



## Third Quarterly Human Rights Report

July-September 2024

**Prepared: Odhikar**

**Published: 14 November 2024**

## Foreword

Since its establishment in 1994 as a human rights organisation, Odhikar has highlighted instances of human rights violations committed by the state. Alongside raising awareness amongst the people, Odhikar has consistently campaigned for internationally recognized civil and political rights, carrying out various activities in an attempt to prevent the state from committing human rights violations. Odhikar stands with victims of human rights violations regardless of political affiliation and works towards ensuring their safety and establishing justice.

While the July-September 2024 report was being prepared, Bangladesh's political landscape underwent drastic changes initiated by university students. From 1 July to 5 August the authoritarian government committed widespread human rights violations to suppress the student protests. Members of law enforcement agencies and leaders and activists of the ruling party indiscriminately shot at protesting students. 1581 people, including children, were killed<sup>1</sup>, over 18,000 were injured<sup>2</sup> and 550 people sustained injuries that damaged their eyesight<sup>3</sup>. What started as a student protest against the quota system, soon turned into a people's uprising against the autocratic regime. On 5 August, the people of Bangladesh ousted the authoritarian government of Sheikh Hasina through a mass uprising, and when the former Prime Minister was forced to flee the country, an interim government was formed on 8 August 2024.<sup>4</sup>

During its reign from 6 January 2009 to 5 August 2024, the Awami League-led government of Sheikh Hasina engaged in extensive human rights violations and acts of

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<sup>1</sup> Prothom Alo English 28 September 2024; <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/pm7kcgunmb>, Samakal 28 September 2024; <https://samakal.com/bangladesh/article/257973/>

<sup>2</sup> Prothom Alo English 7 September 2024; <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/1qyly6muhk>

<sup>3</sup> The Daily Star 19 August 2024; <https://bangla.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news-606761>

<sup>4</sup> The Daily Star 9 August 2024; <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news/yunus-led-interim-govt-takes-charge-3672656>

corruption. They destroyed the electoral system completely and forcefully retained power, politicizing many important state institutions and making them subservient. Several institutions, including the Election Commission, Anti-Corruption Commission and the National Human Rights Commission, were rendered dysfunctional. Odhikar also faced extreme state oppression due to its human rights-related activities. After publishing the fact-finding report on extrajudicial killings in 2013, on 14 September 2023, after 10 years of trial process, Dhaka Cyber Tribunal judge AM Zulfiqar Hayat sentenced Odhikar's secretary Adilur Rahman Khan and ASM Nasir Uddin Elan to two years imprisonment and fined them ten thousand taka each, under the repressive Information and Communications Technology Act 2006. In 2022, after eight years of stalling, the NGO Affairs Bureau under the Prime Minister's Office declined the application for renewal of Odhikar's registration. The High Court Division of the Supreme Court scrapped the convictions against Adilur Rahman Khan and ASM Nasir Uddin Elan on 22 August 2024, and at the time of the interim government, the NGO Affairs Bureau renewed Odhikar's registration by order of the court.

The three-month human rights report for July-September 2024 has been prepared by Odhikar based on reports sent by human rights activists affiliated with Odhikar and data published by different news media. This report has been divided into three sections. The first section (A) covers relevant information from 1 July to 5 August 2024, during the authoritarian regime of Sheikh Hasina. The second section (B) contains relevant information from 9 August to 30 September, spanning the interim government's rule. The third section (C) contains information regarding other human rights violations from 1 July to 30 September. Bangladesh had no government between 5-8 August 2024.

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## Statistics: January - September 2024

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Type of Human Rights Violation		Awami League Govt							No Government Exists	Interim Government		Total	
		January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August (1-5)	August (6-8)	August (9-31)		September
Extrajudicial killings & Massacre		1	1	0	2	1	1	1581 <sup>6</sup>		0	0	8	N/A
Enforced Disappearances		0	0	2	4	4	0	10	0	0	0	0	20
Death in Jail		15	15	11	6	6	8	2	0	0	4	5	72
Death Penalty	Sentenced to death	36	43	32	27	37	30	28	0	0	18	10	261
	Execution	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Human rights violations by Indian BSF	Bangladeshis Killed	2	0	4	3	2	2	1	0	0	1	2	17
	Bangladeshis Injured	0	1	5	5	3	2	5	2	0	2	0	25
Attack on journalists	Killed	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	1	0	0	0	5
	Injured	29	14	8	15	14	4	25	8	0	3	1	121
	Assaulted	2	2	2	7	6	0	2	0	0	2	0	23
Public lynching		6	4	8	4	5	1	1	35	0	14	17	95
Political Violence	Killed	22	15	8	8	18	20	14	93	4	34	18	254
	Injuries	1555	385	202	198	897	789	2219	734	9	467	841	8296

