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Human Rights Monitoring Report

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Unstable political situation

Extrajudicial killings

Torture

Allegations of enforced disappearance

Abuses of rights of the religious minority community

Violations to freedom of expression and assembly

Human rights violations by the BSF along the border

Inhuman and cruel treatment against children

Public lynching

Violence against women

Activities of Odhikar hindered

Odhikar believes that 'democracy' is a form of the State and that freedom and human rights are its foundations. Democracy is not merely a process of electing a ruler; it is the result of the peoples' struggle for inalienable rights, which become the fundamental premise to constitute the State. 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 State's failure to recognise this basis of democracy at the founding moment, is a continuing curse that people in Bangladesh 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 willingness, commitment and capacity to ensure human rights, dignity and

integrity of citizens. If the state does not ensure full participation in the decision making process at all levels – from the lowest level of the administration to the highest level – it cannot be called a ‘democratic’ state. Citizens realise their rights and responsibilities through participation and decision making processes. The awareness about the rights of others and collective benefits and responsibilities, can be ensured and implemented through this process as well. There is no alternative. The Parliament, Judiciary and Executive cannot and should not, have any power to abrogate fundamental civil and political rights through any legislation, Judicial verdict or Executive order, as such rights are inviolable and are the foundational principles of the State.

Odhikar, being an organisation of human rights defenders in Bangladesh, has been struggling to ensure internationally recognised civil and political rights of citizens. Odhikar stands against all forms of human rights violations; and participates and remains directly involved in the human rights movement in Bangladesh. The dimension of constituting a democratic state has been achieved through historical movements and the universality of these civil and political rights has been established worldwide through various international declarations, conventions and treaties.

Thus Odhikar does not believe that the human rights movement merely endeavours to protect the ‘individual’ from violations perpetrated by the state; rather, it believes that the movement to establish the rights and dignity of every individual is part of the struggle to constitute Bangladesh as a democratic state. As part of its mission, Odhikar monitors the human rights situation in order to promote and protect civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of Bangladeshi citizens and to report violations and defend the victims. In line with this campaign, Odhikar prepares and releases human rights status reports every month. The Organisation has released the human rights monitoring report for August 2015, despite facing persecution and continuous harassment and threats to its existence since August 10, 2013.

Unstable political situation and human rights violations

1. The Awami League led government returned to power for a consecutive second term through controversial elections held on January 5, 2014 due to a boycott by almost all opposition political parties. The current government has become very repressive as there is no proper representation of or accountability to the people. Criminalization of Chhatra League¹ and Jubo

¹ Student wing of Awami League.

League² and repression against leaders and activists of opposition parties continue in order to appoint government supporters into government jobs; to make partisan various important government institutions; and to suspend the liberty of the constitutional bodies. It was easy for the government to conduct a unilateral and controversial election through the enactment and imposition of various repressive laws; and by putting up barriers to the meetings and assemblies of the opposition. The Parliamentary Opposition, made up of the Jatiya Party, is very weak – made even more so due to the fact that some of its members have been appointed as Ministers in the present government. The political situation is at a crisis in absence of an accountable government. As in previous months, several incidents of internal clashes took place between the activists of Chhatra League and Jubo League, which resulted in a number of casualties. Chhatra League and Jubo League activists were seen to use firearms openly. Furthermore, human rights abuses continue by the state security forces. Incidents of enforced disappearance, extrajudicial killings and violations to freedom of expression continue. As a result of these violations, adverse and long-lasting impacts to society have evolved. Society has become defensive and violent and incidents of violence against women and children and public lynching are taking place.

2. According to information gathered by Odhikar, in August 2015, 13 persons were killed and 420 were injured in political violence. 31 incidents of internal violence in the Awami League were recorded during this period. In addition to this, four persons were killed and 321 were injured in internal conflicts of the Awami League. Two incidents are given below to highlight the situation:
3. On August 15, 2015 a youth named Sabuj (24) was killed in a violent altercation between supporters of District unit Swechchasebak League³ and supporters of Mominur Rahman, a suspended General Secretary of District unit Awami League, over a programme on the National Mourning Day in Kushtia. It was learnt that the deceased Sabuj was a supporter of Mominur Rahman. A violent altercation took place when rallies of the two rival factions faced one another at around 12:15 pm, on August 15 in the Rail Gate area of the town, while paying tribute to the founding President of Bangladesh, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.⁴
4. On August 16, 2015 at least 40 students and two teachers were injured when Jubo League activists attacked them in Bhuiyara High School under Kochua Upazila in Chandpur, over collecting donations for National Mourning Day. In the night of August 14, some Jubo League activists, including Monir Proddhan, Liton and Faruque went to Bhuiyara High School and demanded

² Youth Wing of Awami League.

³ Voluntary wing of Awami League

⁴ The daily Prothom Alo, 16/08/2015

from the Head Teacher that 15 thousand taka had to be given from the money which had arrived for female student scholarships. Jubo League activists assaulted Head Teacher Dulal Chandra Sarkar at noon on August 15 as the money was not given to them. Another teacher of this school, Fazlur Rahman was beaten by Jubo League activists when he protested. In the morning of August 16, when the incident was made public, students of that school formed a human chain in protest. At that time, around 15 to 16 Jubo League activists attacked the students with sticks and injured at least 40 of them. 22 of them were female students.⁵

5. Odhikar believes that the present government has led the country towards a volatile situation by repealing the Constitutional provision of conducting Parliamentary elections under a non-partisan caretaker government, through the 15th Amendment to the Constitution. As a result, many irregularities and violence occurred during the controversial 10th Parliamentary elections on January 5, 2014; during the Upazila elections in 2014; and the City Corporations elections in 2015. These have all led to the deterioration of the law and order situation. Odhikar demands an impartial election with the participation of all political parties, under a neutral government or under the supervision of the United Nations in order to make a democratic and accountable government.

Extrajudicial killings

6. According to information gathered by Odhikar, in August 2015, a total of 19 persons were killed in alleged 'crossfire/encounters/gun fights'. Of them five were killed by RAB and 14 were killed by the police.

