</sup> The daily Jai Jai Din, 06/07/2013

<sup>9</sup> The daily Prothom Alo, 16/07/2013

<sup>10</sup> Student wing of Jamaat-e-Islami

<sup>11</sup> The daily Prothom Alo, 16/07/2013

<sup>12</sup> The daily Manabzamin, 17/07/2013

Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) Examinations; and demanding revaluation of the results of the 34<sup>th</sup> BCS exam. Police threw tear gas shells, rubber bullets and live bullets at the protesters in front of the Dhaka University Central Library, Teachers Students Centre, Arts Faculty and Sir AF Rahman residential hall. Chhatra League activists also attacked them with sticks in front of the residence of the Vice-Chancellor. More than 100 students were injured in joint attacks by police and Chhatra League. Among them Anwar, Sreejon, Inamul and Imran were admitted to Dhaka Medical College hospital with bullet injuries. Police arrested 20 persons from different areas in relation to this incident.

9. On July 13, 2013, about 30-40 men, led by Dhaka University unit Chhatra League's General Secretary, Omar Sharif attacked protesting students when they were trying to come out with a procession from the University's Central Library. It is to be mentioned that a 56% quota system is followed at present in all government services. As a result, brilliant students have often been deprived from the opportunity to join the services; and taking advantage of the quota system, political appointments are given (as alleged by the protestors). It is to be mentioned that 30% of the quota is being allocated for children and grand children of the freedom fighters, 10% for women, 10% for district-wise quota, 5% for the ethnic minority communities; and 1% of the quota is allocated for persons with disabilities.<sup>13</sup>
10. Odhikar believes that promising students are excluded from the competitive examinations due to this quota system and this system opens a wide range of discriminatory appointments with political blessings. Odhikar urges the government to either cancel this quota system or keep it at a minimum level and to appoint deserving candidates according to merit; and with no discrimination. Odhikar also calls for legal action against the attackers of the protesting students immediately.

## **Meetings and assemblies prohibited**

11. On July 5, 2013 a meeting of Nagorik Oikkyo at Netrokona was stopped by the local administration. Member-Secretary of the District Nagorik Oikkyo, Advocate Nazrul Islam Khan informed Odhikar that Nagorik Oikkyo hired a conference room at the Netrokona Press Club for organising a discussion meeting on July 5. Posters and leaflets were distributed in the city mentioning that the central committee convener, Mahmudur Rahman Manna would be present at the meeting as chief guest. On July 3 the Secretary of the press club, Mokhlesur Rahman told Nazrul Islam that the Deputy Commissioner of Netrokona, who is

---

<sup>13</sup> Manabzamin, 12/07/2013; Amader Shomoy, 14/07/2013

also ex-officio President of Netrokona Press Club, directed him to cancel the booking of Nagorik Oikkyo. Hearing this news Advocate Nazrul Islam met the Deputy Commissioner and requested him to grant permission for the meeting, but the Deputy Commissioner asked him to organise the meeting elsewhere. Nagorik Oikkyo then got permission from the Head Teacher of Netrokona Unmesh Adorsha High School to hold their meeting there. On July 4, Nazrul Islam was informed by the Head Teacher that the local NSI and DGFII personnel told him that Chhatra League activists would attack the meeting. Later the Head Teacher cancelled the permission for the meeting.<sup>14</sup>

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

## **Imposition of Section 144 of the Cr.PC<sup>15</sup>**

13. According to Odhikar's statistics, in July 2013, a total of two instances of the imposition of Section 144 of the Cr.PC by the local administration, were recorded across the country; mainly to stop political gatherings and rallies from occurring.
14. 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 on the same day and thus cause the imposition of section 144.

## **Human rights violations along the border by BSF**

15. According to information compiled by Odhikar, it is noticed that several incidents of human rights violations on Bangladeshi citizens were committed by the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) in July 2013. During this period, BSF killed three Bangladeshi citizens. Among them, one was shot dead and two were tortured to death by BSF. Furthermore, three Bangladeshis were injured and one woman was raped. 12 persons were abducted by the BSF during this period.
16. A Bangladeshi cattle trader Ebarat Ali (28) was allegedly beaten to death by the BSF at Dharmagarh border under Haripur upazila in Thakurgaon district. On July 15, 2013, the body of the deceased was seen floating on Nagor River at zero point near international pillar 373/2 S.<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> Information collected from Nagorik Oikkyo

