



October 01, 2016

Human Rights Monitoring Report

September 1 – 30, 2016

Political violence
Enforced disappearances
Extrajudicial killings
Workers Rights: Explosions at Tampaco Factory
Torture, inhuman treatment and unlawful detention by law enforcement agencies
Death in jail
Public lynching
Hindrance to freedom of media and expression
Meetings and assemblies prohibited
Aggressive policy of Indian government towards Bangladesh
Human rights abuses on members of minority communities
Violence against women
Activities of Odhikar hindered

Odhikar believes that 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 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 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. The Parliament, Judiciary and Executive cannot and should not, have any power to abrogate fundamental civil and political rights

through any means, 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.

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 on violations and defend the victims. In line with this campaign, Odhikar prepares and releases human rights status reports every month. The Organisation has released this human rights monitoring report of September 2016, despite facing persecution and continuous harassment and threats to its existence since August 10, 2013.

Statistics: January-September 2016*											
Type of Human Rights Violation		January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	Total
Extrajudicial killings	Crossfire	6	10	11	7	3	25	13	17	8	100
	Shot to death	2	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	1	7
	Torture to death	1	2	0	0	2	1	1	1	0	8
	Beaten to death	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	3
	Total	9	12	11	11	5	26	15	19	10	118
Shot on legs by law enforcement agencies		2	0	2	3	0	0	6	2	0	15
Enforced Disappearances**		6	1	9	10	13	13	4	7	0	63
Death in Jail		8	3	4	5	9	5	5	2	5	46
Human rights violations by Indian BSF	Bangladeshis Killed	3	1	1	2	4	4	4	3	5	27
	Bangladeshis Injured	4	4	0	2	3	4	1	7	4	29
	Bangladeshis Abducted	0	5	0	2	0	10	0	0	1	18
	Total	7	10	1	6	7	18	5	10	10	74
Attack on journalists	Injured	9	2	5	6	6	7	4	7	0	46
	Assaulted	9	1	0	0	0	0	2	3	1	16
Political Violence including local government election violence	Killed	6	5	50	33	53	28	14	2	7	198
	Injured	429	566	2263	1381	1608	1001	462	262	213	8185
Dowry related violence against women		22	19	15	16	12	20	20	21	13	158
Rape		59	57	60	77	71	52	72	47	70	565
Sexual harassment /Stalking against women		27	23	20	26	16	20	18	14	25	189
Acid Throwing		4	4	3	4	4	1	2	4	7	33
Public lynching		2	11	5	6	3	7	2	2	2	40
Situation of Ready-made Garments Workers	Died in factory fire	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3
	Injured during demonstrations and or factory fire	25	31	12	34	18	46	28	17	15	226
Arrest under the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Act***		1	4	0	1	1	1	4	15	2	29

*Odhikar's documentation

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

***The cases of arrests under the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Act that are documented are those where the presentations/statements in question are considered critical against government officials and government party leaders, as these are mainly reported in the media.

Political violence

1. According to information gathered by Odhikar, in September 2016, seven persons were killed and 213 were injured in political violence. Furthermore, 18 incidents of internal violence in the Awami League were also recorded during this period, where six persons were killed and 197 were injured.
2. Criminalisation of Chhatra League¹ and Jubo League² continues. Across the country, leaders and activists of the ruling party, mainly Chhatra League and Jubo League, are reportedly involved in criminal activities and most of the criminal activities and violence are linked to vested interest. Such acts have caused internal conflicts; and mainly occur using political influence. During violent political altercations, these groups were seen in public, armed with weapons. In almost all cases, they got away with their criminal activities. Two incidents of September 2016 are as follows:
3. On September 15, 2016 at around 11:30 pm, a rickshaw puller named Kabir Hossain took Banani Thana unit Jubo League's Joint Convener Yusuf Sardar Sohel and his associate Shah Alam, to Banani road 2 from Gulshan (Dhaka) for a fare of Taka 40³. After reaching the destination, Sohel and Shah Alam were leaving without paying the rickshaw puller. When the rickshaw puller Kabir asked for his fare, Sohel slapped him and then shot him in the left leg. Kabir Hossain was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital and a case was filed with Banani Police Station in this regard. The next day police arrested Sohel with a pistol and 22 bullets. On September 17, police produced Sohel before the court and sought a 5-day remand. Meanwhile, the lawyer of the accused Sohel had appealed for a bail, cancelling the police remand. After the hearing, Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Golam Nabi granted Sohel's bail plea.⁴
4. On September 18, 2016 Alvi Hassan (17), a student of Wills Little Flower School and College, was stabbed and injured by Chhatra League leader Kamrul and his associate Tipu at the Malibagh Rail Crossing area in Dhaka. While attacking Alvi, Kamrul said, "I am a Chhatra League leader. I came here to cut your hands". Alvi was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital. Later he was transferred to the Orthopedic Hospital as both his hands were severely wounded. It is to be mentioned that such incident occurred after Alvi's classmates paid Chhatra League leader Kamrul to beat him up over a dispute between senior and junior students of Wills Little Flower School and College.⁵

¹ Student wing of the Awami League

² Youth wing of the Awami League

³ 1.00 taka= 0.0127624USD (Mid-market rates: 2016-09-29 09:28 UTC)

⁴ The daily Prothom Alo, 18/09/2016 www.prothom-alo.com/bangladesh/article/978730/

⁵ The daily Jugantor, 19/09/2016; www.jugantor.com/first-page/2016/09/19/61294/



Alvi Hassan, who was stabbed by Chhatra League leader Kamrul, Photo: Jugantor, 19 September 2016

5. Political intolerance and criminalization of politics has increased alarmingly after the controversial and farcical Parliamentary elections on January 5, 2014 and the leaders and activists of the ruling party are using the administration for their politically vested interest. At the January 2014 election, the government took away the voting rights of the people which was repeated through criminalization in the local government elections. Thus democracy needs to be restored immediately by establishing an accountable government through free, fair and inclusive Parliamentary elections under a neutral government, or under the supervision of the United Nations.

