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Human Rights Monitoring Report

January 1 – 31, 2014

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Odhikar believes that 'democracy' is a form of the State and presupposes that freedom and human rights are its foundations. Democracy is not merely a process of electing a ruler. Democracy is the result of the peoples' struggle for inalienable rights, which become the fundamental premise to constitute the State defining 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. In recent times, Odhikar's human rights defenders have been persecuted for their work and beliefs. However, this has only strengthened the organisation's resolve to fight for human rights, with no discrimination whatsoever.

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, Odhikar prepares and releases monthly situation reports. The Organisation has released human rights monitoring report for January 2014 despite facing harassment and threats to its existence. However, it did not publish the report on its website in protest of the harassment and persecution by the government, who are using the repressive Information and Communication Technology Act, 2006 (amended in 2009 and 2013)¹ to challenge dissent and criticism.

Political violence over the 5th January Parliamentary elections

1. The controversial 10th Parliamentary Elections were held on January 5, 2014. Most of the political parties, which are registered with the Election Commission, including the main Opposition, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) led 18-Party Alliance, did not participate in the elections. The Opposition alliance called for boycotting and resisting these elections. As a result of this boycott, 153 candidates from the ruling Awami League and its alliance were elected uncontested out of the 300 constituencies even before the elections were held; which is an unprecedented incident in a democratic electoral system. Of these constituencies, Awami League got 127 seats; Jatiya Party got 20 seats; Jatiya Somajtantrik Dal got three seats; Worker's Party of

¹ Section 57 of the ICT Act: (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 for a term of minimum of seven years' imprisonment and a maximum of 14 years or a fine of Taka one crore or both.

Bangladesh got two seats; and Jatiyo Party (Monju) got one seat. Later elections took place in 147 constituencies on January 5. Across the country, a total of 40,802,739 voters out of 91,948,861 voters could not cast their vote, as the candidates for the 153 constituencies, to which they belong, were declared elected unopposed.²

2. According to information from the Election Commission, 40.56 percent voters casted their votes. Very low turnouts were reported by various media and election observers. For instance, Fair Elections Monitoring Alliance (FEMA) reported the voter turnout was 10 percent till 2:00 pm on Election Day and after the polling ended, it stated that the voter turnout was 14 percent.³ Meanwhile, the daily New Age reported that in most of the polling centres, the turnout was in the range of 10-12 percent, according to generous estimates and the Daily Star reported a 20 percent turnout.⁴
3. Allegations of large-scale rigging were made by the unelected candidates. During the poll, candidates both from political parties and independent ones, boycotted elections in at least 30 constituencies in protest of vote rigging.⁵ They organised press conferences and submitted written complaints to the Election Commission. At the same time, many allegations regarding fake votes were found in different polling centres. Furthermore, not a single vote was casted in 38 polling centres across the country, as recorded by media.⁶ In many polling centres, very few voters were present. Odhikar refrained from directly observing elections due to the non participation of all political parties. However, Odhikar gathered primary and secondary level information on elections through its human rights defenders across the country and from the people working with different media.
4. Political violence started long before the 10th Parliamentary elections on January 5, as the Opposition alliance demanded that the elections not be held. The BNP led 18-Party Alliance announced continuous blockades and hartals soon after the declaration of Election Schedule on November 25, 2013. Incidents of injuries and deaths took place due to arson and petrol bomb attacks on public transport during this period. Odhikar documentation shows that from November 25, 2013 to January 10, 2014, 21 persons died and 65 were injured in arson and petrol bomb attacks. Many ordinary people became victims of arbitrary arrest during the special operation conducted by Joint Forces across the country, before and after the polls. Incidents of violence in many polling centres started the night before elections. During this time, several polling centres were set on fire. The Election Commission had to

² The daily Manab Kantha, 08/01/2014 and Bangladesh Election Commission, <http://www.ecs.gov.bd/English/index.php>

³ The daily New Age, 10/01/2014

⁴ The daily New Age, 07/01/2014 and the Daily Star 06/01/2014

⁵ The daily Samakal, 06/01/2014

⁶ The daily Manabzamin, 06/01/2014

suspend polling at 392 centers in eight constituencies across the country, due to nonstop violence.⁷ Some incidents of election related violence are as follows:

5. On January 4, 2014, Jobaitul Huq (55), the Assistant Presiding Officer of Molani Chheprikura Government Primary School polling centre, died in Thakurgaon Sadar Hospital after being attacked by anti election protesters.⁸
6. On January 5, 2014 some criminals led by Ashik Al Shams, son of the then State Minister for Home Affairs, Shamsul Huq Tuku and his APS Anisuzzaman stamped 475 ballot papers in Ebtedaye Madrassa polling centre and 238 ballot papers in Shahidnagar Government High School under Pabna-1 (Beda-Sathiya) constituency. The Presiding Officers of the two polling centres, Atiqur Rahman and Shakhawat Hossain filed written complaints to the Upazila Nirbahi Officer in this regard.⁹
7. Candidates of 30 constituencies boycotted elections by bringing allegations of vote rigging against the government supported candidates. The constituencies were: Laxmipur-4, Jamalpur-1, Jamalpur-2, Sirajganj-5, Dhaka-15, Barisal-2, Narayanganj-1, Dhaka-6, Jhenaidah-1, Feni-3, Dhaka-5, Lalmonirhat-1, Mymensingh-11, Gaibandha-4, Cox's Bazaar-4, Bogra-2, Sherpur-2, Sherpur-3, Brahmanbaria-5, Noakhali-6, Manikganj-1, Patuakhali-1, Barisal-3, Khulna-2, Khulna-3, Munshiganj-1, Munshigabj-2, Barguna-1, Barguna-2 and Brahmanbaria-3.¹⁰
8. Due to violence, the Election Commission shut down the following polling centres: 84 centres in Rangpur, 129 centres in Gaibandha, 9 centres in Nilphamari, 45 centres in Dinajpur, 100 centres in Bogra, 3 centres in Habiganj, 21 centres in Laxmipur, 2 centres in Chittagong, 19 centres in Thakurgaon, 15 centres in Comilla, 4 centres in Jamalpur, 65 centres in Jessore, 1 centre in Feni, and 3 polling centres in Jhenaidah.¹¹
9. At around 6.00 am on the Election Day, a group of criminals threw petrol bombs and cocktails in Garozaripa Government Primary School polling centre under Sherpur-3 (Shreebardi-Jhenaigati) constituency. As a result, many important documents, including ballot papers, were burnt. Later polling in this centre was suspended. Two polling officers, Kalpana and Hira Nasrin were injured by crude bombs at around 10:00 am in Bagrakosa Sherpur High School polling centre. At around 2:30 pm, BNP supporters took away six ballot boxes with ballot papers from Digharpar Government Primary School centre. Later, polling at this centre was suspended. Activists of BNP and Jamaat attacked Palpara and Sahapur polling centres under Tangail-2

⁷ The Daily Ittefaq, 16/01/2014

⁸ The daily Prothom Alo, Bangla News and Shirsho News online version, 06/01/2014

⁹ The online versions of the daily Prothom Alo and Manabzamin, 05/01/2014

¹⁰ The daily Manabzamin, 06/01/2014 and online version the daily Amar Desh, 06/01/2014

¹¹ The daily Manabzamin, 06/01/2014

(Gopalpur-Bhuapur) constituency at around 11:00 am on election day. The attackers ran away when police fired blank shots. At least five voters were wounded.¹²

10. The candidates alleged that Awami League candidates 'took over' 96 polling centres in three constituencies under Haboganj and cast fake votes. Among the polling centres 'hijacked' 25 were in Habiganj-3, 41 in Habiganj-2 and 30 centres were in Habiganj-4 constituency. Voting was recorded in Raipur Primary School centre under Meherpur Sadar Upazila even after the specified polling time of 4:00 pm. The Presiding Officer of this polling centre, Jahangir Alam admitted this.¹³
11. A group of criminals snatched away ballot boxes at around 2:00 pm from Chor Bhurungamari Government Primary School polling centre under Kurigram-1 constituency. The Assistant Presiding Officer, Swapon Kumar was injured during this attack. Eight activists of BNP and Jamaat were shot during a clash with police at Ramnagar Government Primary School polling centre under Manda Upazila of Naogaon-4 constituency. Among the injured persons, a Jubo Dal activist named Babul Hossain (28) died.¹⁴
12. In January 2014, according to information gathered by Odhikar, 53¹⁵ persons were killed and 1472 injured in political violence. Among the 53, 39 persons were allegedly killed by violence which took place in some polling centres, as the Opposition alliance called hartal and blockade programmes protesting the elections either due to clashes with police, Awami League and the 18-Party Alliance or had died in petrol bomb attacks.
13. 20 incidents of internal violence in the Awami League and one in the BNP was also recorded during this period. In addition to this, two persons were killed and 224 were injured in internal conflicts of the Awami League while 15 were injured in BNP's internal conflicts.