<sup>5</sup> Except for the information regarding extrajudicial killings in July - 05 August, all other information has been documented by Odhikar. The sources were national dailies and information collected from human rights defenders. Some people were killed jointly by police and Awami League activists. This data has also been inserted in Odhikar's extrajudicial killing and political violence files.

<sup>6</sup> Information from Prothom Alo English 28 September 2024; <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/pm7kcgunmb>, Samakal 28 September 2024; <https://samakal.com/bangladesh/article/257973/>, and from Students Against Discrimination and Jatiya Nagorik Committee. The number reported here reflects the total death toll during the July-August massacre. Odhikar is still investigating and compiling its list of extrajudicial killings during July - 05 August.

## (A) Reporting Period: 1 July – 5 August 2024

### The government's atrocities committed on students

#### *The massacre*

1. The student movement against the authoritarian regime of Sheikh Hasina is a historical event in Bangladesh. Seeking to repress the movement with a heavy hand, the then-government unleashed its affiliates, such as Chhatra League<sup>7</sup>, Jubo League<sup>8</sup> and Swechchasebak League<sup>9</sup>, against the student protestors. During this time, even a UN-labelled armed vehicle was deployed to quell protests.<sup>10</sup> Members of law enforcement agencies and security personnel shot at student protestors indiscriminately. **1581 people, including children, were killed<sup>11</sup>, over 18,000<sup>12</sup> were injured, and 550 people<sup>13</sup> sustained injuries that damaged their eyesight.** These numbers are expected to be much higher as the tally continues. The mass killings perpetrated in July-August 2024 are the largest in Bangladesh's history of repression during protests. Alongside the mass killings, members of law enforcement agencies also disappeared, arrested, and tortured student protestors.
2. The student protests began based on a writ petition.<sup>14</sup> On 5 June 2024, a bench consisting of Justice Kamrul Kader and Justice Khijir Hayat of the High Court

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<sup>7</sup> Student wing of the Bangladesh Awami League (BAL)

<sup>8</sup> Youth wing of the Bangladesh Awami League (BAL)

<sup>9</sup> Volunteer wing of the Bangladesh Awami League (BAL)

<sup>10</sup> DW News 23 July 2024; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TMF9dWjg8P0>

<sup>11</sup> Prothom Alo English 28 September 2024; <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/pm7kcgunmb>,

Samakal 28 September 2024; <https://samakal.com/bangladesh/article/257973/>

<sup>12</sup> Prothom Alo English 7 September 2024; <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/1qyly6muhk>

<sup>13</sup> The Daily Star 19 August 2024; <https://bangla.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news-606761>

<sup>14</sup> This movement began primarily on 17 February 2018. At this time, students protested to reform the quota system that existed in government jobs under the banner of "Bangladesh General Students'

Division of the Supreme Court ruled that the previous circular canceling the freedom fighter quota for jobs in government offices, autonomous and semi-autonomous institutions, and direct recruitment to various corporations (9<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> grade) was illegal. From 6 June, students organised a protest rally under the banner “Dhaka University Students,” opposing the High Court’s decision to reinstate the quota system and demanding the retention of merit-based recruitment.