Enforced disappearances

6. According to information gathered by Odhikar, from January to September 2016, 63 persons were allegedly disappeared. Of them, eight were found dead, 38 shown as arrested after a long time or surfaced alive and the whereabouts of 17 persons remain unknown.⁶
7. On September 15, 2016 the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances stated in its annual report, submitted to the UN Human Rights Council, that incidents of enforced disappearance are increasing in many countries around the world and this is leading to a 'very frightening trend'. The report revealed that cases of enforced disappearance are rising due to 'fallacious and pernicious belief that such process is a useful tool to defend national security and combat terrorism'.⁷ It was also mentioned in the

⁶Odhikar only documents allegation of enforced disappearance where the family members or witnesses claim that the victim was taken away by people in law enforcement uniform or by those who said they were from law enforcement agencies.

⁷ The daily Prothom Alo, 17/09/2016; www.prothom-alo.com/bangladesh/article/977563/

report that during the reporting period from May 2015 to May 2016, the Working Group transmitted 766 new cases of enforced disappearance to 37 States.⁸ The Working Group transmitted 483 of the above-mentioned cases under the urgent action procedure⁹ to 20 States¹⁰, which is three times higher than the number of cases mentioned in its previous year's annual report.¹¹ During the four-year reporting period from May 2011 to May 2015, the Working Group transmitted 384 new cases of enforced disappearance to 33 countries, including Bangladesh, concerned that the alleged frequent use of enforced disappearance was a tool used by law enforcement agencies, paramilitary and armed forces to detain and even 'extra-judicially' kill individuals.¹² The Working Group received a reply from the Bangladesh government on only one case out of 31 cases that it transmitted during the reporting period, according to the report. In the single case, the government informed the Working Group that the person, who was an alleged victim of enforced disappearance, was 'at liberty'.¹³ It is to be mentioned that the crime of enforced disappearances reemerged as a dangerous trend in Bangladesh in 2009. One case of September 2016 is as follows:

8. On September 4, 2016 at around 3:30 am, the Detective Branch of Police, led by Sub Inspectors Rowshan Ali and Yeasir Arafat conducted an operation in Boroitola village of Gandhail Union under Kazirpur Upazila in Sirajganj District; and arrested suspected JMB leader Faridul Islam's mother Phulera Begum (45), his two sisters Shakila Khatun (18), Salma Khatun (16) and a neighbour (carpenter) Rafiqul Islam's wife Razia Begum (35). On September 5, the Superintendent of Police of Sirajganj District, Miraj Uddin gave this information at a press conference. Meanwhile, Rafiqul Islam's father Lokman Hossain alleged that police picked up six persons, including his son and daughter-in-law one month ago from Boroitola village. After a long time with no communication, his daughter-in-law had been shown as arrested but the whereabouts of his son remained unknown.¹⁴
9. Odhikar expresses grave concern over the persistent incidents of enforced disappearance. This has to be stopped and punishment of the perpetrators must be ensured.

⁸ http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/33/51

⁹ Cases of enforced disappearances that occurred within three months prior to the receipt of a report by the Working Group.

¹⁰ http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/33/51

¹¹ The daily Prothom Alo, 17/09/2016; www.prothom-alo.com/bangladesh/article/977563/

¹² The daily New Age, 17/09/2016, 'UN concerned over enforced disappearance', <http://newagebd.net/251835/>

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ Bangla Tribune; <http://www.banglatribune.com/country/news/139065/>

Extrajudicial killings

10. According to information gathered by Odhikar, in September 2016, 10 persons were allegedly killed extra judicially.
11. Incidents of such killings were claimed as deaths in 'gunfight' or 'crossfire'¹⁵ by law enforcement agencies. Although the highest court of the country issued several rules regarding extrajudicial executions, extrajudicial killings do not stop. The government flatly denies incidents of extrajudicial killings, despite repeated demands to bring the responsible parties to justice; and the impunity of law enforcement agencies, in terms of extrajudicial killings prevail. One example is as follows:
12. On September 12, 2016 police claimed that one youth named Al-Amin Islam Manik alias Robin (30) was killed in 'gunfight' with police at Hatirjheel area in Dhaka. Police of Tejgaon Industrial Police Station stated that in the night of September 11, 2016 police arrested 'chief robber' Al-Amin from Tejgaon industrial area. During the primary interrogation, Al-Amin said that some of his men would be gathered at the north-east corner of the Mohanagar Bridge preparing for a robbery. Based on this information, police carried out an operation with Al-Amin in that area at around 3:45 am on September 12. According to police, Al-Amin's associates opened fire at them and in retaliation police shot back. At one stage of gunfight between the two groups, Al-Amin was shot while he was escaping. Al-Amin was taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where the duty doctor declared him dead. After the incident, the role of the police created questions because at first, it was informed that a body of an 'unknown man' had been found in Hatirjheel. Later, it was written in the register book at Dhaka Medical College Hospital that Al-Amin died in a road accident and thereafter this had been corrected to state he was shot and killed.¹⁶

Type of death

'Crossfire/encounters/gunfights'

13. Eight persons were killed by 'crossfire/encounters/gunfights'. Among them seven were allegedly killed by police and one by RAB.

Shot to death

14. One person was shot to death by police during this period.

¹⁵ 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

¹⁶ The daily Prothom Alo, 16/09/2016; www.prothom-alo.com/bangladesh/article/977005/

Beaten to death

15. One person was allegedly beaten to death by police.

The identity of the deceased:

16. Of the 10 persons who were killed extra-judicially, one was a shop owner and nine were alleged criminals.

Worker Rights:

Explosion at Tampaco factory: 41 bodies recovered

17. On September 10, 2016 at around 6:00 am, four adjacent buildings caught fire after a huge explosion in an aluminum foil packaging factory belonging to Tampaco Foils Limited, in Tongi, Gazipur. As a result, a 5-storied and two 3-storied buildings of that factory collapsed. Many people were killed and injured due to the fire and were trapped under the buildings. To date, 41 bodies had been recovered. At least 11 persons are still missing, as claimed by their families. In addition to that, 35 persons were injured. Among the 41 deceased, one was a rickshaw puller, two were bystanders and one was a child, who lived in a house beside the factory.¹⁷ Soon after the accident, it was reported that such incident occurred due to a boiler explosion. But after getting the fire under control, the boiler room was inspected by the Inspector Engineer Sharafat Ali of the Ministry of Industry. He claimed that the two boilers were intact. He believes that such accident might have occurred due to a leakage in a gas line. Boiler operator in-charge of the factory, Imam Uddin said that a leakage was created in the gas line on September 4, 2016.¹⁸ On September 17, 2016 workers of Tampaco organised a protest and human chain, demanding that the Titas Gas authority of the government be held responsible for this accident. They claimed that information about the gas line leakage was given to Titas Gas, on behalf of Tampaco, four days before the accident; but the Titas Gas authority did not take any measure.¹⁹ The Officer-in-Charge of Gazipur Police Station, Firoze Talukder said that four years ago, it was found, by a primary investigation, that the buildings had become incompetent to be used as a factory. Moreover, the electric facility was also vulnerable.²⁰ A few months ago, the local Municipal authority requested the concerned authorities, including local factory and institution inspection authority and Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC)

¹⁷ The daily Prothom Alo, 19/09/2016; www.prothom-alo.com/bangladesh/article/979579 and the daily Prothom Alo, 25/09/2016; www.prothom-alo.com/bangladesh/article/985570/

¹⁸ The daily Naya Diganta, 12/09/2016; <http://www.dailynayadiganta.com/detail/news/152888>

¹⁹ The daily Prothom Alo, 18/09/2016; www.prothom-alo.com/bangladesh/article/978598/

²⁰ The Daily Star, 19/09/2016; 'Gas leak alert ignored Say Tongi police; file murder case against 10 including owner over Tampaco fire'; <http://www.thedailystar.net/city/gas-leak-alert-ignored-1286137>

to declare the factory unfit. The owner was also alerted, but no one paid any heed.²¹ There was no stairway in the 5-storied building, despite the Tampaco Foils Limited claim of being a factory having international standards and compliance. Only an iron made stairway was present outside the building. The factory was in service violating all labour related national and international laws. The factory authority did not even give appointment letters to the workers.²² On September 17, 2016 Sub Inspector of Tongi Police Station, Ajoy Kumar Chakroborty, filed a murder case with Tongi Police Station. In the case, the Chairman of Tampaco Foils Ltd. and ex-MP of Sylhet-6 constituency, Syed Maqbul Hossain and his wife Mosammat Parvin; his son and Managing Director of the factory, Tanvir Ahmed; his daughter and Director of the factory, Abida Parvin; son-in-law and Deputy Managing Director, Shafi Sami; General Manager Shafiqur Rahman; Manager (Administration) Monir Hossain; Manager (General) Samir Ahmed; Deputy Managing Director Alamgir Hossain; and Manager (Security) Hanif had been accused. In the FIR, allegations of constructing vulnerable buildings, keeping a weak gas line and not repairing boilers were made against the accused persons. The complainant also alleged that the accused persons had killed and injured workers and bystanders by intentionally setting fire to the factory through negligence. Earlier, on September 12, Abdul Qadir, father of a deceased worker Jewel Mia, filed another murder case accusing eight persons, including the factory owner.²³

²¹ The daily Jugantor, 12/09/2016; www.jugantor.com/first-page/2016/09/12/60308/

²² The daily Prothom Alo, 25/09/2016; www.prothom-alo.com/bangladesh/article/985570/

²³ The daily Prothom Alo, 19/09/2016; www.prothom-alo.com/bangladesh/article/979579/



Tampaco Foils Limited, after the explosion; Photo: The Daily Star- 11 September, 2016

18. Odhikar condemns and also expresses deep concern over the incident. Vulnerable workers are working in factories that have infrastructural flaws, lack inspections due to corruption, etc. Due to the serious irresponsibility of some factory owners and negligence of the government, workers are repeatedly facing such disasters and the relevant government officials and factory/industry owners are usually not being held accountable. As a result,

such incidents continue. We can recall the many workers who were killed due to fire at two garment factories, Tazrin Fashions in November 2012 and at Smart Garments situated at Ashulia in January 2013; and those killed due to the Rana Plaza collapse in Savar in April 2013.

Repression against RMG factory workers

19. According to information gathered by Odhikar, in September 2016, 15 workers were injured by the garments authority during workers unrest in the ready-made garment industries.
20. On September 29, 2016 workers of a garment factory called Ananta Denim Technology, situated at Kanchpur Dayabari area under Sonargaon Upazila in Narayanganj District, were gathered inside the factory and protesting against late payment of their wages, bonus, holiday and overtime allowance. The factory Manager (Admin) Sushanta Kumar slapped a female worker there, which infuriated the workers who beat five officials, including Sushanta Kumar, Accounts Officer Mainuddin and a (Sri Lankan) officer Prodip Chandra Nath. After that, a group of criminals led by Jubo League activists Babul, Sumon and Ohid, under directions from the factory owner, attacked workers with local weapons. At least 15 workers were injured in this regard.²⁴
21. Garment manufacturing factories are a very large source of revenue for Bangladesh and the factory workers are one of the main contributing factors to this success. However, many factories were closed without notice. This and the sudden termination of workers and not paying wages on time are some of the main reasons for workers' unrest.