Identities of the deceased persons

7. Of the 19 persons who were killed extra-judicially, four were leaders and activists of the Awami League and 15 were alleged criminals.
8. Extrajudicial killings continue despite several protests from human rights organisations, civil society and opposition political parties; and even from some members of the ruling party. The law and justice delivery system of the country is becoming increasingly questionable due to the persistence of extrajudicial killings. Incidents of such killings were claimed as 'gunfight' or 'crossfire'⁶ by RAB and police, however, the families of the victims alleged

⁵ The daily Naya Diganta, 17/08/2015

⁶ On November 15, 2009 a Bench of the High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh, issued a *suo moto* Rule on the government regarding the deaths of two brothers, Lutfar Khalashi and Khairul Khalashi in 'crossfire' in Madaripur. In the Rule the Court asked the government to show why the killings of the two brothers in 'crossfire' would not be declared illegal. On December 14, 2009 the State (Attorney General) appealed for time during the hearing to the same High Court Division Bench. The Court ordered that the practice of 'cross fire' be stopped until the hearing of the case is completed.

that their relatives were shot dead after being arrested and taken away by members of law enforcement agencies. Impunity of the law enforcement agencies in relation to extrajudicial killings freely exists despite repeated demands to bring the perpetrators to justice. The ruling party Awami League articulated strong opinions against extrajudicial killings during the 9th Parliamentary Elections on December 29, 2008. Its reflection was seen during the reviewing of the human rights record of Bangladesh, under the Universal Periodic Review Session on February 3, 2009 at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva. There the then Foreign Minister of Bangladesh, Dr. Dipu Moni said that the Awami League government has 'zero tolerance' regarding extrajudicial killings. On February 11, 2009 the Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina said, "Those who were involved in extrajudicial killings will be brought to justice".⁷ However, 1066 people were reported killed extra judicially⁸ from January 2009 to August 2015.

9. Generally, the victims of extrajudicial killings are the leaders and activists of opposition political parties and or alleged criminals. However, in August 2015, some leaders and activists belonging to the Student and Youth wings of the ruling party became victims of extrajudicial killings. The incidents of extrajudicial killings were noted even by the highest Court of the land and it issued several Rules on the matter. However, extrajudicial killings continue. Some incidents are as follows:
10. In the night of August 2, 2015 a man named Abdus Salam was killed in 'gunfight' with police in the Kafrul area of the Dhaka Metropolitan City. Police claimed that Abdus Salam was killed in a gunfight with police when he was preparing to commit a robbery. However, the mother of the deceased, Rowshan Ara said that at midnight on August 2, police conducted an operation in a slum at Bhashantek area and shot Abdus Salam dead and took his body away. At the same time Abdus Salam's wife Rubina and their infant daughter Samiha were also taken by police.⁹
11. On August 9, 2015 six men named Ansar Sana (55), Siddique Sana (45), Bappi Hossain (20), Rafiqul Islam (38), Mazid Gazi (35) and Mamun Gazi (28) were killed in 'gunfight' with police inside the Sundarbans under Koira Upazila in Khulna District. Police claimed that all the deceased were tiger poachers and

Later, the Bench which had issued the Rule was dissolved when the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court reorganised the High Court Division Benches. As a result, the hearing of that matter is still adjourned.

⁷ The daily Ittefaq, 12/02/2009

⁸ The Ministry of Home Affairs commented on two incidents of death in the hands of RAB as 'extrajudicial killing'. These were the deaths of Mohiuddin Arif on February 3, 2010 in Mirpur area of Dhaka and the killing of young TV actor Kaiser Mahmud Bappi on September 10, 2009 in the Rampura area of Dhaka. Investigations of the two incidents were conducted under the leadership of the Deputy Secretary (Law Wing) of the Ministry of Home Affairs, based on the allegations made by the families of the deceased. It was mentioned in the investigation reports that Arif died due to torture in RAB custody; while Bappi was killed in direct shooting by RAB and not in 'crossfire'. The special inquiry committee had also recommended that exemplary punishment of the perpetrators through due process of law be ensured.

⁹ The daily Prothom Alo, 04/08/2015

members of the forest robber gang Ilias-Jahangir 'Bahini'¹⁰. They were arrested with the skins of three tigers. As per their statement, police carried out an operation for arms recovery with them at noon, where the six men under police custody were killed in gunfight with 'criminals'. On August 10, 2015 police filed three separate cases with Koira Police Station accusing 18-20 persons, including the deceased under the Arms Act, 1878 for attacking police and preventing and hampering government duty and under the Wildlife (Protection and Safety) Act, 2012¹¹. Meanwhile the family members of the deceased and local inhabitants said that the six men who were killed in so-called 'gunfight' had been arrested by police, in the night of August 8, from different locations. Siddique Sana's father Syed Ali Sana said that at around 3.00 am, a few men in plain clothes had come to their house and called out for Siddique. The men entered the home by breaking the door and beat Siddique severely and took him away. Mazid Gazi's wife Monowara Begum said that at around 8.00pm on August 8, some unidentified men called her husband's cell phone and he left the house. Later she learnt that police had arrested her husband. Some shopkeepers in Koira said that the six men were taken towards the local police station early in the morning and at around 10.00 am, six blindfolded persons had been taken away by a car. At around 4.00 pm, they heard that all the six had been killed in 'gunfight'.¹²

12. On August 18, 2015 between 12.15 am and 4.30 am, two present and former Chhatra League leaders Arzu Mia (28) and Mehedi Hassan (34) were killed in separate 'gunfights' in Dhaka and Magura. The family members of the deceased men alleged that both were killed after being arrested from separate places and the police had staged a drama of 'gunfight'. At around 4.30 am on August 18, Arzu was killed in 'gunfight' with a team of Satmasjid Camp RAB-2 at Boraikhali area behind Shikdar Medical College in Dhaka. Arzu was the main accused of an incident where a 16-year boy named Raja Mia had been beaten to death. Arzu's brother Masud Rana alleged that RAB had arrested Arzu in the evening of August 17, from in front of Hazaribagh Park. After 11.00 pm, his mother Joytunnesa and sister Rehana Akhter were picked up by the police of Hazaribagh Police Station. They were kept in police custody all night and only released after their signatures were taken on blank sheets of paper. Arzu's sister Rehana Akhter said that she and her mother saw Arzu's motorcycle parked at the police station. They heard the news of Arzu's death soon after they returned home.¹³ On August 19, a press conference was organised on behalf of Hazaribagh unit Awami League at the Dhaka Reporters Unity, where it was mentioned that Arzu was arrested by RAB and

¹⁰ Bahini is Bangla for 'group' or 'gang', usually an armed one.