3. On 1 July, various universities across the country, including Dhaka University, organised student rallies, demanding the reinstatement of the circular canceling the quota system. At this time, the protesters’ platform took on the name of “Anti-Discrimination Student Movement.” On 4 July, the six-member Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, headed by Chief Justice Obaidul Hassan, did not suspend the High Court’s decision, because of which the quota system remained. From then onwards, the protests gained momentum among students nationwide. Students joined the movement spontaneously and called for strikes. From 6 July, students from different universities and educational institutions across the country organised several programmes, including demonstrations, exam boycotts and student rallies. On 7 July they declared a blockade of all roads and highways. This programme, dubbed the “Bangla Blockade” by students, caused a shutdown of the whole country. On 8 July students blocked 11 regions in Dhaka, hosted demonstrations at nine universities, blockaded railways in three places and highways in six places. On this day, a team of 65 coordinators of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement was formed. On 10 July, the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement declared a Bangla Blockade from morning to

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Council.” Afterwards, the government disrupted the student’s serial peaceful rallies by using the police, who attacked the student protesters with sticks, pellet guns, tear gas, and hot water cannons. Members and activists of Chhatra League, Awami League supporters, joined the police to attack protesters, just as they did in 2024. At one point, when the protests spread across the entire student population, the Prime Minister was forced to announce the cancellation of the quota at the National Parliament. Then in 2021, some people identifying as children of freedom fighters filed a writ petition with the High Court Division of the Supreme Court, demanding this circular to be cancelled.

evening. On 11 July, in several regions of the country, police attacked students with sticks and fired tear gas and rubber bullets at them, leaving at least 40 people injured.<sup>15</sup> On 14 July during a press conference at Ganabhaban, the former Prime Minister, responding to a (pro-regime) journalist's question, remarked, "If the grandchildren of freedom fighters do not receive quota benefits, should the grandchildren of rajakars<sup>16</sup> receive them?" At midnight that same day, many Dhaka University students, across campus and several residence halls, protested against the former Prime Minister's remarks, which they considered derogatory. They chanted several slogans including "Who are you, who am I - rajakar, rajakar" and "We asked for our rights, but became rajakars." At a press conference on 15 July, General Secretary of Awami League Obaidul Quader, threatened to send the Chhatra League after student protesters, as is customary, stating that they would respond to the "Rajakar" slogan appropriately. After his speech, men<sup>17</sup> were brought to the university campus to attack students. On the same day, Chhatra League members and activists attacked student protesters at Dhaka University with firearms and various local weapons, leaving over 300 of them injured. Chhatra League activists also indiscriminately attacked female students, many of whom were physically assaulted and seriously injured.<sup>18</sup> Shots were fired at the students and bombs thrown at them.<sup>19</sup> Journalists attempting to document the events were also attacked by Chhatra League activists. When the injured were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, Chhatra League activists entered the hospital premises to continue their attacks. Helmeted, pro-government goons attacked not only Dhaka University, but also Jahangirnagar,

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<sup>15</sup> The Daily Star 12 July 2024; <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news/quota-protests-heat-govt-mulls-hard-line-3654791>, Manabzamin 12 July 2024; <https://mzamin.com/news.php?news=118270>

<sup>16</sup> The label "Rajakar" was given to associates and collaborators of the Pakistani military in 1971.

<sup>17</sup> The Daily Star 15 July 2024; <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news/bcl-quota-protesters-clash-3657531>, Daily Nayadiganta 16 July 2024; <https://www.dailynayadiganta.com/first-page/849961/>

<sup>18</sup> Prothom Alo English 16 July 2024; <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/city/kxvjs84138>, Samakal 16 July 2024; <https://samakal.com/education/article/246859>

<sup>19</sup> Prothom Alo English 15 July 2024; <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/3dnfvcty2a>, Manabzamin 16 July 2024; <https://mzamin.com/news.php?news=118886>



Rajshahi, and Chittagong universities,<sup>20</sup> Kushtia Islamic University, Kurigram Govt. College<sup>21</sup>, Rangpur Begum Rokeya University and student protesters in Jessore.<sup>22</sup> Police, Chhatra League, Jubo League, and other pro-government forces continued their attacks on student protesters on the streets.<sup>23</sup> On 16 July, a member of the police force named S I Yunus shot and killed Abu Sayeed, a student of Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur. The event, which was videoed on a cell phone, garnered widespread attention on social media. Dr. Tuhin Wadud, the University professor who took Abu Sayeed to the hospital, said that he had numerous rubber bullet wounds all over his body, including on his arms, chest, back, and face. The doctors performing the autopsy declared that this happened because he was shot from a close distance.<sup>24</sup> In order to distract from the case filed against his death, the preliminary information statement reads that Abu Sayeed died at some point from the protesters firing bullets and hurling bricks.<sup>25</sup> The police accused eleventh grade student Alfi Shahriar Mahim, of Police Lines School and College, Rangpur, in the case of Abu Sayeed's death. Mahim's father states that the police captured his son after shooting him in the foot. On 19 July, Mahim appeared before a court in Rangpur, after being shown arrested for Abu Sayeed's murder. According to his birth certificate, Mahim was 16 years and ten months old, but in the police case, his age was recorded as 19.<sup>26</sup> When students all over the country took to the streets after Abu Sayeed's