<sup>15</sup> 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&sections\\_id=20789](http://bdlaws.minlaw.gov.bd/sections_detail.php?id=75&sections_id=20789)

<sup>16</sup> The Daily Inqilab, 16/07/2013

17. According to the Memorandum of Understanding and related treaties signed between the two countries, if citizens of both countries illegally cross the border, it would be considered trespass and as per law those persons should be handed over to the civilian authority. However, we have repeatedly noticed that India and its BSF have been violating treaties and shooting at anyone seen near the border or anyone trying to cross the border; and illegally entering Bangladesh. This is a clear violation of international law and human rights.
18. Odhikar believes that the role of the Government of Bangladesh should be effective as an independent and sovereign state. Any independent and sovereign country would never accept the killing and torture of its citizens by another country. The Bangladesh government and Border Guard Bangladesh have constantly failed to protect Bangladeshi citizens at the border areas.

## **Extrajudicial killings continue**

19. Despite assurances of the government, extrajudicial killings continue. In July 2013, nine persons were killed in ‘crossfire’. Among them seven were allegedly killed by Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) and two by the police.

## **Identity of the deceased**

20. Among the deceased, one was a Joint Secretary of Dhaka Metropolitan Awami League (North), five were alleged criminals, two were carjackers and one was an alleged kidnapper.

## **Death in jail**

21. In July 2013, seven persons reportedly died in jail due to ‘illnesses’.

## **Information Ministry asks Odhikar for fact finding report data on ‘Assembly of Hefazate Islam and Human Rights Violation’**

22. On July 10, 2013 a letter (Ref: Memo No. TAMA/TAMAD/BIBIDH-10/2013/2144) signed by the Personal Secretary of the Information Minister, Mohammad Shahidul Huq Bhuiyan, was sent to Odhikar requesting a copy of the fact finding report prepared by Odhikar on the incident of human rights violations by the government on May 5 and 6, 2013 at the assembly of Hefazate Islam Bangladesh at Shapla Square, Motijheel, Dhaka; along with the details of the deceased, including the names of their fathers and mothers and their addresses. Odhikar sent its reply on July 17, 2013 with the fact finding report but

without a list; and requested the Information Minister Hasanul Haque Inu to ensure the following for the sake of the security of the members of the victims' families:

- a. Form a neutral Investigation Commission headed by a retired Judge of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh, after having discussions with human rights organisations, which are working to prepare the list of the deceased persons.
  - b. Take appropriate measures to ensure the security of the information providers, victims/their families and witnesses.
  - c. Ensure that there will not be any reprisal or any further human rights violations against victims/their families, witnesses and other information providers.
23. The family members of the deceased are living in insecurity and fear. The government filed 23 cases at different police stations accusing at least 133,500 unnamed persons over the Shapla Square incident. The families of the victims fear that the government will harass them further and are afraid to speak out in public. Therefore, as a responsible human rights organisation, Odhikar cannot send the detailed list of the deceased without ensuring the aforesaid demands. It is to be mentioned that there is no victim and witness protection law in Bangladesh. Being a human rights organisation, it is Odhikar's duty to ensure the safety and security of the victims.<sup>17</sup>

## **Government decides to withdraw cases filed against Limon**

24. The Government has decided to withdraw all cases filed against Limon Hossain by RAB. On July 9, 2013 the Home Minister, Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir told the journalists that the government had decided to withdraw two cases filed by RAB against Limon, according to Section 494 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.<sup>18</sup> As a result of this decision, on July 16, the Home Ministry sent an order to the Deputy Commissioner, Jhalokathi. On July 21 the Public Prosecutor applied to the Court when the Deputy Commissioner of Jhalokathi requested him to take necessary action in this regard. On July 29, the judge of the Jhalokathi Special Tribunal-2, Shankor Haldar acquitted Limon from a case filed under the Arms Act. The second case, related to obstructing government duty, will be heard on August 18, 2013.<sup>19</sup> On March 23, 2011, Limon Hossain, son of a day-labourer