Torture, inhuman treatment and lack of accountability of law enforcement agencies

22. Allegations of acts of harassment, extortion, attacks, torture and killing against the police are becoming more and more common. The members of law enforcement agencies are enjoying impunity due to the government practice of using the law enforcement agencies against its political opponents and others who oppose or criticise it. As a result, they have come to believe that they are above the law. After a prolonged campaign, on October 24, 2013 the Torture and Custodial Death (Prevention) Act, 2013 was passed in the Parliament. Despite this, there was no change in the actual situation. Some incidents are as follows:

²⁴ The daily Naya Diganta, 30/09/2016; <http://www.dailynayadiganta.com/detail/news/157281>

Unlawful detention, torture and punishment of a school student through a mobile court

23. A student class of IX of Protima Bonki Public High School of Tangail district, Sabbir Hossain Sikder (15) was allegedly tortured after being taken and detained for three days over allegations of giving death threats on Facebook to Anupam Shahjahan Joy, Member of Parliament (MP) of Tangail-8 (Basail-Shakhipur) constituency. Sabbir was punished through a mobile court. The MP's cousin Shibly Mia, filed a General Diary (GD) with Shakhipur Police Station in this regard. As a result, on September 16, 2016 police arrested Sabbir Hossain Sikder and a youth called Roman Ahmed from their homes. Roman Ahmed was released, but Sabbir was tortured after being detained for three days in Shakhipur Police Station and a confession was extracted from him. In the evening of September 18, 2016 a mobile court was set up through Shakhipur Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO), S M Rafiqul Islam, which sentenced Sabbir to two years imprisonment under the Narcotics Control Act 1990, showing him to be 19 years of age.²⁵ On September 19, Sabbir was sent to jail. On September 20, a media report of the incident drew the attention of a vacation Bench of the High Court Division of the Supreme Court comprising of Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Justice Ashish Ranjan Das. The High Court issued a suo-moto Rule and directed the Executive Magistrate of the mobile court and UNO, SM Rafiqul Islam and the Officer-in-Charge of Shakhipur Police Station (OC), Makshudul Alam, to be present in person before the High Court on September 27 and explain this matter. At the same time, convicted Sabbir was given bail and asked to be present before this court.²⁶ After that, S M Rafiqul Islam, Executive Magistrate of the Mobile Court and Upazila Nirbahi Officer and Maksudul Alam, the Officer-in-Charge of Shakhipur Police Station, presented their statements before the High Court Division Bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Justice Ashish Ranjan Das, through lawyers. At the same time, Sabbir Hossain also described the incident. He said that on the night of September 16, 2016, police arrested him from his house and took him to the house of the Member of Parliament (MP). The MP became furious and beat him twice. After that, police detained him for three days. Police threatened to kill him in crossfire and blindfolded him and also tortured him. After that UNO, S M Rafiqul Islam kicked Sabbir in the chest when he was taken to his office. After the hearing, the Court fixed October 18, 2016 for issuing an Order regarding the incident.²⁷

²⁵ Report sent by local human rights defender associated with Odhikar from Tangail

²⁶ The daily Prothom Alo, 21/09/2016; www.prothom-alo.com/bangladesh/article/981328/

²⁷ The daily Jugantor 28/09/2016; www.jugantor.com/last-page/2016/09/28/63850/



Sabbir Ahmed Sikder (15), Photo: Odhikar

Allegation of being beaten to death by police

24. On September 7, 2016 Sub Inspector of the Detective Branch (DB) of Police at Norshingdi, Khokon Chandra Sarkar conducted a raid at Mohammad Ali's grocery shop on suspicion over the selling of drugs in the shop, in Matialpara area under Belabo Upazila in Norshingdi District. During the raid, Mohammad Ali was beaten with an iron rod and also hit with bricks when he denied the allegation of selling drugs. Later he was taken to Belabo Police Station and a case was filed against him after police confiscated 100 Yaba. Witnesses and the family members of Mohammad Ali said that at around 3:00 pm Mohammad Ali was brought to Norshingdi District Hospital with severe injuries and he died there in the evening. The Officer-in-Charge of Detective Branch of Police (DB) in Norshingdi, Saidur Rahman said that Mohammad Ali was in good health when he was arrested. Later he was taken to the hospital when he became sick and as a result he died while was under treatment.²⁸

Allegation of detaining of three youth at police station for 23 hours without any charge

25. On September 26, 2016, police arrested Mohammad Rasel Ahmed (18), a student of the Bangla department at Asian University; Rubel Hossain (22), local fish trader; and Mohammad Ruhul Amin (21) from a field beside Road No. 1 of Sector 10 of Uttara, Dhaka. While in custody the men said that they were friends and were chatting beside a field. ASI Mohammad Sagor (who was in plainclothes) and Constable Sujon Bhuiyan, led by plain clothed SI Abdullah Ibn Sayeed, approached them and started interrogating them. The policemen started to search them but found nothing illegal. After a few minutes, the policemen collected a cigarette packet from behind where the three men were standing and took them to the police station. The families of the men alleged that SI Abdullah demanded taka 400,000 as bribe to release them. Later, taka 20,000 was fixed to release the youths. But at around 2:00

²⁸ The daily Prothom Alo, 08/09/2016; / www.prothom-alo.com/bangladesh/article/971734/

am, when the members of the detainees' family went the police with the money, SI Abdullah told them that they could not be released because the higher authority of the police station knew of the matter. Then SI Abdullah demanded taka 50,000 as a bribe. After several movements of lobbying and discussion, the men were released after 23 hours of detention.²⁹

26. Odhikar believes that such acts of brutality, harassment and torture have increasing due to unfettered impunity of the members of law enforcement agencies and for unlawfully using them for the sake of political gain; and due to immense corruption at every stage, including in appointments and promotions of law enforcers.

Death in jail

27. In September 2016, a reported five persons died in prison due to 'illness'. It is alleged that due to lack of proper treatment facilities and negligence by the prison authorities, many prisoners become ill and some die. Again, there have been instances where persons who are abused in police custody and fall gravely ill, succumb to their mistreatment in jail custody, where they are sent by the court.
28. Odhikar demands the government ensure adequate medical treatment in every prison and stop torture in remand.

Public lynching continues

29. In September 2016, two persons were reportedly killed due to public lynching.
30. Due to a weak criminal justice system, lack of respect for law, distrust of the police and instability in the country, the tendency to resort to public lynching is increasing. People are losing their confidence and faith in the police and judicial system. At the same time, the social fabric is crumbling resulting in insensitivity, insecurity, lack of empathy and fear. As a result, incidents of killings by mob violence continue.