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<sup>20</sup> Prothom Alo English 16 July 2024; <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/city/kxvjs84138>, Samakal 16 July 2024; <https://samakal.com/education/article/246859/>

<sup>21</sup> The Daily Star 15 July 2024; <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news/bcl-quota-protesters-clash-3657531>, Jugantor 16 July 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/tp-firstpage/828506>

<sup>22</sup> Prothom Alo English 16 July 2024; <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/city/kxvjs84138>, Prothom Alo 16 July 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/h6dxt7siwl>

<sup>23</sup> Jugantor 17 July 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/tp-first-page/828882/>

<sup>24</sup> The Daily Star 27 July 2024; <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news/abu-sayeds-death-police-firing-cops-fir-runs-counter-known-facts-3662771>, Samakal 25 July 2024; <https://samakal.com/whole-country/article/247614/>

<sup>25</sup> The Daily Star 27 July 2024; <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news/abu-sayeds-death-police-firing-cops-fir-runs-counter-known-facts-3662771>, Prothom Alo 28 July 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/hhh9h7oz63>

<sup>26</sup> Prothom Alo English 1 August 2024; <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/eg1760ezrb>, Prothom Alo 1 August 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/623hzx82oj>

murder, police and activists of Chhatra League and Jubo League continued their violent spree.<sup>27</sup> The government began using the police, BGB, and specialized SWAT forces against the protesters.<sup>28</sup> At this point, local people also joined the student protesters.<sup>29</sup>



*Students gather at Shahbag intersection in Dhaka on July 11, breaking police barricades and demanding quota reforms. Photo: Samakal, 12 July 2024.*



*Chhatra League members attacking students protesting for quota reforms in government jobs at Dhaka University. Photo: Jugantor, 16 July 2024.*

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<sup>27</sup> Prothom Alo English 2 August 2024; <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/5jvl0xye5l>, Prothom Alo 2 August 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/djik2als3t>

<sup>28</sup> Samakal 19 July 2024; <https://epaper.samakal.com/nogor-edition/2024-07-19/1/6379>

<sup>29</sup> Nayadiganta 19 July 2024





Quota reform movement protesters being attacked at Dhaka University campus by Chhatra League.  
Photo: Samakal, 16 July 2024.



Three Chhatra League members with guns, seen firing at protesting students during clashes at Dhaka University. Photo: Prothom Alo: 16 July 2024.



স্বাস্থ্য - জরুরি শ্রাব্য		তারিখ: ১৬/০৭/২৪	
নিম্নোক্ত - ১৬/০৭/২৪		স্বাস্থ্য কর্মসূচির বিবরণ	
১৬/০৭/২৪		১৬/০৭/২৪	
১. নাম, বয়স, পেশা	২. জন্ম তারিখ	৩. জন্মস্থান	৪. জন্মের সময়
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Abu Sayeed and his autopsy report. Photo: SomoyTVNews, 24 September 2024.