Unguarded: attacks on vulnerable communities before and after elections

14. After the January 5 elections, incidents of attacks on citizens belonging to religious minority communities occurred across the country allegedly because

¹² The daily Prothom Alo, 06/01/2014

¹³ The daily Prothom Alo, 06/01/2014

¹⁴ Report sent by human rights defender associated with Odhikar from Kurigram, 06/01/2014

¹⁵ Among the 53 persons, 14 were shot to death by police in political violence, which is described in the Extrajudicial Killings section of this report.

they went to the polls. Houses, shops and business offices and places of worship were attacked.¹⁶ Some incidents are given below:

15. On January 5, 2014 supporters of the BNP-led 18-Party Alliance ransacked and set fire to at least 150 houses and shops belonging to Hindu citizens at Kornai village of Chehelgazi union in Dinajpur. Victims alleged that the local UP member Nazir Ahmed; Akbar Ali of Dumurtoli; Mahbulul Alam of Katapara; Sahabul Alam of Mohadebpur; Abul Kana of Bokripara; Nuhu Mia of Kornai village led the attack. All of them were supporters of BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami. Moreover, before election day, BNP and Jamaat activists threatened the citizens belonging to religious minority communities not to go to the polling stations.¹⁷
16. On January 5, at least 40 families from the Hindu community were affected in post election violence in Malopara village under Abhoynagar upazila in Jessore district. In retaliation, four houses were attacked in an area inhabited by Muslims at Chapatola village adjacent to Malopara on January 6. At least seven persons from both sides were injured in these incidents. On December 27, 2013 Awami League leader and Whip of the 9th Parliament, Abdul Ohab, who was not nominated by the Awami League for the 10 Parliamentary elections; threatened religious minority groups in a public meeting at Sundaly Primary School field to vote for him as an independent candidate. Odhikar's fact finding reveals that 202 vote were casted out of 400 votes in specified booths under Champatola Madrassa polling centre in Malopara. Among them, Awami League candidate Ranjeet Roy got 132 votes with the symbol 'Boat' while Abdul Ohab got 70 votes with the symbol 'Kolosh'¹⁸. Supporters of Abdul Ohab expressed their anger against citizens belonging to the religious (Hindu) minority at Champatola Madrassa area. At around 10.00 am, four Hindu citizens were beaten by supporters of the 18-Party Alliance while on their way to the polling centre at Pukurkanda in Malopara. At around 4.00 pm, tension spread between both sides over the incident that took place in the morning when inhabitants of Champatola were returning via Malopara. A rumour was spread that two Muslims were killed by Hindus. On this rumour, supporters of the 18-Party Alliance carried out the attack at Malopara. The Alliance had control over the area 'Champatola' and Awami League controlled the area 'Chengutia Bazaar'. Before this attack, more than one hundred outsiders gathered at Chengutia Shalbon by five Nosimon¹⁹ vehicles. During this attack, at least 43 houses of citizens belonging to the minority community were vandalized. The next day, on the night of January

¹⁶ It has been seen since the independence of Bangladesh that after every elections the religious minority communities have been deliberately targeted for political and financial benefits. Awami League, BNP, Jamaat and Jatiya Party - all are allegedly involved in this attack.

¹⁷ The daily Prothom Alo, 07/01/2014

¹⁸ A Kolosh or Kolshi is a large water pot usually made of clay.

¹⁹ Nosimon: local transport in South Eastern part of Bangladesh

- 6, four houses belonging to Muslim families were vandalized and looted in the presence of police.²⁰
17. On January 7, 2014 a group of criminals attacked some Christian families at Bhagra in Shreepur union under Jamalpur district. 15 persons were injured in this attack. The victims claimed that they were attacked by men who opposed the elections and because they voted for 'Boat'.²¹
 18. Odhikar condemns this practice of attacking socially, economically and politically vulnerable groups belonging to Hindu, Christians or other religious and cultural minorities by local thugs and power elites, during every pre and post election period. Despite the known areas of vulnerable localities where such violence could take place, the apathy of the government and the administration is the single most worrying issue for human rights defenders concerned about the safety and security of these communities. Such incidents happen repeatedly due to the failure of arrest and punishment of perpetrators. The systematic politicisation of these incidents and the ensuing blame game makes the situation more vulnerable. Odhikar strongly demands that criminals committing such crimes must be arrested and brought to justice, regardless of political affinity.
 19. Odhikar expresses its grievances over such heinous attacks and also condemns the failure of the government to protect life and livelihood and places of worship belonging to religious minority communities.