Hindrance to freedom of expression and the media

31. The government is severely curtailing the right to freedom of expression and preventing dissenting or critical voices. The government has already drafted repressive laws, such as- National Broadcasting Bill 2016 and Distortion of the History of Bangladesh Liberation War Crimes Bill 2016 and also finalised a draft for a Press Council (amendment) Act 2016 and the Foreign Donation (Voluntary Activities) Regulation Bill 2016, incorporating provisions for regulating non-government organisations. If these laws are passed, they will

²⁹ The daily Jugantor 28/09/2016; www.jugantor.com/last-page/2016/09/28/63848/

severely regulate the media and curtail freedom of expression of the citizens. In the meanwhile, the repressive Information and Communication Technology Act 2006 (amended 2009, 2013), is being imposed against people who are critical of the decisions and activities of those in high positions of the government and their families. Even the local administration is used to punish people through mobile courts. The social media are also under constant monitor by the government and the Cabinet has approved of the Bill for a new Digital Security Act 2016. In Bangladesh, the government controls most of the media; particularly the electronic media which are owned or controlled by supporters or members of the ruling party. The only state-owned television channel- Bangladesh Television is totally under the control of the government and is used to broadcast news of the government and the ruling party. Meanwhile the government closed down known as pro-opposition electronic media, such as Channel 1, Diganta TV, Islamic TV and the publication of the Print media, daily Amar Desh.

Facebook, Skype, Twitter, Viber, Imo, Snapchat, Whats App to be monitored

32. Encrypted Messaging Apps – Skype, Viber, Whats App, Imo, Snapchat – are getting under the government monitor. Furthermore, social media – Facebook, Twitter and private blogs are already being monitored. For this, a special detection machine called ‘Open Source Intelligence Solution’ is going to be bought.³⁰ At the first stage, one machine will be purchased for the Special Branch (SB) of Police and another one for Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP). On August 31, 2016 the Police Headquarters gave a letter to the Senior Secretary of the Ministry of Home Affairs, requesting that these two special machines be included in the existing organising structure of the police department.³¹



³⁰ The daily Manabzamin, 05/09/2016; www.mzamin.com/article.php?mzamin=30374&cat=2/

³¹ The daily Manabzamin, 05/09/2016; www.mzamin.com/article.php?mzamin=30374&cat=2/

Use of the Information and Communication Technology Act 2006 (amended 2009 and 2013)

33. The repressive law, Information and Communication Technology Act, 2006 (amended 2009 and 2013) remains in force. The latest amendment to the ICT Act was made on October 6, 2013. Section 57³² 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 imprisonment, with no minimum; to a term of a minimum of seven years and maximum of 14 years imprisonment. This law has curtailed the freedom of expression and the government is using it against human rights defenders, journalists, bloggers and activists of the opposition political parties and even the ordinary people who have alternative opinions.
34. According to information gathered by Odhikar, in September 2016, two people were arrested under the Information and Communication Technology Act 2006 (amended in 2009 and 2013) for writing posts against high officials of the government and their families, mainly on facebook. A case is as follows:
35. On September 1, 2016 police arrested Siddiqur Rahman Khan, Editor of an online portal, 'Shiksha.com', under the Information and Communication Technology Act 2006 (amended 2009 and 2013). On September 2, the investigating officer of this case and Inspector of Cyber Crime and Counter Terrorism Unit, Shawkat Ali Sarkar, produced him before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate of Dhaka, and sought a five-day remand for interrogation. It was stated in the remand application that Siddiqur Rahman Khan had published an indecent report based on false information against the former Director General of the Secondary and Higher Secondary Education Department, Professor Fahima Khatun. In a counter, his lawyer said that such report was published on 'Shiksha.com' based on appropriate documents and information. Metropolitan Magistrate Maruf Hossain rejected the remand application and ordered Siddiqur Rahman Khan be sent to jail.³³ It is to be mentioned that Professor Fahima Khatun is the wife of the ruling party MP of Brahmanbaria-3, R A M Obaidul Muktedir Chowdhury and the sister of the Food Minister Kamrul Islam.³⁴

³² 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 10 million or both.

³³ The daily Manabzamin, 03/09/2016; www.mzamin.com/article.php?mzamin=30065&cat=3/

³⁴ Information gathered by Odhikar.



Siddiqur Rahman Khan, Editor of 'Shikhsa.com'. Photo: Manabzamin, 3 September 2016

Meetings and assemblies prohibited

Chhatra League and police barred a cycle rally brought out by online activists and students

36. On September 30, 2016 activists of Chhatra League and police foiled a cycle rally brought out by students and facebook activists campaigning against the construction of a coal-based power plant in Rampal near the Sundarbans. At around 10:30am, the rally faced the first obstacle at Central Shaheed Minar in Dhaka, where the programme was supposed to begin. The obstruction took the form of a human chain formed by members of the Chhatra League.³⁵ At noon, the cyclists moved forward, defying the cordon and reached in front of the National Press Club. On their way to the Press Club, police used water canon at the Doel Chottor area to disperse the protesters. The protesters later hold a brief rally in front of the Press Club, where Professor Anu Muhammad, Member-Secretary of the National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources, Power and Ports condemned the attacks carried out by Chhatra League and police. According to an organiser and Dhaka University student Zakaria Hossain, Chhatra League activists assaulted several activists during the confrontation.³⁶ One of the leaders of the National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources, Power and Ports; and General Secretary of Revolutionary Workers Party, Saiful Huq informed Odhikar that 25 activists were injured during the several confrontations with police and Chhatra League activists.

³⁵ 'Protests for Sundarbans face police, BCL bar' - The Daily Star (online version), 30/09/2016; <http://www.thedailystar.net/country/bcl-foils-cycle-rally-sundarbans-1292107>

³⁶ 'Police, BCL men interrupt rally against Rampal plant' - The New Age (on line version), 30/09/2016; <http://newagebd.net/254290/police-bcl-men-interrupt-rally-rampal-plant/>



Police spray water when the students and online activists broke away from police bar at Doel Chottor in Dhaka. Photo: Prothom Alo, 30 September 2016

37. On September 2, 2016 Senbag Upazila unit BNP organised an extended meeting at Samirmunshirhat Mayabi Community Centre under Senbag in Noakhali District. According to BNP source, the party had taken police permission to organise this meeting two days previously. However, on the day of the meeting when the leaders and activists of BNP gathered from different areas, they found that police had barricaded the meeting venue. Police also stopped BNP's leaders and activist from holding a meeting.³⁷
38. Odhikar expresses grave concern over the persistent interference of the government on freedoms of opinion, expression and assembly and association of the citizens of the country. Odhikar believes that if any opinion or statement of any citizen goes against the government, he or she is likely to be arrested, persecuted or harassed by the state. Odhikar also demands that the government repeal all repressive laws, including the Information and Communication Technology Act 2006 (amended 2009, 2013) immediately. At the same time, Odhikar also urges the government to refrain from hindering people's fundamental rights to freedom of expression and assembly.