4. In the Bishwa Road area of Rampura in Dhaka city, protesters sought refuge from police bullets in various streets and alleys. The police used drones to target and shoot at protesters.<sup>30</sup> As protesters had declared a “complete shutdown” from 18 July, the government shut off internet services<sup>31</sup> until 23 July and carried out indiscriminate killings. At this time there were arson attacks carried out on Dhaka’s Bangladesh Television building, the Directorate of Disaster Management and Setu Bhaban, and a Metrorail station was vandalised. Besides this, police boxes in different areas were also burnt down and vandalised.<sup>32</sup>
5. On 18 July, Shaikh Ashabul Yeamin, a student at the Military Institute of Science and Technology (MIST), was shot by the police. He was then hoisted onto the roof of an armored police vehicle. Yeamin was still alive at the time. Later, several policemen dragged him down and tossed his body across the road divider. The incident took place near the Pakiza Model Mosque in Savar during quota reform movements.<sup>33</sup>



*Police treating bullet-ridden Yeamin's body with utter disrespect. Photo: Prothom Alo, 15 August 2024.*

<sup>30</sup> Nayadiganta 19 July 2024

<sup>31</sup> New Age, 4 August, 2024; <https://www.newagebd.net/post/country/241641/mobile-internet-shut-down-across-bangladesh-again>, Prothom Alo 4 August 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/5h6t8ay1r1>

<sup>32</sup> Samakal 19 July 2024; <https://epaper.samakal.com/nogor-edition/2024-07-19/1/6373>

<sup>33</sup> Prothom Alo English 15 August 2024; <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/egizjx62l6>



6. The government imposed a curfew across the country on 20 July and the army was deployed. A general holiday was also declared. Student protesters still took to the streets.<sup>34</sup> The police headquarters stated that a total of 44 police officers had been killed in July-August.<sup>35</sup> 20 police stations including the police headquarters were attacked, vandalised, and set on fire.<sup>36</sup> Some other instances of extrajudicial killings related to the movement are mentioned below:
7. On 19 July, Al Amin Roni (24), a mechanic in a workshop, was shot dead by law enforcement personnel in Dhaka's Mohakhali. He was the only breadwinner of the family, and his wife was six months pregnant.<sup>37</sup> On 19 July, law enforcers shot at student protesters from helicopters in Dania, Dhaka, killing college student Mohammad Nayeem.<sup>38</sup> During clashes between protesters and police in front of the BTV building on 19 July, shots fired at protesters from helicopters injured many. When a driver named Alamgir Sheikh went to give the protesters water, he was also shot dead from a helicopter.<sup>39</sup> On 22 July, protesters were shot at by highway police officers from above the Institute of Child and Mother Health in Matuail. In retaliation, angry protesters set the building ablaze. The trapped highway police officers were rescued via helicopters. However, police did not rescue Selim Mondol (29), Abdus Salam (22), and Sohel (20), three carpenters who died entrapped in the building due to the smoke and fire.<sup>40</sup> On 4 August Golam Nafiz, an eleventh grader at Banani Bidyaniketan School and College, was shot, below the pedestrian bridge in Farmgate. Nafiz was carried away on a rickshaw, but Awami League leaders accosted the vehicle and

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<sup>34</sup> Prothom Alo English 2 August 2024, <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/5jvl0xye5l>, Prothom Alo 25 July 2024 (2 August 2024); <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/djik2als3t>

<sup>35</sup> The Daily Star 18 August 2024; <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news/police-hq-releases-names-and-details-slain-cops-3680371>

<sup>36</sup> The Daily Star 6 August 2024; <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news/66-dead-city-convulsed-violence-3670231>, Kaler Kantho 6 August 2024; <https://www.kalerkantho.com/online/national/2024/08/06/1412181>

<sup>37</sup> Samakal 22 July 2024; <https://epaper.samakal.com/nogor-edition/2024-07-22/7>

<sup>38</sup> Jugantor 22 July 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/tp-bangla-face/833728>

<sup>39</sup> New Age 24 September 2024; <https://www.newagebd.net/print/post/246044>, Samakal 25 July 2024; <https://samakal.com/whole-country/article/247629/>

<sup>40</sup> Nayadiganta 23 July 2024

prevented bullet-ridden Nafiz from being taken to the hospital. Despite facing obstacles from the police and Awami League leaders, Jibon Ahmed, a photojournalist at Manabzamin, was able to take a few pictures of Nafiz balancing on the rickshaw's footrest. The next day, when these photographs were published in the newspaper, Nafiz's parents were able to locate his body at the morgue.<sup>41</sup>



*Bullet-ridden Nafiz being carried away on a rickshaw. He was still holding onto a rod at the time. This photograph, published in the newspapers, helped Nafiz's parents to locate his body at the hospital morgue.*

*Photo: Prothom Alo, 12 August 2024.*

8. On 19 July, members of law enforcement agencies shot dead 11-year-old Samir,<sup>42</sup> 4-year-old Abdul Ahad,<sup>43</sup> 6-year-old Riya Gop,<sup>44</sup> in their own homes, and 15-year-old Md. Rasel, killed at DIT road Narayanganj.

