

Victims of Enforced Disappearance Share Testimonies with Inquiry Commission in Khulna

On 25 July 2025, representatives from the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearance held a consultation meeting with victims and families affected by enforced disappearance in Khulna Division. The meeting took place at the BRAC Learning Centre in Khalishpur, Khulna, and was organized by Odhikar, with support from the United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office (UNRCO).



Throughout the day—from 10:00 AM to 5:30 PM—a total of 21 individuals from the Khulna region shared their deeply personal experiences. Among them were survivors who had reappeared after periods of disappearance, as well as family members of individuals who remain missing. Their powerful testimonies highlighted the ongoing pain and uncertainty faced by the victims and their loved ones.



Commission members recorded testimonies and acknowledged the victims' demands for justice and reparation in response to the losses they have endured. Those who still have not submit their documents to the Commission were

encouraged to do so. The consultation offered a critical platform to collect firsthand evidence and initiate dialogue on next steps for trial, rehabilitation, and restitution.



The discussion, facilitated by ASM Nasiruddin Elan, Director of Odhikar, and Commission members Nabila Idris and Sazzad Hossain, engaged in in-depth conversations to better understand the victims' experiences and gather insights to create future actions. As they recounted the trauma inflicted under the deposed authoritarian regime of Sheikh Hasina, victims and their families grew visibly emotional—as they relived their painful experiences of repression and loss.



On the night of August 4, 2016, Moklesur Rahman Jony went to the New Market area of Satkhira town to buy medicine for his elderly father. At approximately 9:30 PM, Jony was picked up in front of Satkhira's New Market by a team from Satkhira Sadar Police Station and the Detective Branch (DB), led by Sub-Inspector (SI) Himel and DB SI Kamal. Several of the officers were reportedly dressed in plain clothes. When his family inquired at the police station and DB office later that night, the authorities denied arresting him. However, at 5 AM on August 5, Jony's father saw him in custody in the Sadar police station lockup.

Recalling the incident, Jony's father said:

"On August 5, I handed my beloved son two bananas and some bread at the lockup—that was the last meal I ever gave him. After that, we lost all trace of him." "Later, on August 8, when I met SI Himel again to ask about Jony's condition, he informed me that Jony had been taken elsewhere on orders from higher authorities. Since then, my Jony never returned."



Jasmine, daughter of disappeared Habibul Bashar, recalled her father's abduction:

"On July 6th, 2011, around 5:30 in the morning my father was walking back home after Fajr prayer. Right in front of me and my mother, a group of police led by SI



Zahirul from Morelganj Police Station—some of whom were in plain clothes—forcefully detained my father from the street beside our house and loaded him onto a trawler. As they left, they said they were taking him to Morelganj Police Station. But when we quickly hired another trawler and arrived at the police station, we were told that Morelganj police had not detained him. Later, when we met the Superintendent of Police in Bagerhat district, he told us he knew nothing about the incident and suggested that a joint force might have taken

him. When I went to Morelganj police station again, OC Abdul Khalek arrogantly crossed his legs and blew cigarette smoke directly into my face. My younger brother—who was only 16 when our father was taken—applied for a job as a police constable in 2022. But after learning about our father’s disappearance, the police angrily discarded his documents. When he applied again in 2023, the results of his exam were never released by the police. After fourteen relentless years of searching for our father—through alleys, offices, and across districts—we are drained of hope. Our strength has frayed. We can no longer chase shadows.”



During the consultation meeting, Commission member Sazzad Hossain reaffirmed their commitment to supporting victims within the Commission’s jurisdiction. He noted that their second interim report had already been submitted to the interim government.

Commission’s other member Nabila Idris shared that the Commission had investigated 250 of the 1,800 complaints received. Addressing concerns about the slow pace of progress, she explained that persistent challenges in gathering evidence were hampering their efforts. Nonetheless, she emphasized that the Commission was working diligently to complete its mandate by December 2025.

UN Human Rights Office representative Zahid Hossain welcomed the Interim Government's decision to establish a UN human rights office in Bangladesh, calling it a key step toward advancing the country’s human rights efforts. He reaffirmed human rights as a core UN mandate and pledged support for victims seeking justice, especially those whose loved ones remain unaccounted for.

Odhikar's Director, ASM Nasiruddin Elan, stated that since its founding in 1994, Odhikar has remained steadfast in its mission to protect civil and political rights in Bangladesh. Despite enduring repeated state repression under the regime of deposed Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the organisation has continued to stand beside victims of abuse and injustice—providing psychosocial support and building their capacity to seek justice and reclaim their rights. Over the years, it has built enduring relationships with affected communities across the country. Since 2009, Odhikar has been documenting cases of enforced disappearance and has carried out vigorous advocacy against this grave human rights violation, both nationally and internationally. It is imperative that everyone takes a stand against enforced disappearance to ensure that such incidents never occur in Bangladesh again.