---

<sup>17</sup> For detailed information, please visit

[http://odhikar.org/documents/2013/FF\\_Report\\_2013/Hefazat\\_e\\_islam/Home%20Ministry/Reply%20to%20the%20Information%20Minister\\_English.pdf](http://odhikar.org/documents/2013/FF_Report_2013/Hefazat_e_islam/Home%20Ministry/Reply%20to%20the%20Information%20Minister_English.pdf)

and

[http://odhikar.org/documents/2013/FF\\_Report\\_2013/Hefazat\\_e\\_islam/Home%20Ministry/Letter%20from%20the%20Ministry%20of%20Information\\_English\\_Translated.pdf](http://odhikar.org/documents/2013/FF_Report_2013/Hefazat_e_islam/Home%20Ministry/Letter%20from%20the%20Ministry%20of%20Information_English_Translated.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> The daily Prothom Alo, 10/07/2013

<sup>19</sup> The Daily Ittefaq, 30/07/2013

Tofazzal Hossain of Saturia village under Rajapur Upazila in Jhalokathi district was shot by RAB members in his left leg, while returning home with cattle. Later Limon's left leg had to be amputated at the Orthpedic Hospital at Dhaka.<sup>20</sup> RAB filed two cases against Limon accusing him under the Arms Act and for obstruction to government duty. Of the two cases, the Special Tribunal-2 at Jhalokathi framed charges against Limon under the Arms Act.<sup>21</sup> Meanwhile, on April 10, 2011, Limon's mother Henowara Begum filed a case with the Senior Judicial Magistrate's Court at Jhalokathi, accusing 12 persons in total, including the DAD Lutfar Rahman and five other members of RAB-8 unit and against six unknown people.<sup>22</sup>

25. Odhikar expresses its satisfaction over the 'better late than never' decision of the government to withdraw cases against Limon. However, Odhikar believes that the government must now take legal action against the RAB members who shot Limon, because the government has proved that Limon is innocent. If the accused RAB members are not brought to justice, then it would seem as if the government is encouraging impunity of the law enforcement agencies.

## Freedom of the media

26. In July 2013, several incidents of attack on journalists occurred. According to Odhikar's documentation, nine journalists were injured and one was sued.
27. On July 27, 2013 the acting editor of the daily Amar Desh, Mahmudur Rahman was taken into 3-day remand again by police. On February 22, 2013 police filed a case with Ramna Police Station against Mahmudur Rahman accusing him of publishing provocative news, vandalising vehicles and arson attacks. On June 12, 2013 Mahmudur Rahman was brought to the Court of Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate, Mohammad Harun-ur-Rashid from Kashimpur Jail by a prison van. Sub Inspector Mir Rezaul Islam of Ramna Police Station appealed to the Court for a 10-day remand but the Magistrate granted a 3-day remand after the hearing. It was learnt that Mahmudur Rahman was ill-treated during remand and he was sent back to Kashimpur Jail again by the Magistrate after a 3-day remand.<sup>23</sup>
28. It is to be mentioned that the Detective Branch (DB) of Police arrested Mahmudur Rahman on April 11, 2013 at around 9.00 am from the Amar Desh news paper office. Mahmudur Rahman was taken to the DB office after his arrest. Three cases filed against him at Tejgaon Police Station with regard to sedition; and under sections 56<sup>24</sup> and 57<sup>25</sup> of the Information and Communication

---

<sup>20</sup> Fact finding report of Odhikar

<sup>21</sup> The daily Prothom Alo, 10/07/2013

<sup>22</sup> The daily Amar Desh, 24/04/2011

<sup>23</sup> The daily Naya Diganta, 31/07/2013

<sup>24</sup> Section 56 of the Information and Technology Act 2006 refers to punishment for hacking with computer system.

<sup>25</sup> Section 57 refers to punishment for publishing fake, obscene or defaming information in electronic form.



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.<sup>26</sup> On April 17, Mahmudur Rahman was produced before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Shahidul Islam after the remand period. The lawyers of Mahmudur Rahman alleged that he was physically and mentally tortured in remand. During this time, Mahmudur Rahman collapsed in the witness-box and his family members also alleged that he was given electric shocks.<sup>27</sup>

