



On 5 February 2026, **Odhikar**, with the support of the Asian Federation Against Involuntary Disappearances (AFAD), organised a lobby meeting with two advisers of the Interim Government, which was also attended by survivors of enforced disappearance and family members of the disappeared. The meeting was held at the auditorium of the Bangladesh Institute of Law and International Affairs (BILIA), Dhaka.



Held a few days before the national election, the meeting conveyed important messages to the Interim Government and the future, elected government, and offered discussions and recommendations aimed at supporting survivors and victim-families.



Those present at the event included Industries and Housing & Public Works Adviser Adilur Rahman Khan, former member of the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances Md. Sazzad Hussain, and International Crimes Tribunal Prosecutor Uday Tasmir. Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Adviser Asif Nazrul joined the meeting online. The keynote paper was presented by Odhikar's Director (Advocacy) Taskin Fahmina, and the event was moderated by Odhikar's Director (Admin and Finance) ASM Nasiruddin Elan.

In the keynote paper, Odhikar presented seven recommendations to the government:

1. Disclose the fate of those who were disappeared;
2. Grant the families of the disappeared, the authority to manage bank accounts and property of the victim;
3. Withdraw false cases filed against returned survivors;
4. Prosecute those involved, as well as those who destroyed evidence or assisted perpetrators in escaping;
5. Provide compensation and rehabilitation to survivors and victim families;
6. Form a special commission to provide assistance to the survivor and victim families; and
7. Withdraw special privileges granted to accused military officers.



Former ambassador and government secretary, M. Maroof Zaman, a survivor of disappearance during the Hasina government; Lieutenant Colonel Hasinur Rahman, who was disappeared twice; survivor's Iqbal Chowdhury and Rahmatullah (the latter

who was disappeared, taken to India, and later returned), all demanded proper trials, reparation, and the withdrawal of false and fabricated cases that remain in effect against them. They also called for the formation of a commission to support the victims and families. They emphasized that the new government formed after the election must continue the judicial process regarding enforced disappearances.

Prosecutor Uday Tasmir stated that investigations into enforced disappearances are time-consuming and complex. Gathering court-admissible evidence is extremely difficult because disappearances were carried out systematically and secretly. The accused often provide false information and do not easily disclose facts.



Former Commission member Md. Sazzad Hussain said the Commission had been given the responsibility to examine cases of enforced disappearances that had occurred, identify and locate victims of enforced disappearance, collect information from families, institutions, and organisations; inform families of victims' whereabouts where possible, identify individuals or groups responsible and recommend legal action, submit reports to the government, and propose institutional and legal reforms to prevent recurrence of such crimes. He noted that the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances has been dissolved and that the National Human Rights Commission of Bangladesh has been tasked with continuing the unfinished work. He further stated that the Enforced Disappearances Prevention and Redress Ordinance, 2025 and the National Human Rights Commission Ordinance, 2025 would lose effectiveness unless enacted into law within 30 days of the formation of the elected government. Therefore, it is everyone's responsibility to pressure the government to turn the Ordinance into law within the stipulated time.



Nasrin Jahan Smriti, wife of Ismail Hossain Baten, who never returned after being disappeared; Amena Akhter Brishti, wife of Firoz Khan; and Jesmin Begum, daughter of Md. Habibur Rahman Hawlader, both who remain disappeared, also spoke. Addressing Law Adviser Asif Nazrul online, they asked what had happened to their loved ones and described the severe economic and psychological pressures they face. They questioned the delay in receiving government-issued certificates that would allow them to manage the bank accounts of the victims, and also raised concerns about delays in justice for enforced disappearances.

In response, the Law Adviser stated that the new National Human Rights Commission, will assist victims of enforced disappearances and their families.

Housing and Public Works Adviser Adilur Rahman Khan, said that although advancing trials for enforced disappearances is difficult, it is a hopeful sign that such judicial proceedings are underway in Bangladesh. He added that Bangladesh is the only country in South Asia where this kind of judicial process has begun, and emphasized that the struggle for justice must continue.