¹¹ Report sent by human rights defender associated with Odhikar from Khulna

¹² The daily Prothom Alo, 12/08/2015

¹³ The daily Prothom Alo, 19/08/2015

later killed in a staged 'gunfight'. They demanded punishment of the RAB members involved. The same day, the ruling party's Member of Parliament, Fazle Noor Taposh told the media that "RAB killed Arzu after he was arrested. A 'Gunfight' claimed by RAB was a so-called common statement. It did not make any sense".¹⁴ Terming Arzu's death as 'extrajudicial', the President of Chhatra League's Central Committee, Saifur Rahman said, "If Arzu was guilty he could be punished through a proper investigation. We could also take organisational action. But extrajudicial killing cannot be accepted under any circumstances"¹⁵. On August 23, 2015 Arzu's brother filed a complaint against the Director of RAB-2, Lt. Col. Masud Rana; Deputy Assistant Director, Shahidur Rahman; Inspector Wahid; and RAB informer Ratan in Metropolitan Magistrate Court.¹⁶ After filing the case, Lt. Col. Masud Rana was transferred to the RAB Headquarters.¹⁷

13. At around 12.15 am on August 18, 2015 a former Chhatra League leader, Azibor Sheikh, was killed in 'gunfight' with police at Doarpar area in Magura. On July 23, 2015 a bullet hit an eight-month pregnant woman named Nazma Begum in the abdomen during a clash between two factions of Chhatra League in Doarpar Karigarhpara of Magura town. The unborn child in Nazma's womb was seriously injured and Nazma's uncle-in-law, Momen Bhuiyan was shot dead. Azibor was the third person accused in that case. On August 17 at around 5.00 pm, police arrested Azibor from Shimakhali Bus Stand under Shalikhha Upazila in Magura and forcibly taken into a vehicle, as stated by eye-witnesses in the Bazaar. Azibor was killed in "gunfight" at night, though police denied his arrest.¹⁸
14. Everyone has the right to a fair trial; and equality before the law is a fundamental right. Odhikar believes that the law and justice delivery system of the country is becoming increasingly questionable and the members of law enforcement agencies are enjoying full impunity. Odhikar believes that extrajudicial killings occur, to some extent, in order to protect criminals who are manipulating and using law enforcement agencies for their own benefits. Odhikar demands that all incidents of killings should be properly investigated and the perpetrators be brought to justice.

Torture in custody

15. Bangladesh ratified the UN Convention against Torture on October 5, 1998; and every State Party has committed to enact a domestic law to criminalise torture. As a result of this commitment, on October 24, 2013 the Parliament,

¹⁴ The daily Prothom Alo, 20/08/2015

¹⁵ The daily Prothom Alo, 19/08/2015

¹⁶ The daily Prothom Alo, 19/08/2015

¹⁷ The daily Jugantor, 25/08/2015

¹⁸ The daily Prothom Alo, 19/08/2015

through voice vote, passed the Torture and Custodial Death (Prevention) Act, 2013. Despite this, incidents of torture and deaths due to torture in the custody by law enforcement agencies continue with impunity.

16. On August 8, 2015 a BNP activist named Toiyab Ali Mintu (28) was allegedly shot in his leg after being arrested and severely beaten by police at Monirampur Police Station in Jessore. Mintus' wife Aleya Begum informed Odhikar that at around 11:30 pm on August 8, Mintu went to Joypur Bazaar to buy medicine. At that time Awami League supporters caught him and handed him over to police. While under treatment in hospital, Mintu said that police started beating him in the vehicle on way to the police station. Police broke three of his fingers at the police station. Later he was shot in his left leg and taken to the hospital.¹⁹
17. On August 12, 2015 at night, a man named Kobbad Ali (42) of Datbhanga Village under Roumari Upazila in Kurigram District, was allegedly tortured several times in the room of the Officer-in-Charge and later in the lock-up of Roumari Police Station. Kobbad Ali had a financial dispute with Al Farooq of the same village. The family of the tortured victim alleged that Al Farooq had bribed the Officer-in-Charge of Roumari Police Station, Sohrab Hossain, to torture Kobbad Ali. However, the OC Sohrab Hossain denied this allegation.²⁰
18. Odhikar believes that the Government has not taken steps or effective measures to implement the Act of 2013 with any seriousness; or curtail torture and other forms of custodial violence and acts of impunity by law enforcement officers. Such lack of action against perpetrators only encourages more human rights violations.

Allegations of enforced disappearance²¹ against law enforcement agencies

19. According to information gathered by Odhikar from January to August 2015, 45 persons have been allegedly disappeared; of them, nine were later found dead, 24 were later produced before the Court after showing them arrested in pending cases and six persons surfaced alive. The whereabouts of six persons are still unknown.²²

¹⁹ The daily Manabzamin, 10/08/2015

²⁰ The daily Manabzamin, 15/08/2015

²¹ Article 2 of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance states, "enforced disappearance" as: "arrest, detention, abduction or any other form of deprivation of liberty by agents of the State or by persons or groups of persons acting with the authorization, support or acquiescence of the State, followed by a refusal to acknowledge the deprivation of liberty or by concealment of the fate or whereabouts of the disappeared person, which place such a person outside the protection of the law." Odhikar documents incidents of enforced disappearance only in cases where family members/witnesses have stated that the victim was taken away by people in law enforcement uniform or by those who said they were from law enforcement agencies.

²² According to information gathered by Odhikar from January 2009 to August 2015, 215 persons have been allegedly disappeared; of them, 29 were later found dead and 82 were later produced before the Court or freed in different places. Till date, there is no whereabouts of 104 disappeared persons.