### **Member of Parliament attacks journalists**

29. On July 20, 2013 a senior reporter of Independent Television, Imtiaz Sunny and cameraman Mohsin Mukul went to the office of Awami League Member of Parliament, Golam Maula Rony, situated at Meherba Plaza in Topkhana, Dhaka, for information. During this time, a group of criminals led by MP Rony apprehended the journalists and beat them with sticks and iron rods, broke the camera and took its memory card. Later police and other journalists rescued them from there.<sup>28</sup> On July 20 at night, Assistant Manager of Independent TV, Yunus Ali filed a case with Shahbagh Police Station in this regard accusing 20/25 people, including MP Golam Maula Rony, alleging attempt to murder, beating and vandalism. On July 21, Golam Maula Rony took an interim bail from the Court, but the DB police arrested him and he was sent to jail, when the Court issued a warrant of arrest by cancelling his bail order on July 24, 2013.<sup>29</sup>

### **Attacks on human rights defenders**

30. On July 27, 2013 a human rights defender associated with Odhikar and Nandail upazila correspondent of the daily Ittefaq, Shah Alam Bhuiyan was attacked by upazila unit Awami League's Relief and Social Welfare Affairs Secretary Mohammad Nazim Uddin for publishing news on gambling. He was attacked and his right hand broken at a market in Nandail Municipality. Later he was admitted to the Upazila Health Complex. On July 26, Shah Alam Bhuiyan was threatened by Awami League leader Mohammad Nazim Uddin through a mobile phone call. On the same day, Shah Alam filed a General Diary with Nandail Model Police Station. He informed Odhikar that he did not get any police security even after filing a complaint.<sup>30</sup>
31. Human rights defender and Convener of the Illegal Sand Lifting Prevention Committee at Sonargaon, Narayanganj, Shahed Kayes was stabbed after being abducted by criminals. On July 25, 2013 Shahed Kayes along with two others

---

<sup>26</sup> The Daily Ittefaq/Prothom Alo, 12/04/2013

<sup>27</sup> The Daily Ittefaq, 18/04/2013

<sup>28</sup> The daily Manabzamin, 21/07/2013

<sup>29</sup> The daily Jugantor, 25/07/2013

<sup>30</sup> Report from human rights defender, Wahiduzzaman associated with Odhikar from Mymensingh

were going to Ramprashader Chor by trawler on the river Meghna. During this time, Meghna upazila Jubo League activist Zakir Hossain; Awami League activist Mohsin Mia; resident of Sonargaon Noonertek area and former UP member Osman Gani, Zakir Mia and Hossain Mia came by on two speedboats and picked up Shahed Kayes. Shahed Kayes was taken 10 kilometers away to Farazikandi where he was beaten and attacked with knives on his left hand and neck. Hearing the noise, police of Meghna Police Station approached and the criminals escaped, taking Shahed's camera and cell phone. He informed Odhikar that criminals, with the help of Sonargaon Upazila unit Awami League leaders formed a group and were lifting sand illegally from the river beside Noonertek village. The criminals attacked him for protesting against this illegal act.<sup>31</sup> It is to be mentioned that on July 2, 2013 two unidentified men approached Shahed Kayes on motorcycles and threatened to kill him, while he was in the Khasnagar Dighirpar area. Shahed Kayes filed a General Diary at Sonargaon Police Station in this regard.<sup>32</sup>

32. Odhikar demands the arrest of the perpetrators who attack human rights defenders.

## **Killing continues through public lynching**

33. In July 2013, 12 people were allegedly killed due to public lynching/mob violence.
34. Many people are killed by mob violence in various places in the country. 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.

## **Situation of workers' rights**

35. 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. But the workers are neglected and discriminated by the factory owners as well as the government. Workers are often terminated without any valid reasons and the non-payment of wages is triggering unrest amongst RMG workers. The workers need to be brought under a synchronized security programmes and the infrastructure of the factories to be built systematically.
36. According to information gathered by Odhikar, in July 2013, 98 garment workers were injured during protests against termination of workers, closure of factories and demand for overdue wages and bonus.

---

<sup>31</sup> Report from human rights defender, Billal Hossain Robin associated with Odhikar from Narayanganj

<sup>32</sup> Report from human rights defender, Billal Hossain Robin associated with Odhikar from Narayanganj