Aggressive policy of the Indian government on Bangladesh continues

39. The Indian government is taking transit facility through Bangladesh at almost no cost and is also taking advantage of other business and trade facilities. At

³⁷ The daily Manabzamin, 04/09/2016; www.mzamin.com/article.php?mzamin=30146&cat=9/

the same time the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) is torturing and killing Bangladeshi citizens indiscriminately along the border areas. Furthermore, the Government of Bangladesh has initiated a process to build Rampal Power Plant with an Indian company near the world's largest mangrove forest, the Sundarbans, located in the Southern part of Bangladesh, which is threatening Bangladesh's ecology, natural heritage and the livelihood of the people of that area. Moreover, India is depriving Bangladesh from getting adequate water during the dry season and creating floods over Bangladesh by opening all the sluice gates of the Farakka barrage constructed on the Ganges River and the Gajaldoba barrage constructed on the Teesta River, during the monsoon (rainy) season; and thus violating international human rights laws. In this way the Indian government continues its destructive policies towards Bangladesh.

Human rights violations by Indian BSF in border areas

40. According to information collected by Odhikar, in September 2016, five Bangladeshi citizens were gunned down by the Indian Border Security Force (BSF). Four Bangladeshis were also injured by the BSF. Among them, three were shot and one was injured by hurling sound grenades. Moreover, one Bangladeshi was abducted by the BSF.
41. In the morning of September 9, 2016, some Bangladeshi cattle traders went to bring cows from near international pillar 915 of sub pillar 8S at Burirhat border under Goral Union of Kaliganj Upazila in Lalmonirhat District. At that time, patrolling BSF members of Satbhandaria Camp of India at Kochbihar border opened fire at them. One Bangladeshi citizen named Mohubar Rahman (38) was shot dead on the spot and two others named Selim Hossain and Shariful Islam were shot and injured.³⁸



Mohubar Rahman shot dead by BSF in Lalmonirhat on September 09, 2016, Photo: Odhikar

³⁸ Report sent by local human rights defender associated with Odhikar from Lalmonirhat

Construction of Rampal Coal-based Power Plant

42. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) suggested that the Bangladesh government cancel the project that was undertaken to build a 1320 MW coal-fired power plant in a location at Rampal near the Sundarbans. The UNESCO stated that if this power plant is built, it would cause irreparable damage to the forest and the project should be relocated. The three-member UNESCO expert team which visited Bangladesh in March, made this appeal in their report submitted to the government. The report said the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report found many discrepancies between the statements of Rampal project construction firm Bangladesh-India Friendship Power Company and the tender documents. During their Bangladesh visit, the team was only allowed to meet a limited number of experts and interaction with the local people was also organised by the company.³⁹ The UNESCO report highlighted four risks regarding the Rampal project. These are, air pollution, water pollution, increased river traffic and accumulated pollution caused by industries and infrastructure coming up in the project area. Furthermore, the report stated that the rich bio-diversity of the Sundarbans and forest animals will be endangered; the burning of coal at Rampal will lead to emissions of large amounts of sulphur dioxide, carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide and mercury. Sulphur dioxide and nitrous oxide will cause acid rain, which will be a serious threat to Sundarban's water biodiversity and mercury emissions will also pollute the environment. It will enter the human body through fish consumption and people will face the consequences of mercury poisoning.⁴⁰ The UNESCO is not just saying that the Sundarbans will be protected if Rampal project is cancelled. It has also pointed out that prolonged harm on the world's heritage Sundarbans has been due to the construction of the Farakka barrage on the River Ganges.⁴¹ It is to be mentioned that the construction of Farakka barrage was started in 1961 across the Ganges River located in Maldah and Murshidabad of the Indian state of West Bengal and completed in 1974 at a cost of US \$ 3 billion. On April 21, 1975 operations of this barrage commenced. The barrage is about 2,240 meters (7,350 ft) long. Due to this barrage, the life and livelihood of the people of South-Western parts of Bangladesh has fallen in danger during dry season as a result of the low flowing water of the Ganges. Agricultures, irrigation, fisheries, industries,

³⁹ "UNESCO calls for shelving Rampal project", the daily Prothom Alo, 24/09/2016, <http://en.prothom-alo.com/environment/news/122299/Unesco-calls-for-shelving-Rampal-project>

⁴⁰ Ibid

⁴¹ The daily Prothom Alo, 25/09/2016; www.prothom-alo.com/bangladesh/article/985558/

water transport, and water supplies of Bangladesh harmed.⁴² From January to May 2016, Bangladesh received 120,864 cusecs of water less in 15 intervals.⁴³



Sundarbans, the world's largest mangrove forest, Sundarbans part situated in Bangladesh. Photo: Collected

43. It is to be mentioned that on July 12, 2016 an agreement of the much debated project of the Rampal Coal-based Power Plant was signed in Dhaka. The agreement was signed by the Managing Director of Bangladesh-India Friendship Power Company Limited (BIFPCL), Ujjal Kanti Bhattacharya; and the General Manager of the construction company Bharat Heavy Electric Limited (BHEL), Prem Pal Yadav. Construction of Rampal coal-based power plant has already commenced. The government signed this agreement with India ignoring protests from civil society and political parties. The ecology of the world largest mangrove forest, the Sundarbans, will be destroyed if this power plant is established. As a result, environmentally there will be a massive negative impact on Bangladesh.