20. Enforced disappearance is a serious violation of fundamental human rights. It is imposed against people who have been labeled as 'enemies of the State', on the pretext of maintaining peace and order and protecting national security. The families of the victims claim that the members of law enforcement agencies are making arrests and the victims then disappear or their bodies are later found. In some cases, law enforcement agencies deny the arrest; but days later, the arrested persons are produced in public or handed over to a police station and appear in Court. In the past, incidents of enforced disappearance were denied by responsible persons of the government and no action was taken against any member of any law enforcement agency, despite having evidence after investigations by the Ministry of Home Affairs.²³ As a result, incidents of enforced disappearance continue.
21. Odhikar, as a member of the Asian Federation Against Involuntary Disappearances (AFAD) and the International Coalition Against Enforced Disappearances (ICAED), has been working on documentation, fact finding and creating a network of victim families; and also campaigning against enforced disappearance.
22. On August 18, 2015 police claimed that a British citizen named Touhidur Rahman was arrested under allegations of being involved in the killings of bloggers. His family members alleged that on May 28, 2015 the law enforcement officers arrested Touhidur Rahman and took him away. Two years ago, Touhidur Rahman returned to Bangladesh from London and started living with his sister and mother in their flat. The security guard Meher Ali and caretaker Swapon Barua informed Al-Jazeera on August 20, that members of law enforcement agencies picked up Touhidur Rahman three months ago, in the evening of May 28, 2015. The next day Touhidur's sister Nasera Begum filed a General Diary (GD) with the local police station in relation to this matter. According to Nasera Begum, RAB officials produced Touhidur, along with two others, in front of the media on August 18. She did not know where her brother had been kept by RAB for about three months. The name of the two other men, who were arrested by RAB, are Sadek Ali Mithu (28) and Aminul Mallik (35). On August 19 they were produced before the Court. Sadek Ali Mithu and Aminul Mallik also confirmed that law enforcement authorities had picked them up from different places in May 2015.²⁴
23. Odhikar demands the government take immediate measure to return the disappeared persons to their families and take action against the perpetrators.

²³ The daily Prothom Alo, 12/08/2012 <http://archive.prothom-alo.com/detail/date/2012-08-12/news/281302>

²⁴ The daily Manabzamin, 23/08/2015

Death in jail

24. In August 2015, a reported four persons died due to illness in prison.
25. It is alleged that due to lack of treatment facilities and negligence by the prison authorities, many prisoners became ill, which caused death.
26. Odhikar demands better treatment for all inmates in every jail. Deprivation of proper treatment in jail is a violation of human rights.

Violence against religious minority communities

27. Incidents of land grabbing, intimidation, extortion and various kinds of illegal activities, including attacks on places of worship belonging to religious minority citizens, continue under political shelter.
28. On August 6, 2015 the Bangladesh Hindu, Buddha, Christian, Oikya Parishad (Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council) made allegations in a press conference at the Dhaka Reporters Unity that the Ministers, Members of Parliament and the Administration are involved in grabbing property belonging to minority communities. A statement signed by the General Secretary of the organisation, Rana Dasgupta, mentioned that the ruling party (Awami League) Parliamentarian from Thakurgaon-2 constituency, Dabirul Islam and his son Mazharul Islam Sujon were trying to occupy land belonging to Hindu community at Ronobagh in Paria Union under Baliadangi Upazila. An allegation of occupying a shop belonging to a businessman of Swarupkathi, was made against the Member of Parliament MA Awal of Pirozpur. Allegations of occupying Ramganj Mission and grabbing land of the Ashram and cutting trees in Gaibandha, were made against the Whip of the National Parliament, Mahbub Ara Gini. The Health Department has occupied 1869 decimals²⁵ of vested property belonging to Sri Sri Kali Mata Bigraha Mandir (Hindu temple) in Faridpur; a meeting room of the district jail was built after demolishing 3200 decimals of vested property belonging to Sri Sri Shiv Mandir; and the Deputy Commissioner personally occupied 1.32 acres of vested property belonging to Sri Sri Jagannath Bigraha²⁶. 37 decimals of land under vested property belonging to Sri Sri Giridhari Bigraha was also occupied; a girls school and the Shaheed Minar²⁷ were established on 46.99 decimals of land belonging to Brahmasomaj Mandir after demolishing the temple situated there; a cooperative training centre was established on 1725 decimals of land belonging to a private Durga temple; 4.32 acres of land belonging to Modhukhali Brahmottor property has been auctioned off without authorization or permission; 7400 decimals of land under vested

²⁵ One decimal of land is approximately 435.6 Sq Feet.

²⁶ The meaning of the Bengali word 'Bigraha' is Idol

²⁷ The Shaheed Minar ("Martyr Monument") is a national monument in Dhaka, established to commemorate those killed during the Bengali Language Movement demonstrations of 1952.

property belonging to Sri Sri Kalimata Thakurani was measured out and registered in another person's name; an influential syndicate established shops after grabbing three decimals of land belonging to Mahajanbari in Safarbhata under Rangunia Upazila in Chittagong, violating a court order. The statement also said that on April 19, a group of 100 people, including City Corporation Councilor Rafiqul Islam, Sub Inspector Arshad, Detective Branch police officer Mostafa, Sub Inspector Ruhul Amin attacked the houses and temples belonging to the Hindu community and vandalized them. 80 families belonging to the Dalit community of Daspara in Magurghona Union under Dumuria Upazila in Khulna have been harassed by 20/25 criminals led by Union unit Jubo League Vice President Motiar Sardar. Criminals led by Cox's Bazaar Municipality unit Awami League activists Javed Kaisar Novel, Salauddin Setu and Monir Ahmed frequently rob the Buddha Polli²⁸ in that area. Former MP Mohammad Ali and his sons occupied 11 acres of land belonging to Boro Buddha Bihar (temple) at South Hmila under Teknaf Upazila in Cox's Bazaar. In Barisal, initiatives were taken to establish a Bar Association by grabbing ponds and land belonging to Saint Peter Church. In 2015, 15 citizens belonging to ethnic minority communities were killed and seven women belonging to minority communities were killed after rape and sexual violence.²⁹

29. Odhikar strongly condemns the incidents and urges the government to bring the perpetrators before justice by conducting independent and impartial investigation. Odhikar also urges the government to ensure security of citizens belonging to all minority communities in Bangladesh.