On an average one person killed extra judicially everyday

20. In January 2014, according to information gathered by Odhikar, 39 persons were killed extrajudicially by law enforcement agencies. These killings were allegedly conducted by RAB, Police, BGB and Joint Forces.
21. There are allegations of extrajudicial killings of activists and leaders of the Opposition, during countrywide operations carried out by Joint Forces, after the Parliamentary elections of January 5, 2014. According to information gathered by Odhikar, a total of 11 persons were extra judicially killed from 5 to 31 January 2014 by Joint Forces. Among them, three were activists of BNP, seven were activists of Jamaat-e-Islami and one was an alleged criminal. Some incidents are as follows:
22. On January 27, 2014, Vice-President of Tala upazila unit Chhatra Dal²², Azharul Islam (28) was shot dead by joint forces in Satkhira. On January 26, Azharul Islam was arrested by members of the joint forces from a shrimp

²⁰ Fact finding report of Odhikar, 10-12/01/2014

²¹ The daily Prothom Alo, 09/01/2014

²² Chhatra Dal is the student wing of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)

factory at Ghona. The wife of Azharul Islam, Kamini Parvin Chompa said, she with her mother-in-law and son waited at Tala Police Station till 12.00 at night, after her husband was arrested. At around midnight they were forced to leave the police station gate. A few moments later 7/8 police vehicles arrived in front of the station and took her husband away. The next morning she learnt that her husband was shot dead sometime between midnight and in the early hours of 27 January, at the Magura Kheyaghat area.²³

23. On January 20, 2014 police recovered the body of Chhatra Dal leader Atiqur Rahman (26) from Nariadanga bypass road under Syedpur upazila in Nilphamari district. He was one of the accused in a case of an attack on the motorcade²⁴ of the then Member of Parliament (currently Minister for Cultural Affairs) Asaduzzaman Noor on December 14, 2013 at Ramganj Bazaar in Nilphamari. Atiqur's elder brother, Aminul Islam said that Atiqur was in hiding since the incident of attack on Noor's motorcade. He came to know that Atiqur and Mohidul (26) were arrested by Detective Branch Police on January 13, 2014 at night, from a house adjacent to Shafia Girls School under Deldwar upazila in Tangail. After his arrest, his family went to police stations and other places looking for him.²⁵ Two days before that incident, on January 18, the body of Golam Rabbani, another accused person involved in the attack on Asaduzzaman Noor's motorcade; and Laxmichap union unit BNPs Organising Secretary was recovered by Nilphamari police. The family of Golam Rabbani alleged that RAB arrested Rabbani from one of his relative's house. Some days later his body was found.²⁶
24. On January 19 at midnight Assistant Secretary of Meherpur district unit Jamaat-e-Islami, Mohammad Saiful Islam (35) was shot dead by joint forces. On that day at around 3.00 pm DB police and a team of police of Meherpur Sadar Police Station arrested him from the Islami Bank Bhaban at Meherpur town.²⁷

Types of extrajudicial deaths

Crossfire/encounter/gun fight:

25. Among the 39 persons extrajudicially killed, 20 were killed in 'crossfire/encounters/ gun fights'. Among the deceased, two were allegedly killed by the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), 10 by the police and eight by Joint Forces.

²³ The daily Manabzamin, 28/01/2014

²⁴ On December 14, 2013, motorcade of the then Member of Parliament Asaduzzaman Noor was stuck near Ramganj bridge in Nilphamari when Jamaat-Shibir activists cut off the roads. A clash between police, Awami League and Jamaat-Shibir took place during that time. Four Awami League activists and one Jamaat activist were killed during the clash.

²⁵ The daily Prothom Alo, 21/01/2014

²⁶ The daily Prothom Alo, 21/01/2014

²⁷ The daily Manabzamin, 21/01/2014

Shot to death:

26. Among the deceased, 18 persons were shot and killed during this period. Of them 12 were shot by police, three by joint forces, two by RAB and one by BGB.