Human rights violations on religious minority communities

44. Incidents of attacks on citizens belonging to minority communities and at their places of worship continue due to the unavailability of justice for similar incidents that took place in the past; and also due to the politicisation of these incidents. At present, the human rights situation of citizens belonging to minority communities is deplorable, as alleged by their representatives.⁴⁴
45. On September 22, 2016 at night, some unidentified criminals came to the Hindu temple at Purba Keshalidanga of Kamarpara Union under Sadullapur

⁴² Wikipedia; <https://bn.wikipedia.org/s/11te>

⁴³ Munshi Abdul Mannan, 'Destructive Barrage Farakka', the daily Inqilab, 27/08/2016; <https://www.dailyinqilab.com/details/34961/>

⁴⁴ The daily Manabzamin, 23/04/2016; www.mzamin.com/article.php?mzamin=11043&cat=2/

Upazila in Gaibandha District and vandalised the effigy of the goddess Durga.⁴⁵

46. In the early morning of September 23, 2016 some unidentified criminals broke the head of an effigy of Lakshmi, the Hindu goddess of wealth and good fortune, after breaking the bamboo gate of a Durga temple in Kakina Village under Kaliganj Upazila in Lalmonirhat.⁴⁶
47. Odhikar condemns such incidents. Odhikar demands the government bring the perpetrators to justice through impartial and unbiased investigation and ensure the security of the citizens belonging to all religious and ethnic minority communities; and their places of worship.

Violence against women

48. Incidents of violence against women continue; and most of the victims are not getting justice due to a prevailing culture of impunity.

Rape

49. In September 2016, Odhikar recorded a total number of 70 females who were raped. Among them, 25 were women, 43 were children and the age of two victims could not be ascertained. Of the women, 12 were victims of gang rape and four were killed after being raped. Out of the 43 child victims, 14 were victims of gang rape and one was killed after being raped. Six women and children were victims of attempted rape. One example is as follows:
50. On September 15, 2016 a college student named Helena Akhter (21) was killed after being raped by criminals at her home in Haridrabadia Village of Gulishakhali Union under Amtoli Upazila in Borguna District. On September 16, her brother Mizanur Rahman filed a case with the police station accusing six persons. Police arrested Helena's ex-husband Arifur Rahman Shohag in this regard. On September 27, 2016 Shohag made a confessional statement under section 164 of the Code of Criminal Procedure before the court.⁴⁷

Dowry-related violence

51. The Dowry system is deeply rooted in society and its cruelty takes away the lives of many brides. Dowry has become a serious social ailment, with women in all sectors and their families being affected. Poor women have been victims of physical assault and death by their husbands and in-laws due to failure to provide a dowry. According to information gathered by Odhikar, in September 2016, a total of 13 women were subjected to dowry violence. Of

⁴⁵ *ibid*

⁴⁶ The Daily Star, 24/09/2016, 'Hindu idol broken in Lalmonirhat temple'.

⁴⁷ The daily Prothom Alo, 17/09/2016 and the daily Jugantor, 01/10/2016; www.jugantor.com/bangla-face/2016/10/01/64741/

these women, it has been alleged that eight were killed and four were physically abused over dowry demands and one was committed suicide. An incident is as follows:

52. A housewife named Fatema Begum (25) was allegedly choked to death by her husband Shafiqul Islam and some of her in-laws over dowry demands in Machhimpur village of Murapara Union under Rupganj Upazila in Narayanganj District. The father of the deceased, who by profession a farmer, Rowshan Ali said that he married off his daughter with Shafiqul Islam of Machhimpur village 8 years ago. During the wedding, 50 thousand Taka along with some jewelry and furniture were given to Shafiqul as dowry. After the marriage Fatema Begum gave birth to a daughter. Fatema's husband Shafiqul Islam, her brother-in-law Nazrul Islam and her mother-in-law Masuda Begum had been demanding one hundred thousand taka since 2015. Of the money, 50 thousand taka was paid six months ago. After that, the accused were physically and mentally torturing Fatema for the other 50 thousand. In the morning of September 13, 2016 (on Eid day), Fatema's in-laws members, including her husband Shafiqul Islam, brother-in-law Nazrul Islam and mother-in-law Masuda Begum strangled her to death as she refused to give further dowry. Rowshan Ali filed a case with Rupganj Police Station in this regard accusing Shafiqul Islam, Nazrul Islam and Masuda Begum. Police are yet to arrest anyone involved in this incident.⁴⁸
53. In 1980, Bangladesh passed the Dowry Prohibition Act banning dowry. The law contains provisions for imprisonment or a fine or both for taking dowry. Section 11 of the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act, 2000 (amended 2003) also contains provisions for punishment for dowry-related violence. Regardless of the laws, dowry violence is a vicious cycle and the root cause for domestic violence in the country.

Acid violence

54. In September 2016, according to Odhikar documentation, a total of seven persons became victims of acid violence. Of them, four were woman, two were girls and one man were victims of acid violence. One incident is as follows:
55. On September 26, 2016 Shelly Akhtar (22) was asleep with her mother Hosne Ara Begum (55) in a slum at the Pologround area under Kotwali Police Station in Chittagong. At around 5:00 am, acid was thrown at Shelly and her mother. Both were admitted to the Burn and Plastic Surgery Unit of Chittagong Medical College Hospital. Doctors said that 15% of Shelly's body and 10% of Hosne Ara's body were burnt with acid. Injured Hosne Ara Begum said that a few years ago her daughter Shelly married an auto-rickshaw driver Jahangir.

⁴⁸ Report sent by local human rights defender associated with Odhikar from Narayanganj

But Shelly divorced him one year ago and left Jahangir's home as she could not bear the physical and mental abuse. She claimed that Jahangir threw acid on them to take revenge.⁴⁹ On September 29, 2016 police arrested Jahangir from Dhaka.



Shelly Akhtar, victim of acid violence, showing her previous photo by her mobile phone while under treatment. Photo: Prothom Alo, 27 September 2016

56. Despite the existence of the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act, 2000, the Acid Control Act, 2002 and the Acid Crime Control Act, 2002, girls and women are falling victim to acid violence due to the non-implementation of the laws. Many men have also fallen victim to acid attacks. Though it is a punishable offence to buy, sell or import acid without a licence, due to a loose monitoring system, acid is readily available and such violence can be perpetrated upon any person. A majority of the acid attacks on women occur due to refusal of proposal of love, marriage or sexual advances or over land disputes.