Hindrance to freedom of expression and assembly

Killing of bloggers continue

30. On August 7, 2015 blogger Neeladri Chatterjee was killed in his rented flat, located at road 8 in South Goran under Khilgaon Police Station in Dhaka. Neeladri Chatterjee had been advised by the police to leave the country when he went to file a General Diary seeking security. He used to write in various social media including Facebook and had a blog in the pen name 'Niloy Neel'. Four unidentified criminals stabbed him to death in front on his wife Asha Moni. After a few hours, an organisation named 'Ansarul Al-Islam' took the responsibility for this killing through an email message sent to the media. On May 15, 2015 Neeladri mentioned in his Facebook post that some unidentified youths were following him.³⁰

²⁸ Community of Buddhist families

²⁹ Press Statement of Bangladesh Hindu Buddha Christian Oikya Parishad, 06/08/2015

³⁰ The daily Manabzamin, 08/08/2015

31. According to information gathered by Odhikar from January 2013 to August 2015, five bloggers were killed. In the meantime on August 8, 2015 Awami Olama League³¹ and other 13 Islamic organisations, made a human chain in front of the National Press Club and demanded a law with the death penalty for defaming religion; and to stop all blogs and websites belonging to 'atheist' bloggers. Awami Olama League also declared 'Pahela Boishakh'³² as Haraam³³ (sinful).³⁴

Violations to freedom of the media

32. According to information gathered by Odhikar, in August 2015, one journalist was injured, three were assaulted, one was threatened, one was attacked and one was arrested.
33. Incidents of attacks on media and filing cases against journalists continue for putting pressure on the media. Odhikar believes that this kind of action is contrary to freedoms of thought and expression.
34. On August 19, 2015 a group of employees of the National Identity Card Registration Department beat and injured Channel 24, a private satellite TV reporter, GM Mustafizul Alam and camera person, Ripu Ahmed. The injured journalists were gathering information regarding the various problems in relation to obtaining National Identity cards.³⁵

Use of the repressive Information and Communication Technology Act

35. According to information gathered by Odhikar, from January to August 2015, 20 persons were arrested under the Information and Communication Technology Act 2006 (Amended 2009 and 2013).
36. The latest amendment to the ICT Act was made on October 6, 2013. Section 57³⁶ of the ICT Act 2013, states that publishing or transmitting in a website in electronic form, of any defamatory or false information is considered to be a cognizable and non-bailable offence. Moreover, punishment for committing this offence has been amended from a maximum of 10 years, with no minimum, to a term of between seven to 14 years imprisonment. This law has

³¹ Awami League affiliated organisation of Islamists.

³² Pohela Boishakh, also widely known as Bangla Noboborsho or Bengali New Year, is the first day of the Bengali calendar, celebrated on 14 April in the Bangladesh.

³³ Haraam is an Arabic term meaning sinful. In Islamic jurisdiction, haram is used to refer to any act that is forbidden by Allah.

³⁴ The daily Prothom Alo, 09/08/2015

³⁵ The daily Jugantor, 20/08/2015

³⁶ Section 57 of the ICT Act states: (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.

curtailed freedom of expression and the government is using this Act against human rights defenders, journalists, bloggers and people who have alternative opinions.

37. On August 16, 2015 at around 6:45 pm, Probir Sikder, Editor of an online newspaper named “Uttaradhikar ‘71”, was picked up by the Detective Branch (DB) of Police from his office at Indira Road in Dhaka. At around 11:00 pm, a case was filed against him under the Information and Communication Technology Act 2006 (Amended 2009 & 2013) with Kotwali Police Station in Faridpur, by the Assistant Public Prosecutor (APP) of Faridpur District Court, Swapon Pal. On that night Probir Sikder was taken to Faridpur Kotwali Police Station from Dhaka; and was shown as arrested under the Information and Communication Technology Act. There were allegations against Probir Sikder that he had given a status on his Facebook account against LGRD³⁷ Minister Khandker Mosharaf Hossain, Musa Bin Shamser³⁸ and Moulana Abul Kalam Azad³⁹, mentioning his security. APP Swapon Pal mentioned in the case that the Minister had been defamed due to that Facebook status.⁴⁰ On August 18, the Court granted a three-day remand against Probir Sikder. Probir Sikder stated in court that he was interrogated blindfolds after being arrested and was mentally tortured by police.⁴¹
38. Odhikar expresses grave concern at such violations to freedom of expression. Odhikar believes that it is a misuse of power to arrest and harass persons whose opinions are critical of a government. Odhikar demands the government repeal the draconian Information and Communication Technology Act 2006 (Amended in 2009 and 2013). Odhikar demands the arrest of the actual persons responsible for the killing of blogger Neeldri Chatterjee. At the same time it also demands justice through impartial investigations into the killings of bloggers Rajib Haider, Ovijit Roy, Washikur Rahman Babu and Ananta Bijoy. Odhikar also urges the government to put a stop to harassment of journalists and the imposition of control on the media.

Meetings and assemblies prohibited

39. The present government is barring meetings and assemblies of any ‘opposition’ and groups with alternative beliefs; and also engages the police and party activists to attack such gatherings. The political situation of the country has become repressive as a result of the government’s restraint on the opposition parties and alternative voices; and by taking away the rights to freedom of expression, assembly and the holding of peaceful meetings.

³⁷ Local Government and Rural Development

³⁸ A rich business man

³⁹ A convicted prisoner with death penalty for committed crimes against humanity in 1971, who is currently absconded.

⁴⁰ The daily Amar desh (online), 17/08/2015

⁴¹ The daily Prothom Alo, 19/08/2015

40. The National Press Club authority abruptly cancelled its permission to Odhikar to hold a programme in its auditorium, to mark the International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances. This was scheduled to be held on August 30, 2015. The event was scheduled to be jointly organised by members of the families of the disappeared, the Asian Federation against Involuntary Disappearances (AFAD), the Asian Legal Resource Centre (ALRC), the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and Odhikar. On August 29, 2015 at 5:20 pm, an employee of the Press Club, Selim Mia made a phone call to Odhikar and said that the hall booking had been cancelled as per instructions from the General Secretary of the National Press Club, Kamrul Islam Chowdhury. It is to be mentioned that the specific auditorium had been booked by Odhikar on July 11, 2015 and the hall rent had been paid. Earlier in the day on August 29, a few families of the disappeared were also threatened over telephone from unknown numbers and advised not to participate in the programme. At around 5:30 pm on August 29, two men in plain clothes came to the main gate of Odhikar and asked the security guard for the whereabouts of its Secretary, Advocate Adilur Rahman Khan. Furthermore, law enforcement agencies in various districts have also inquired about local human rights defenders who are associated with Odhikar and advised them not to conduct any programmes on August 30.
41. On August 29, 2015 police barred a human chain and meeting of Chittagong city BNP, while it was organising those programme to protest the increasing price of electricity and gas. Police took away the meeting banner as well.⁴²
42. On August 18, 2015 police stopped a meeting of a group named 'Adarsha Dhaka Andolon', which was organised in Samarai Convention Centre at Panthapath in Dhaka. Police arrested the Member Secretary of this organisation; and the President of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ), Shawkat Mahmud from the meeting. The Convener of 'Adarsha Dhaka Andolon' and former Vice-Chancellor of Dhaka University, Professor Emazuddin Ahmed said that the meeting had been organised to present information and reports on irregularities, rigging and intimidation of voters during the recent three City Corporations elections in Dhaka and Chittagong.⁴³ It is to be mentioned that the said Organisation nominated its candidates in three City Corporations elections, which were held recently. But the Organisation boycotted the elections after vote rigging occurred during the polls.