Beaten to death:

27. Among the deceased, one was beaten to death by BGB.

Identities of the deceased

28. Of the 39 persons who were killed extrajudicially, 11 were alleged leaders and activists of the BNP and its associate organisations, 15 were leaders and activists of Jamaat-Shibir, one was an activist of Jatiya Ganatantrik Party, one was from the Purbo Banglar Communist Party (ML), 10 were alleged criminals and one person's profession could not be determined.

Freedom of speech and expression and the media

29. In January 2014, according to information gathered by Odhikar, two journalists were injured, one was threatened and four journalists were arrested.

30. On January 16, 2014 the printing press of the daily Inqilab at Ram Krishna Mission Road in Dhaka was sealed after a search by police. During this operation, News Editor Rabiullah Rabi, Deputy Chief Reporter Rafique Mohammad and Diplomatic Correspondent Atiqur Rahman were arrested. Furthermore, two computers and some documents were also seized and the server room and plate room were sealed by police. A report titled 'Indian force assists operation by Joint Forces in Satkhira' was published on January 16, in the daily Inqilab. Due to this report, a case was filed with Wari Police Station against the Editor, Publisher and Chief News Editor of the newspaper under the Information and Communication Technology Act 2006 (Amendment 2013) and under the Penal Code.²⁸

31. The Awami League led Government closed down the electronic and print media owned by pro-opposition supporters/members such as Channel 1, Diganta TV, Islamic TV and the daily Amar Desh. The Acting Editor of Amar Desh, Mahmudur Rahman has been detained in Kashimpur Central Jail-2 since April 11, 2013 and he has been charged under the Information and Communication Technology Act 2006 (Amendment 2009).²⁹ The latest attack

²⁸ The daily Manabzamin, 17/01/2014

²⁹ The daily Prothom Alo, 26/11/2013

on freedom of speech is the closing down of the daily Inqilab after arresting its journalists.

32. Odhikar believes that wide scope has been created to violate freedom of speech, expression and media under the Information and Communication Technology Act, 2006 (amended in 2009 and 2013), which is violating a democratic process. The government is putting journalists, human rights defenders and citizens who have alternative beliefs, behind bars by arresting them under this Act - which was made even more repressive after amendments in August 2013.

Human rights violations in border areas by BSF continues

33. Odhikar notes with mounting concern that very little is being done about the continuous acts of violence, death and terror perpetrated by the BSF on Bangladeshi citizens along the Bangladesh-India border. Odhikar questions the Bangladeshi Governments' stance in allowing its citizens to be violated by foreign entities in peaceful times. These violations have been occurring for a very long time and no government in power has done anything to strengthen the Bangladesh border. Nor has any initiative been taken by the other side to court BSF atrocities. Some incidents of border violence recorded by Odhikar are as follows:
 34. On January 2, 2014 at night, a Bangladeshi cattle trader, Abdul Ohad Mia (45) was chased by inhabitants along the Mathabhanga border of Koch Bihar under West Bengal in India, from International Main Pillar 872 at Dhabolguri border under Patgram upazila in Lalmonirhat district. Later he was handed over to BSF and beaten to death by BSF and Indian citizens.³⁰
 35. According to information, in January 2014, one Bangladeshi was tortured to death by BSF. Furthermore, four Bangladeshis were injured and 13 were allegedly abducted by the BSF.
 36. 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 noticed that India has been repeatedly violating treaties, 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.
 37. Odhikar believes that the role of the Bangladesh Government should be independent and sovereign in order to protect its citizens. No independent

³⁰ Report sent by human rights defender associated with Odhikar from Lalmonirhat, 03/01/2014

and sovereign state can ever accept the indiscriminate killing, torture and abduction of its citizens by another state without reason.

Public lynching continues

38. The lack of respect for law, distrust of the police and instability in the country has increased the fear and insecurity among people, who have resorted to taking the law into their own hands.
39. In January 2014, 16 people were reportedly killed due to public lynching by mobs.
40. Odhikar believes that due to the weak criminal justice system, the tendency to resort to public lynching is increasing, as people are losing their confidence and faith in the police and judiciary.

