



## Joint Consultation with the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances



On 15 June 2025, a joint consultation on enforced disappearances in Bangladesh was held between Odhikar, United for the Victims of Enforced Disappearance (UVED), and Human Rights Support Society (HRSS), with members of the United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances (WGEID), during their four-day visit to Bangladesh. The meeting was convened by the UN Resident Coordinator's Office in Gulshan, Dhaka.

Victim family members and individuals, who had survived enforced disappearance, were present and shared their harrowing experiences. Ms. Anisha Islam Insha, Ms. Nasrin Jahan Smrity, and Mr. Zahid Hasan, representing families whose loved ones remain missing, spoke of the enduring pain and hardship they continue to face.

Mr. ASM Nasiruddin Elan, Director of Odhikar, emphasized the need to hold all perpetrators of enforced disappearances accountable and called for their immediate prosecution through the International Crimes Tribunal.

Ms. Taskin Fahmina, Senior Researcher of Odhikar, presented a publication by Odhikar to the esteemed members of WGEID named "Disappeared by Forced" and shared documentation gathered by the organisation from January 2009 to 5 August 2024. According to Odhikar, 730 persons were subjected to enforced disappearance during this period. Of these, 83 were later victims of extrajudicial executions, 485 resurfaced alive, and 162 remain missing. Three victims were found in India and there is a possibility that there could be more victims there. Odhikar believes these figures represent only a fraction of the actual number, as many families remain silent due to fear or repression.

From UVED—a platform of survivors—former Ambassador and surfaced alive victim Mr. Maroof Zaman stressed the need to expand the Enquiry Commission on Enforced Disappearances to all administrative divisions. Fellow UVED members and enforced disappearance survivors Mr. Ikbāl Chowdhury and Mr. Humayun Kabir also described the torture and inhumane treatment they endured during their secret detention.

The Executive Director of Human Rights Support Society, Mr. Ijajul Islam spoke about the misuse of the Anti-Terrorism Act to target innocent individuals under the pretext of national security.

Several recommendations were made by the rights groups, Victim families and survivors towards the Working Group:

1. Conduct independent, impartial, and transparent investigations into all cases of enforced disappearances.
2. Urge the authorities to implement the Guiding Principles for the Search for Disappeared Persons, including the adoption of a national strategy for effective search operations.
3. Urge the authorities to immediately withdraw all false or fabricated cases filed against survivors.
4. Urge the authorities for adoption of legal provisions that enable the families of disappeared individuals to manage the victims' bank accounts, assets, and properties and for adequate reparation for both the victims and their families.
5. Press for the enactment of a comprehensive victim and witness protection law to guarantee safety during legal proceedings.
6. Press for the Amendment of the Anti-Terrorism Act,
7. Urge the authorities to disband the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), a security force repeatedly implicated in enforced disappearances and extrajudicial executions.
8. Recognize the need for international accountability if fair trials are disrupted,
9. Recognize the need for the draft legislation on enforced disappearance to be brought in full conformity with the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (ICPPED).
10. Ensure that those responsible for destroying evidence, including the destruction of secret detention centers, or obstructing investigations into enforced disappearances, are prosecuted.
11. Ensure the guarantee of fair, transparent, and expeditious trials to end the prolonged suffering of victims and their families.
12. Provide technical support to the Government of Bangladesh for the implementation of the ICPPED and to improve forensic, legal, and investigative capacities in line with international human rights standards.

This consultation reaffirmed the vital role of international mechanisms, including the WGEID, in ensuring accountability, truth, and justice for victims of enforced disappearance and their families.

Odhikar remains committed to collaborating with the UN system and other stakeholders to combat impunity and uphold human rights in Bangladesh.

Mobile No: +880 1335 084 080

Email: [Odhikar.bd@gmail.com](mailto:Odhikar.bd@gmail.com), [Odhikar.documentation@gmail.com](mailto:Odhikar.documentation@gmail.com)

Website: [www.Odhikar.org](http://www.Odhikar.org)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Odhikar.HumanRights>

Twitter: [@odhikar\\_bd](https://twitter.com/odhikar_bd)