⁴² The daily Prothom Alo, 30/08/2015

⁴³ The daily Naya Diganta, 19/08/2015

Punishment of the Acting Editor of the daily Amar Desh and Jahangirnagar University teacher

43. On August 13, 2015 the Acting Editor of the daily Amar Desh, Mahmudur Rahman was sentenced to three years imprisonment and one hundred thousand taka fine by a temporary Court situated at Alia Madrassa field in Old Dhaka. The Court also gave the verdict of another month of jail if he fails to pay the fine. The Anti Corruption Commission (ACC) had allegations against him that he did not response to a notice given by the ACC regarding his property. Mahmudur Rahman stated after the verdict that, “this judgement was another example of repression and injustice”.⁴⁴ It is to be mentioned that Mahmudur Rahman had been arrested on April 11, 2013 from the daily Amar Desh office. In the evening of that day, the printing press of the Amar Desh was sealed and remains so to this day.⁴⁵
44. On August 12, 2015 the Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate of Dhaka, Nazmul Huq Shyamol awarded three years of rigorous imprisonment with 10 thousand taka fine and another six months jail for default in payment of fine, in a sedition case filed against Ruhul Amin Khandker, a former teacher of Jahangirnagar University. He had been sentenced for giving a status on his Facebook account⁴⁶ on August 13, 2011 about the Prime Minister and regarding the deaths due to road accidents. The Court declared this judgement in absence of the accused teacher.⁴⁷ A sedition case was filed against Ruhul Amin on October 4, 2011 and the Court framed charges against him on April 23, 2014 showing him as absconding.⁴⁸ Ruhul Amin Khandker was in Australia when the case was filed and at present he is in London.⁴⁹

Human rights violations by BSF in border areas

45. According to information collected by Odhikar, in August 2015, three Bangladeshi citizens were tortured to death by the Indian Border Security Force (BSF). Furthermore, six Bangladeshi were injured by the BSF. Among them, five were bullet shot and one was tortured.⁵⁰
46. BSF has continued human rights violations on Bangladeshi citizens at the border areas over the years, ignoring protests made by various groups. On

⁴⁴ The daily Amar Desh (Online), 13/08/2015

⁴⁵ Information gathered by Odhikar

⁴⁶ <http://archive.prothom-alo.com/detail/date/2012-01-09/news/215140>

⁴⁷ On August 13, 2011, a famous film director Tareq Masud and journalist Mishuk Manir were died in a road accident in Manikganj. At that time 27 thousand driving license were given to the drivers without any scrutiny. Being annoyed of their death, Ruhul AMin Khandker gave such status on his facebook account.

⁴⁸ The daily Prothom Alo, 13/08/2015

⁴⁹ The daily Prothom Alo, 13/08/2015

⁵⁰ According to information gathered by Odhikar from January 2009 to August 2015, 336 Bangladeshi citizens were killed and 504 were injured by BSF.

behalf of human rights defenders, this matter has been repeatedly raised in regular meetings between border guards of the two countries. The BSF has not deviated from its policy of shooting at anyone seen near the border.

47. On August 19, 2015 a Bangladeshi cattle trader named Shafiqul Islam (28) was beaten to death by BSF Jawans of Adadanga 31 BSF Camp of India at Shapahar border in Naogaon District. Shafiqul went to India in the night of August 18, with other cattle traders, to bring cows from there. In the early morning of August 19, when he was returning to Bangladesh through No. 237 main pillar, the BSF chased after and caught him. Later the BSF left Shafiqul with severe injuries in Bangladeshi territory after inflicting torture on him. His family took him to the local health complex where the duty doctor declared him dead.⁵¹
48. According to the Memorandum of Understanding and related treaties signed between Bangladesh and India, if citizens of either country 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, over the years, repeatedly violating treaties, killing or physically harming anyone seen near the border or anyone trying to cross the border; and also attacked Bangladeshi citizens by illegally entering Bangladesh, which are clear violations of international law and human rights. To some extent, the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) and local inhabitants have made a joint resistance against illegal trespass of the BSF into Bangladesh.
49. Odhikar believes that the role of the Bangladesh Government should be independent and sovereign in order to protect its citizens. No independent and sovereign state would passively watch its citizens being indiscriminately killed, tortured and abducted by another state.

Inhuman and cruel treatment against children

50. In the last two months, cruelty against children seems to have turned into a serious issue, with several instances occurring in succession.
51. On August 2, 2015 a 12-year old boy, Shakil Kazi was tied to a tree and beaten over allegations of stealing in Malipara village under Boraigram Upazila in Natore District. On July 31, 2015 some local influential men, including Saidur Islam, attacked Shakil after being instructed by one Rabiul Karim, in relation to an incident of stealing from the grocery shop of Bulbul Hossain of the same village. However, the victim family could not file a case in fear of the influential people. They did not even dare to take Shakil to hospital.⁵²