Situation of ready-made garment workers

41. According to information gathered by Odhikar, in January 2014, 60 workers were injured and 20 were terminated during workers' unrest. Most of the incidents occurred over demands for overdue wages and increase of wages fixed by the wage board.
42. On January 4, 2014, at least 20 persons were injured in a clash between police and garment factory workers over protests demanding increased wages, in two RMG factories named Section Seven Ltd and Section Seven Apparels Ltd in Chittagong EPZ. Workers alleged that wages were supposed to be given under a new salary structure from December 2013. The factory authorities also obtained additional work from workers on the pretext of increasing their wages. Despite this, wages were not increased and the factory authorities could not give a proper explanation for this. As a result, angry workers gathered outside the factories. During this time, the authority closed the main gates of the factories, which caused the infuriated workers to vandalize the area.³¹

Violence against women

43. A significant number of women were the victims of rape, dowry violence and sexual harassment in January 2014. Odhikar believes that since the perpetrators are spared punishment due to various reasons, potential violators are encouraged. It is important to effectively and adequately implement the law to stop such violence.

³¹ The daily Prothom Alo, 05/01/2014

Dowry-related violence

44. In January 2014, Odhikar recorded that 12 women were subjected to dowry violence. Of these women, it has been alleged that seven women were killed because of dowry and five were abused in various ways over dowry demands.

Rape

45. In January 2014, Odhikar recorded a total number of 32 females who were raped. Among them, 11 were women, 19 were children below the age of 16 and the age of two persons could not be determined. Of the women, two were killed after being raped; three were victims of gang rape. Out of the 19 child victims, one child was killed after being raped; one was a victim of gang rape. Furthermore, four women and a girl were victims of attempted rape. Among the four victims one woman was killed during attempted rape.

Sexual harassment and stalking

46. According to information gathered by Odhikar, a total of 13 girls and women were victims of sexual harassment in January 2014. Among them, one girl committed suicide. Moreover, one girl was injured by stalkers, one was assaulted and 10 were sexually harassed in various ways. Five men were injured by the stalkers or by family members of the stalkers, for protesting such acts.

Statistics: January 2014*			
Type of Human Rights Violation		January	Total
Extrajudicial killings	Crossfire	20	20
	Shot to death	18	18
	Beaten to death	1	1
	Total	39	39
Human rights violations by Indian BSF	Bangladeshis Killed	1	1
	Bangladeshis Injured	4	4
	Bangladeshis Abducted	13	13
Attack on journalists	Injured	2	2
	Threatened	1	1
	Arrested	4	4
Political violence	Killed	53	53
	Injured	1472	1472
Dowry related violence (including women victims, their children and relatives)		12	12
Rape		32	32
Sexual harassment /Stalking of women		13	13
Public lynching		16	16
RMG Workers	Killed	0	0
	Injured	60	60

Odhikar's documentation

Among the 18 persons, 14 were shot to death by police, who are also included in the political violence part.

Recommendations

1. The democratic crisis created through a disputed election on January 5, 2014, must be resolved immediately through dialogue. It is very important to ensure a free, fair and credible election through the participation of all political parties, in order to ensure smooth transition of power through a democratic process. The Government has to take the initiative in this regard. The current political crisis has already caused massive human rights violations.
2. The Government should take all measures to protect the rights of religious and ethnic minority communities and ensure their security. Perpetrators of attacks on the religious minority groups must be brought to justice.

3. The Government must stop extrajudicial killings and also bring perpetrators to justice, through proper and independent investigation. The Judiciary and judicial process must be respected and strengthened.
4. The Government must withdraw the ban on TV channels and newspapers belonging to the Opposition, in order to enhance democratic practices and allow freedom of speech and expression as guaranteed by the Constitution. Criticism of the Government in the manner in which it carries out its activities should be taken as constructive criticism and a way to enhance its service to the people.
5. The repressive Information and Communication Technology Act 2006 (Amended in 2009 and 2013) should immediately be repealed.
6. Infrastructural problems in RMG factories, security and health and safety measures for workers in the workplace need to be ensured. Wages and bonus should be adequate and given to garment factory workers on time. RMG factories need to be brought under synchronized security programmes.
7. The Government should protest strongly against human rights violations on Bangladeshi citizens by the BSF through investigation; and take initiative to make the Indian Government accountable and pay adequate compensation to the families of the victims. The Government should also ensure the safety and security of the Bangladeshi citizens residing at the border areas.
8. The Government must ensure the implementation of laws appropriately to stop violence against women and the offenders must be brought to justice, instead of being protected for their heinous crime. The Government should also execute mass awareness programmes in order to eliminate violence against women.

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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, with assistance from trained local human rights defenders.
4. Odhikar is consistent in its human rights reporting and is committed to remain so.