## **Bangladesh Labour (Amendment) Act, 2013 passed in Parliament**

37. On July 15, 2013 the Bangladesh Labour (Amendment) Act 2013 was passed in Parliament. In the amended law a number of issues, including ILO Convention no. 87 relating to the right to freely organise meetings and assemblies and ILO Convention no. 98 relating to right to collective bargaining as per ILO standards have been approved. However, some important features of the Law were found to be below ILO standards. The amended law did not consider the workers and labourers working at EPZs, non-profit education and training institutions, hospitals, clinics and diagnosis centres, farmlands and households; ignoring their trade union rights, which violated the right to have trade unions. Furthermore, there is a complicated process to call strikes in place. Two-third votes of the unions would be necessary to call a strike. It was three-fourth in the earlier Law. Although some developments have been made as result of this amendment, if the government feels, that any strike might cause harm to the workers, they can stop it. The government can misuse this provision. Strikes are prohibited in any foreign investing institutions which are operational in three years. The foreign investors will be benefited due to this discriminatory section related to strikes. The amended law highlights the monitoring by a 'Participation Committee' and 'Safety Committee'. These two committees are formed with a combination of management and workers. Where there is no union in a factory, workers of that factory will directly elect their representatives for these two committees. However, it was not clear what role would be played by the said Committees. No changes were brought in the amended law for electing labour leaders according to workers' own choice. This law did not bring any positive change for the workers. The amended Law cuts off profit sharing and reduce the duration of maternity leave by two months for the workers of readymade garment factories. It also cancels 5% profit sharing of workers; in its place it includes a new clause having a welfare board and welfare fund. Workers fear that the owner will deprive them of their rights of getting a welfare fund. They fear losing the jobs as the law says that an employer can terminate a worker for any misconduct and the workers will not be able to receive any kind of benefits. The new Law does not specify any measures in order to prevent sexual harassment of female workers. As a result, the RMG workers have been deprived from their rights due to this newly amended law.<sup>33</sup>

---

<sup>33</sup> The daily New Age, 17/07/2013 and A Big Letdown, a cover story of the Star, a weekly publication of the Daily Star, Page-8, 26/07/2013

38. Odhikar believes that the new Law fastened the workers more tightly to protect the interest of the factory owners, which jeopardises the amendment of the Bangladesh Labour Law 2006. The Law passed by the Parliament through voice vote did not favour the factory workers regarding their rights to form trade unions and enjoy profit sharing, gratuity, maternity leave, job security and compensation. Odhikar demands the government amend the Labour Law immediately based on ILO standards.

## **Violence against Women**

39. Odhikar believes that violence against women increases when the perpetrators are not punished and potential violators are thus encouraged.

### **Rape**

40. In July 2013, a total number of 50 females were reportedly raped. Among them, 15 were women and 35 were children below the age of 17. Out of the 15 women, two were killed after being raped and five were victims of gang rape. Out of the 35 child victims, five children were killed after being raped and five were victims of gang rape.
41. On July 2, 2013 a female student of class ten was gang raped by Al-Amin, Faruk, Mottaleb and Labu at a house adjacent to her school at Aandharirjhar union under Bhurungamari upazila in Kurigram district. The perpetrators got bail from the High Court Division and threatened the victim's family to withdraw the case.<sup>34</sup>

### **Sexual harassment/stalking**

42. According to information gathered by Odhikar, a total of 25 girls and women were victims of sexual harassment in July 2013. Among them, one was killed, one committed suicide in shame, one was injured, one was a victim of attempted rape, one was assaulted and 20 were sexually harassed in various ways. During this period, two men were injured by stalkers when they protested against such acts of harassment.
43. On July 1, 2013 a 2<sup>nd</sup> year HSC student of Government KC College in Jhenaidah named Mousumi Biswas (17) was physically assaulted by Chhatra League leader Mithun at the college campus. As a consequence of this incident, Mousumi committed suicide on July 5, in shame.<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>34</sup> The daily Manabzamin, 20/07/2013

<sup>35</sup> The daily Manabzamin, 06/07/2013

### **Dowry-related violence**

44. In July 2013, a total of 18 women were subjected to dowry related violence. Of these women, it has been alleged that 12 women were killed because of dowry, three were physically abused for dowry demands and three women allegedly committed suicide.
45. On July 16, 2013 housewife and mother of a child, Shikha Begum (20) was beaten to death by her husband, Solaiman and his family over dowry demands in Bolaiorchor village under Sherpur district.<sup>36</sup>

### **Acid violence**

46. According to information gathered by Odhikar, in July 2013, it was reported that three women became victims of acid violence.
47. On July 19, 2013 at around 11.00 pm Amarat Hossain, Jasimuddin and Mubarak Hossain threw acid on a day-labourer Tara Mia and his wife Moriam due to a previous enmity, when they were returning home at Kushdi village under Kapashia upazila in Gazipur district. Different portions of Moriam's body, including her face were seriously burnt with acid. Police arrested the culprits in connection with this incident.<sup>37</sup>
48. Incidents of acid throwing are occurring due to the lack of implementation of the Acid Crimes Prevention Act 2002. Despite the obligation of completing cases under this Act by 90 days, it has never been implemented.