⁵¹ The daily Jugantor, 20/08/2015

⁵² The daily Prothom Alo, 06/08/2015

52. On August 3, 2015 a 12-year old boy called Mohammad Rakib Howlader was brutally killed in the garage 'Sharif Motors' at Tutpara Central Road in Khulna. A high-pressure air pump nozzle had been inserted into his anus and his body filled with air. Rakib's intestines tore and his lungs burst as air filled his abdomen. Rakib's father Nurul Alam filed a case against garage owner Oram Sharif, garage staff Mintu Khan and Beauty Begum, the mother of Omar Sharif. In the night of August 3, locals beat Sharif and Mintu and handed them over to the police. Later police also arrested Beauty Begum. On August 4, all three were shown as arrested. Nurul Alam also stated that his son Rakib had been working at Sharif's motor garage for the last two years. A few months ago, Rakib left the job as he was not paid regularly and was often beaten by Sharif. This made Sharif and his associates angry.⁵³
53. On August 17, 2015 Raja Mia (17) was allegedly beaten to death by Hazaribagh Thana unit Chhatra League President, Arzu Mia and his associates over allegations of stealing a cell phone and a laptop, in Hazaribagh, Dhaka. Raja Mia's sister Reshma stated that Arzu and his associates took her brother in the morning and at around 11:00 am, she went to Arzu's home to bring him back. There, she requested Arzu's mother to release Raja. After failing to release her brother, Reshma returned home. At around 4:00 pm, Arzu left Raja at their home unconscious. Raja was taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital with serious injuries, where the doctor on duty declared him dead. Reshma filed a case with Hazaribagh Police Station on that night, accusing 12 persons, including Chhatra League leader Arzu Mia, Moniruzzaman Monir, Sujan and Sagor. Police arrested Monir, Sujan and Sagor at night.⁵⁴ On the same night Arzu was killed in 'gunfight' with police.
54. Odhikar expresses grave concern over the on-going incidents of inhuman and cruel treatment against children across the country. Mostly, children from the poor families are the victims of such violence. It is also important to conduct independent and impartial investigation regarding the role of the members of law enforcement agencies of the relevant areas before and after each incident of killing. Odhikar strongly demands that the government brings the perpetrators, involved in child murder, to justice.

Public lynching continues

55. In August 2015, 19 people were reportedly killed due to public lynching.
56. People are being killed in public lynchings in different places of the country. The lack of respect for law, distrust of the police and instability in the country

⁵³ Report sent by human right defender associated with Odhikar from Khulna

⁵⁴ The daily Jugantor, 18/08/2015

has increased fear and insecurity among people, who have resorted to taking the law into their own hands, fearing that they will not get justice any other way.

57. 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 judicial system. To some extent, members of law enforcement agencies are also involved in public lynching while taking action against 'criminals'.

Violence against women

58. In August 2015, a significant number of women became victims of dowry related violence, rape, sexual harassment and acid attacks.

Dowry-related violence

59. In August 2015, according to Odhikar documentation, 16 women were subjected to dowry violence. Of these women, it has been alleged that eight women were killed because of dowry and seven women were physically abused over dowry demands. Furthermore, one woman committed suicide due to dowry violence.
60. On August 5, 2015 at night, a body of housewife Suchona Akhter (20) was recovered after it was found hanging from the ceiling of her husband, Police Constable Imam Hassan's house, at Kawnia Housing area in Barisal City. Marks of injuries were found on the deceased's body. Suchona's father Ali Hossain alleged that Suchona's in-laws killed her over dowry demands and were publicising it as a suicide case. The next day, Constable Imam Hassan was arrested by police for allegedly killing his wife.⁵⁵

Rape

61. In August 2015, Odhikar recorded a total number of 96 females who were raped. Among them, 55 were women, 40 were children below the age of 16 and the age of one person could not be determined. Of the women, two were killed after being raped; 20 were victims of gang rape. Out of the 40 child victims, three were killed after being raped; nine were victims of gang rape. Furthermore, 10 women and children were victims of attempted rape.
62. On August 23, 2015 a housewife belonging to the ethnic minority community was raped by Awami League activist Mukul Hossain (35), while she was taking a break after working in a paddy field at Ziupara Bilmaria Lake, under Puthia Upazila in Rajshahi District.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ The Daily Star, 07/08/2015

⁵⁶ The daily Jugantor, 25/08/2015

Sexual harassment

63. According to information gathered by Odhikar, in August 2015, a total of 31 girls and women were victims of sexual harassment. Of them, two committed suicide, one was injured, two were assaulted, one was abducted and 25 were stalked. During this time, one woman was killed and four men were injured by the stalkers when they protested against such acts.
64. On August 19, 2015 Khushi Begum was beaten to death by criminals for protesting against acts of sexual harassment towards her daughter in Bhatara village under Tarash Upazila in Sirajganj District. The Officer-in-Charge of the local police station, Aminul Islam stated that one Hanef Ali, a resident of Bhatara village was stalking and harassing Kamrul Islam's daughter. An altercation took place between Kamrul's wife Khushi Begum and Hanef Ali's wife Nirala Begum in relation to this. At one stage, Hanef Ali and Nirala Begum beat Khushi Begum to death and left the scene. Police arrested Hanef Ali's wife Nirala Begum and his sister Rahima Khatun.⁵⁷

Acid violence

65. According to information gathered by Odhikar, in August 2015, six persons became victims of acid violence. Of them, four were women and two were men.
66. On August 5, 2015 criminals threw acid on Mukul Mia, who had filed a case against five police officers, including the Officer-in-Charge of Gobindaganj Police Station, for attempted sexual harassment. At around 10:30 pm, he was attacked with acid by criminals beside the Mohimganj Alia Madrassa, while returning home from a bazaar. Locals rescued Mukul Mia and admitted him to the burn unit of Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital in Bogra. A large portion of his chest and back was burnt with acid.⁵⁸
67. Odhikar expresses grave concern over the incidents of violence against women. Odhikar believes that women are being victimized mainly due to severe deterioration of the laws and order situation. The perpetrators of violence against women escape punishment due to lack of implementation of laws; no victim and witness protection; a negative mindset towards women; corruption and criminalisation of the members of law enforcement agencies; economic instability; and weak administration. As a result, potential violators are encouraged and incidents of violence increase.