<sup>41</sup> Prothom Alo English 13 August 2024; <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/deq62xtoct>, Prothom Alo 12 August 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/912ltfqs3i>

<sup>42</sup> Prothom Alo English 25 July 2024; <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/1eyljrpqqe>, Prothom Alo 24 July 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/capital/pfu6f47u5m>

<sup>43</sup> Prothom Alo English 26 July 2024; <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/b4ez754jvi>, Prothom Alo 26 July 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/district/ghkm45mjr7>

<sup>44</sup> The Daily Star 30 July 2024; <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/lives-we-lost/news/6-year-old-shot-while-her-fathers-arms-passes-away-3665151>, Prothom Alo 25 July 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/cmpqn5yw59>



*Abdul Ahad (left) and Riya Gop (right), shot dead by law enforcement agencies. Photo: Prothom Alo, 26 and 25 July 2024.*

9. In Rayerbag, Mohammadpur, Anjuman Mofidul Islam buried the bodies of 21 people, including a child, killed in the violence during the movement.<sup>45</sup> They had all been shot dead.<sup>46</sup>
10. On 5 August, when a mass of people surrounded Ashulia Police Station in Dhaka, the police opened fire, shooting and killing many. Among them, seven bodies were loaded onto a police van, and later the bodies were set on fire. Allegedly, some of them were still alive at that time.<sup>47</sup>

## ***Scores injured***

11. People were injured by both indiscriminate and targeted police firing during the student movement of July-August. Those injured sought treatment at various hospitals in Dhaka.<sup>48</sup> Students, workers, and day labourers were among the many bullet-ridden patients. Some of them underwent amputation of limbs or

<sup>45</sup> Prothom Alo English 25 July 2024; <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/bb6vucjel7>, Prothom Alo 25 July 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/xtgqswyjfz>

<sup>46</sup> The Daily Star July 30 2024; <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/lives-we-lost/news/6-year-old-shot-while-her-fathers-arms-passes-away-3665151>, Samakal 26 July 2024; <https://epaper.samakal.com/nogor-edition/2024-07-26/1/6635>

<sup>47</sup> The Daily Star, 1 September 2024; <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/crime-justice/news/viral-video-august-5-policemen-seen-piling-bodies-van-3691536>, Manabzamin 1 September 2024; <https://mzamin.com/news.php?news=125464#gsc.tab=0>

<sup>48</sup> Prothomalo, 26 July 2024; <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/m7y7u9hq6y>, Prothom Alo 25 July 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/imke2wcyep>, Samakal 26 July 2024; <https://samakal.com/capital/article/247676/>

other body parts to save their lives.<sup>49</sup> Many intelligence agencies, including police forces, collected information on patients at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, who were being treated for bullet injuries sustained during the violence. Many patients were forced to leave the hospital, fearing arrests by the police.<sup>50</sup> A large number of people were also admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital and eye hospitals for severe bullet wounds sustained to eyes when police shot at them.

## ***Enforced Disappearances***

12. For a long time, the authoritarian Awami League government under Sheikh Hasina used enforced disappearance as an instrument of state oppression, to prolong and retain their power. They disappeared several members and activists of opposition parties and dissidents and created an atmosphere of fear in the country.
13. **During the July-August mass uprising, 10 people were disappeared and tortured. One person among them has still not been found.**
14. On 1 July, Vice President of Dhaka College Chhatra Dal<sup>51</sup> Atiqur Rahman Rasel, was picked up from Azimpur Chapra Mosque, Dhaka, by members of law enforcement agencies. When Rasel's family members contacted Detective Branch (DB) police, Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI), various Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) stations, and the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) office in hopes of finding him, they all denied Rasel's arrest. Rasel's father, Md. Abul Hossain Sardar, filed a writ petition for Rasel's return at the High Court Division of the Supreme Court on 10 July. On 5 August, after the fall of Sheikh Hasina's