---

<sup>36</sup> The Daily Inqilab, 18/07/2013

<sup>37</sup> The daily Jugantor, 21/07/2013

Statistics: 1- 31 July 2013*									
Type of Human Rights Violation		January	February	March	April	May	June	July	Total
Extrajudicial killings	Crossfire	5	7	5	5	4	5	9	<b>40</b>
	Torture to death	0	1	0	0	3	2	0	<b>6</b>
	Shot to death	2	72	47	2	18	1	0	<b>142</b>
	Beaten to death	2	1	0	0	0	1	0	<b>4</b>
	Strangled to death	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
	Total	9	81	52	8	25	9	9	<b>193</b>
Torture (Alive)		4	3	3	2	0	0	2	<b>14</b>
Disappearances		2	1	1	8	0	2	0	<b>14</b>
Human rights violations by Indian BSF	Bangladeshis Killed	5	1	2	1	3	3	3	<b>18</b>
	Bangladeshis Injured	16	7	6	4	10	10	3	<b>56</b>
	Bangladeshis Abducted	12	3	16	12	10	7	12	<b>72</b>
Deaths in Jail		3	6	6	2	12	3	7	<b>39</b>
Attack on journalists	Killed	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
	Injured	20	18	21	17	13	5	9	<b>103</b>
	Threatened	2	3	7	9	0	3	0	<b>24</b>
	Attacked	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	<b>7</b>
	Assaulted	1	5	4	20	0	0	0	<b>30</b>
Political violence	Killed	18	86	76	26	107	9	31	<b>353</b>
	Injured	1643	2772	3055	1450	948	862	1253	<b>11983</b>
Acid violence		5	3	2	4	1	3	3	<b>21</b>
Dowry related violence (including women victims, their children and relatives)		37	42	54	64	46	53	18	<b>314</b>
Rape		109	93	115	111	43	78	50	<b>599</b>
Sexual harassment /Stalking of women		44	31	51	46	11	33	25	<b>241</b>
Section 144 of Cr.PC		9	10	4	2	0	2	2	<b>29</b>
Public lynching		17	8	10	6	9	11	12	<b>73</b>
RMG Workers	Killed	8	0	0	1129	1	1	0	<b>1139</b>
	Injured	235	178	75	2683	361	267	98	<b>3897</b>

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

## Recommendations

1. The Government must take legal action against its party activists, who are involved in criminal activities, in order to stop criminalisation 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.
2. Political programmes should not be obstructed. The Government should refrain from exercising unconstitutional, undemocratic and repressive activities.
3. The Government should take stern legal action against the RAB members who were involved in shooting to Limon. The Government must ensure the

accountability of law enforcement agencies and also take action to put an end to their impunity.

4. The Government should immediately form a neutral Investigation Commission headed by a retired Judge of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh, after having discussion with human rights organisations, which are working on human rights violations to independently investigate the violence on the Hefazate Islam assembly on May 5 and 6, 2013.
5. Incidents of attacks on journalists must be properly investigated and perpetrators of such acts must be brought to justice. Interference on the media must be stopped. The Government should withdraw the ban on the daily Amar Desh, Diganta TV and Islamic TV.
6. 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.
7. Human rights violations against RMG workers should be stopped; and their demands for their well being must be reviewed.
8. The Labour Law must be amended immediately as per ILO standards.
9. The Government must ensure proper trial and punishment of perpetrators of violence against women, under the purview of the law, to ensure that justice is served. The Government should also execute mass awareness programmes, broadly including the media in order to eliminate violence against women.

**Tel: +88-02-9888587, Fax: +88-02-9886208**  
**Email: [odhikar.bd@gmail.com](mailto:odhikar.bd@gmail.com), [odhikar.documentation@gmail.com](mailto:odhikar.documentation@gmail.com)**  
**Website: [www.odhikar.org](http://www.odhikar.org)**

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