Sexual harassment

57. According to information gathered by Odhikar, in September 2016, a total of 25 girls and women were victims of sexual harassment. Of them four committed suicide, one was killed, three were injured, one was assaulted, one was abducted and 15 were victims of stalking. Six men were injured by the stalkers for protesting such incidents. Some examples:
58. A youth named Milon Mondol (18) used to regularly give love proposals to and stalk a girl student of class X, Mitu Mondol, of Nabagram High School on her way to and from school, in Alishakandi Village under Kalkini Upazila in Madaripur District. As Mitu rejected his proposals, on September 18, 2016 Milon Mondol stabbed her when she was going to school. Milon Mondol tried to escape but villagers caught him and handed him over to police.

⁴⁹ The daily Prothom Alo, 27/09/2016 and a report sent by local human rights defender associated with Odhikar from Chittagong

Meanwhile, seriously wounded Mitu Mondol succumbed to her injuries on the way to hospital.⁵⁰



Debauched Milon Mondol was arrested for killing a school student Mitu Mondol. (Inset Mitu Mondol), Photo: Odhikar

59. On January 26, 2011, a Division Bench of the High Court Division of the Supreme Court, comprising of Justice M. Iman Ali and Justice Sheikh Hasan Arif, ordered every incident of stalking related harassment to be regarded as acts of 'sexual harassment'. At the same time, the High Court Division Bench declared inclusion of all Government and private places in the proposed Prevention of Repression on Women and Children Act 2000 (Amendment) as potential areas of sexual harassment along with the educational institutions and work places. Stalking through SMS, E-mail, telephone and cell phone are also being included in the law as criminal offences. Furthermore, the Court asked that necessary measures be taken in order to make registration for cyber cafés compulsory and to record the identity of users.⁵¹ The Court also delivered a judgement that a separate cell or team shall be set up in every police station in order to prevent sexual harassment. The team will submit reports on sexual harassment cases every month at the meetings of district level law and order prevention committee.⁵² Despite the High Court order, separate cells are not set up in most of the police stations.

Hindrance to human rights activities of Odhikar

60. The present government is harassing Odhikar for being vocal against human rights violations and for campaigning to stop this. The government, after assuming power in 2009, started the harassment on Odhikar for its reports on the human rights situation of the country. After that on August 10, 2013 at

⁵⁰ Report sent by local human rights defender associated with Odhikar from Madaripur

⁵¹ The daily Prothom Alo, 27/01/2011, <http://www.prothom-alo.com/detail/date/2011-01-27/news/126785>

⁵² The daily Naya Diganta, 27/01/2011

night, 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 organised by the religious group Hefazate Islam on May 5-6, 2013. Adilur and Odhikar's Director ASM Nasiruddin Elan, were later charged under section 57(1) of the Information and Communication Technology Act, 2006 (Amended 2009). They were detained in prison and later, Adilur and Elan were released on bail after spending 62 and 25 days in prison respectively. Odhikar regularly faces harassment by different organs of the government. Adilur Rahman Khan, staff members of Odhikar and the office 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. Furthermore, the NGO Affairs Bureau (NGOAB) has barred the release of all project related funds of Odhikar, for two and half years, withheld renewal of its registration 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.

Recommendations

1. In order to restore democracy and the voting rights of the people an accountable government must be established through free fair and inclusive elections under an neutral interim government or under the supervision of the UN with the participation of all political parties; and initiatives must be taken to fixing dysfunctional institutions through an elected government.
2. The Government has to investigate and explain all incidents of enforced disappearance and post-disappearance killings, allegedly perpetrated by law enforcement agencies. The Government must bring the members of the security and law enforcement agencies who are involved, to justice before the law. Odhikar urges the government to sign and ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, adopted by the UN General Assembly.
3. Incidents of extrajudicial killings and torture by law enforcement agencies must be investigated and the perpetrators be brought to effective justice. The law enforcement agencies must follow 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”. The Government must ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture; and effectively implement the Torture and Custodial Death (Prevention) Act, 2013. The persons who tortured school student Sabbir and the persons who were involved in his detention and ‘punishment’ through a mobile court, should be brought to justice.
4. The Ready-made garment factories need to be brought under synchronized security programmes and the factories should be made with adequate infrastructural and other facilities. Those responsible for explosion in Tampaco Foils Limited must be arrested and brought to justice. Adequate compensation should be given to the families of the deceased and injured workers and an appropriate measure to be taken for treatment of the wounded workers.
5. Interference to freedom of expression and of the media must be stopped. The Government must withdraw cases filed against all human rights defenders and journalists; and it should also bring the perpetrators to justice through proper investigation. 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 or for expressing their opinions and thoughts, including, the Acting Editor of the daily Amar Desh Mahmudur Rahman and Convener of Nagorik Oikko, Mahmudur Rahman Manna should be released immediately. All repressive laws, including the Information and Communication Technology Act, 2006 (amendment 2009, 2013) and the Special Powers Act, 1974 must be repealed.

Monitoring of the social media and internet, leading to arrests and harassment and human rights violations, should be stopped.

6. The Government must refrain from repressive and unconstitutional activities including interference on freedom of assembly. The government should establish democracy and rule of law by refraining from violating civil and political rights.
7. The Government should protest strongly against human rights violations on Bangladeshi citizens by the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) and take initiatives to investigate and make the Indian Government accountable and compensate the families of the victims. The Government must also ensure the safety and security of the Bangladeshi citizens residing at the border areas. The Indian Government must stop the construction of the destructive coal-based power plant in Rampal in Bangladesh. India must also not open or close the sluice gates of Farakka and Gajaldoba barrages unilaterally for the sake of its own benefit.
8. The Government must take all measures to protect the rights of the citizens belonging to religious, ethnic and linguistic minority communities and ensure their security.
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 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 measures and harassment against human rights defenders associated with Odhikar should be stopped. The government must release the funds of Odhikar to enable it to continue its human rights activities.

Tel: +88-02-9888587, Fax: +88-02-9886208

Email: odhikar.bd@gmail.com, odhikar.documentation@gmail.com

Website: www.odhikar.org

Notes:

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