⁵⁷ The daily Jugantor, 20/08/2015

⁵⁸ The daily Jugantor, 08/08/2015

Activities of Odhikar hindered

68. Odhikar, as a human rights organisation, has come under government fire during various regimes, for being vocal against human rights violations and for campaigning to stop them. However, the present Grand Alliance government, led by Awami League, after assuming power in 2009, started harassment on Odhikar for its reports on the human rights situation of the country. On August 10, 2013 at 10:20 pm, Odhikar's Secretary Adilur Rahman Khan was picked up by persons claiming to be from the Detective Branch (DB) of Police, for publishing a fact finding report on extrajudicial killings during a rally and meeting organised by the religious group Hefazate Islam on May 5-6, 2013. The police, at first, denied detaining him. Adilur and Odhikar's Director ASM Nasiruddin Elan, were charged under section 57(1) of the Information and Communication Technology Act, 2006 (Amended 2009). They were in jail custody and later, Adilur and Elan were released on bail after spending 62 and 25 days in prison respectively. On August 11, 2013 at night, the DB police raided the Odhikar office and confiscated two CPUs (Central Processing Unit) and three laptops, which contained sensitive and confidential information and documents relating to victims of human rights abuses. Odhikar regularly faces harassment by different organs of the government. Adilur Rahman Khan, staff members of Odhikar, the office and even family members, are under surveillance by intelligence agencies. Human rights defenders who are associated with Odhikar are being watched and sometimes harassed and human rights activities hindered. On August 30, 2015 law enforcement agencies in various districts have also inquired about local human rights defenders who are associated with Odhikar and advised them not to conduct any programmes in relation to the International Day of the Victims Enforced Disappearance on August 30. Apart from that, the NGO Affairs Bureau (NGOAB), which is under the Prime Minister's Office, has barred the release of all project related funds of Odhikar in order to stop its human rights activities. The Organisation is still operating due to the volunteer services of grassroots level human rights defenders associated with Odhikar and their commitment to human rights activism.
69. As a human rights organisation, it is Odhikar's duty to highlight human rights violations and take appropriate actions and measures to prevent future violations. The Government is harassing Odhikar, everyone associated with the organisation and victims of human rights violations; gagging their voices by hampering Odhikar's activities.

Statistics: January-August 2015*										
Type of Human Rights Violation		January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	Total
**Extrajudicial killings	Crossfire	12	30	9	8	14	6	7	19	105
	Shot to death	5	5	2	1	0	3	0	0	16
	Beaten to death	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
	Strangled to death	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Tortured to death	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	3
	Others	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	3
	Total	18	38	12	9	18	9	7	19	130
Shot on legs by law enforcement agencies		2	16	8	1	3	0	0	0	30
Disappearances		14	9	11	3	3	3	0	2	45
Human rights violations by Indian BSF	Bangladeshis Killed	2	5	1	9	3	3	5	3	31
	Bangladeshis Injured	11	7	5	4	2	6	5	6	46
	Bangladeshis Abducted	4	9	3	0	0	1	3	0	20
Attack on journalists	Injured	6	3	16	16	5	0	6	1	53
	Threatened	1	1	0	2	10	15	1	1	31
	Assaulted	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	6
	Tortured	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Arrested	2	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	7
Political violence	Killed	48	40	33	11	5	11	5	13	166
	Injured	1947	722	580	262	272	320	475	420	4998
Dowry related violence (including women victims, their children and relatives)		13	15	15	13	17	14	23	16	126
Rape		33	44	41	44	82	65	64	96	469
***Sexual harassment /Stalking of women		19	9	19	6	9	13	5	31	111
Acid violence		8	4	3	5	4	1	5	6	36
Public lynching		12	7	8	15	15	11	9	19	96
Arrest under Information and Communication Technology Act		1	2	3	1	1	6	2	4	20

*Odhikar's documentation

**On January-March five persons were allegedly extra judicially killed by the law enforcement agencies during political violence which is also included in the statistical part of the Political Violence.

***It is to be noted that numerous women became victims of sexual harassment by gangs in Dhaka University campus during celebrations of Bangla New year on April 14, 2015 which could not be determined as victim women didn't report, so that in the statistical part of sexual harassment/stalking of women couldn't be added.

Recommendations

1. In order to stop confrontational politics, free and fair Parliamentary elections must be held immediately by ensuring the participation of all political parties, under a neutral, interim government or under the supervision of the United Nations.
2. Incidents of extrajudicial killings by law enforcement agencies must be investigated and the perpetrators be brought to effective justice. Extrajudicial killings in the name of 'crossfire' and 'gunfight' must be stopped. The law enforcement agencies must follow the international guidelines "Basic Principles on the use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement officials and the UN Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement officials".
3. Torture in custody must stop. The Government should ratify the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture; and effectively implement the Torture and Custodial Death (Prevention) Act, 2013.
4. The Government has to explain all incidents of enforced disappearance and killings allegedly perpetrated by law enforcement agencies. All victims of disappearance should be returned to their families. The Government must bring the members of the security and law enforcement agencies who are involved in the incidents of enforced disappearance and killing to justice. Odhikar urges the government to accede to the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, adopted by the UN on December 20, 2006.
5. The Government should refrain from attacking peaceful public events and from carrying out repressive, unconstitutional activities.
6. Freedom of opinion and expression and of the media must be ensured. The Government should investigate incidents of attacks on human rights defenders and journalists; and take appropriate measures to bring the perpetrators to justice. The ban on the publication of the daily Amar Desh and the broadcasting of Diganta TV, Islamic TV and Channel One should be removed. All persons who were detained for political reasons including Acting Editor of the daily Amar Desh, Mahmudur Rahman should be released immediately. The deaths of the bloggers must be properly investigated and those responsible should be tried. All repressive laws, including the Information and Communication Technology Act, 2006 (amendment 2009 and 2013) and the Special Powers Act, 1974 must be repealed.
7. The Government must ensure the safety of citizens belonging to all minority communities irrespective of their religion, language and ethnicity; and must bring the perpetrators who attacked the minority communities to justice.
8. The Government should protest strongly against human rights violations on Bangladeshi citizens by the BSF and take initiatives to investigate and make

the Indian Government accountable and compensate the families of the victims. The Government should also ensure the safety and security of the Bangladeshi citizens residing at the border areas. Punishment for the murderers of Felani must be ensured by effective intervention on the part of the Bangladesh government.

9. The Government must ensure the effective implementation of laws to stop violence against women and children; and the offenders must be effectively punished under the prevalent laws. The Government should also execute mass awareness programmes in the print and electronic media in order to eliminate violence against women.
10. The case filed against Odhikar's Secretary and its Director under the Information and Communication Technology Act, 2006 (Amended in 2009) must be withdrawn. All repressive measure and harassment against human rights defenders associated with Odhikar should be stopped. The government must release the funds of Odhikar urgently to enable it to continue its human rights activities.

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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.