



The Anti-Torture Consortium meets with Odhikar and Coordinators of the Anti-Discrimination Students Movement

Today, 23 February 2025, members of the Anti-Torture Consortium and Coordinators of Students Against Discrimination met at Odhikar to talk about the issue of torture. Odhikar's Secretary Dr. Saira Rahman Khan, Director ASM Nasiruddin Elan, Senior Researcher Taskin Fahmina, staff and interns attended the meeting.

The discussion focused on the deep-rooted practice and prevalence of torture in Bangladesh and touched on the importance of systemic reforms of the Constitution, police and the judiciary, as well as the implementation of existing legal frameworks, to prevent torture. Since it was founded in 1994, Odhikar has been vocal against torture, extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances in Bangladesh.

Odhikar's Senior Researcher Taskin Fahmina began by presenting Odhikar's background and work related to torture in Bangladesh. According to Odhikar's statistics, from 2009 to 2024, a total of 189 persons were reportedly tortured to death, although it is estimated that this number may be much higher. Members of the Anti-Torture Consortium mentioned three necessary safeguards which need to be ensured during an arrest – namely, access to a lawyer upon request, adequate medical attention, and the notification of family members and third parties using well-maintained arrest registry books. Afterwards, student leaders shared their experiences of being unlawfully detained, tortured in custody and intimidated by members of law enforcement agencies and security forces during the July-August movement. They also expressed their commitment to improving the human rights situation in Bangladesh, envisioning that the younger generation will partake in national politics and nation-building.

The consortium highlighted that the best way to end torture is to ensure that existing legislation is properly implemented, and ineffective laws are either reformed or repealed. Student leaders emphasized the role of the Anti-Torture Consortium and the larger international community in the struggle towards a Bangladesh without torture.