

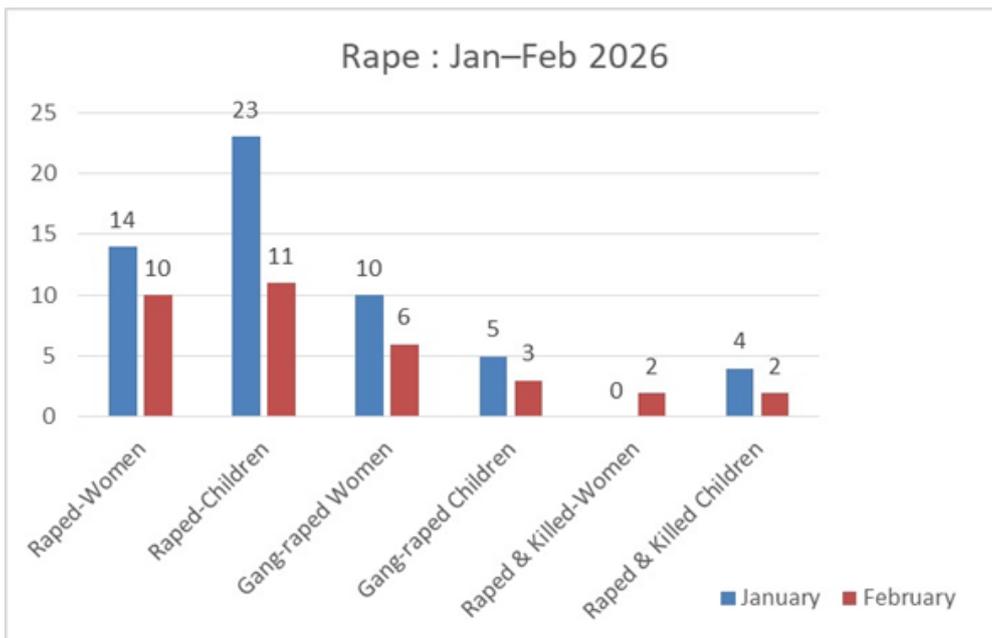


08 March 2026

## Statement of Odhikar on International Women’s Day 2026

March 8 is International Women’s Day. The United Nations declared 1975 as the *International Women’s Year*, and in the same year the Organization officially observed International Women’s Day on March 8 for the first time. Since then, this day has been observed all over the world. In Bangladesh, human rights and women’s rights organizations observe 8<sup>th</sup> March just as enthusiastically as the rest of the world.

In Bangladesh discrimination and violence against women remain extremely prevalent. Economically disadvantaged women are more frequently victims of discrimination and violence. Among the forms of violence against women, dowry-related violence, rape, domestic abuse, and sexual harassment are notable. In fact, reports of rape have risen alarmingly. According to information documented by **Odhikar**, a total of **58 women and girls were victims of rape between 1 January 2026 and 28 February 2026**. Among them, **24 were women and 34 were girls**. Of the 24 women, **16 were victims of gang rape, and two were killed after being raped**. Among the 34 girls, **eight were victims of gang rape, and six were killed after being raped**.



The root of social discrimination and violence against women in Bangladesh lies in patriarchal attitudes and mindsets. Women’s rights are also not adequately protected due to weaknesses in the justice system. Because of the lack of proper implementation of laws, corruption within the police and administration, and interference by politically influential individuals, in many cases perpetrators accused of violence against women cannot be punished. As a result, when offenders go unpunished, violence against women continues to increase. Yet it is extremely important that every offender

involved in violence against women is brought to justice. Furthermore, because reservations to Article 2 of CEDAW have not been withdrawn, discriminations in personal laws remain.

Odhikar believes that in order to eliminate discrimination against women in all spheres and to ensure women's safe and unhindered movement, social and legal resistance must be built against such violence.

**Odhikar's recommendations to stop violence against women in Bangladesh:**

- To prevent violence and discrimination against women in Bangladesh, the government must ensure proper implementation of the existing laws in the country.
- Incidents of rape must be investigated and the victim must not be stigmatized. Cases filed must not be withdrawn on political considerations.
- The judiciary must be allowed to function independently, and trials must be ensured in cases of violence against women.
- Long-term awareness programs must be undertaken at all levels, and social awareness and prevention information included in print and electronic media and academic textbooks in schools.