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<sup>49</sup> The Daily Star 26 July 2024; <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news/quota-protests-trauma-pain-etched-their-faces-3662241>, Jugantor 28 July 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/tp-city/831002>

<sup>50</sup> Daily Sun 1 August 2024; <https://www.daily-sun.com/post/760006>, Daily Nayadiganta 26 July 2024; <https://www.dailynayadiganta.com/first-page/850978/>

<sup>51</sup> Student wing of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)



government, Rasel was dropped off near Kuril Bishwa Road, at around 3 AM. Rasel stated that he had been tortured during the time he was detained.<sup>52</sup>

15. On 13 July, Bhashantek Swechchasebak Dal<sup>53</sup> leader Shakil Ahmed, was picked up by a group of men in plain clothes from Ruposhi road, near Dhaka's Kafrul Police Station.<sup>54</sup> When Shakil's family members contacted DB police, DGFI, various DMP police stations, and the RAB office in hopes of finding him, they all denied arresting Shakil.<sup>55</sup> At the time of this report's publication, there is still no trace of Shakil.
16. On 19 July, Nur Nabi, a coordinator of the Anti-Discrimination Student movement and student of Jagannath University, was picked up from in front of the University's Proctorial Body building by police Additional Deputy Police Commissioner (ADC) Badrul.<sup>56</sup> Nur Nabi states that he was taken to the Mintu Road DB office, where he was stripped naked, thrown onto the ground, and beat mercilessly. He was told that 'Chhatra League broke one of his arms, and the police would break the other.'<sup>57</sup> He was finally released on 6 August, after enduring extreme torture at the DB office.<sup>58</sup>
17. On 19 July Asif Mahmud, one of the key coordinators of the movement (a current Adviser under the interim government), was picked up at night from Mohanagar Residential Area, Hatirjheel, Dhaka by the DB police. He was given an injection that rendered him unconscious, and whenever he regained consciousness, he was given an injection to sedate him again. Around 11 a.m. on 24 July, the DB police dropped him off at Mohanagar Project in Rampura, with his eyes blindfolded. He stated that he was disappeared and tortured to pressure him

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<sup>52</sup> Daily Nayadiganta 11 August 2024; <https://www.dailynayadiganta.com/law-and-justice/854925/>

<sup>53</sup> Volunteer wing of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)

<sup>54</sup> Report collected by Odhikar

<sup>55</sup> "Manabzamin 10 October 2024; <https://mzamin.com/news.php?news=131019#gsc.tab=0>

<sup>56</sup> Daily Nayadiganta 22 July 2024

<sup>57</sup> Dhaka Tribune 9 August 2024; <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/education/354228/jnu-coordinator-describes-brutal-police-torture>, Samakal 9 August 2024; <https://samakal.com/bangladesh/article/249923/>

<sup>58</sup> Dhaka Tribune 17 August 2024; <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/355031/jnu-student-movement-coordinator-steps-down>, Samakal 17 August 2024; <https://samakal.com/bangladesh/article/251230/>

into suspending the protests.<sup>59</sup> Another coordinator of the movement, Abu Baker Majumder, was picked up from Dhanmondi in Dhaka, by DB police on 19 July, in order to force him to release a statement calling off the protests. When Baker refused, he was locked in a dark room for five days and released on 24 July.<sup>60</sup>

18. Around midnight on 20 July, Nahid Islam, one of the key coordinators of the movement (current Adviser under the interim government), was picked up from a home in Nandipara, Khilgaon by men saying they were members of security forces. After he got into their car, he was blindfolded and handcuffed. He was taken to a house, where he was asked questions about the movement and tortured physically and mentally. At some point during the torture Nahid lost consciousness. Those who disappeared him left him under a bridge in Purbachal, Dhaka, on 22 July. He was admitted to Gonoshasthaya Nagar Hospital in Dhaka.<sup>61</sup>



*One of the key coordinators of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement, Nahid Islam, was disappeared and tortured. Photo: Manabzamin, 22 July 2024.*

<sup>59</sup> Jagoneews24.com, 9 August 2024; <https://www.jagoneews24.com/country/news/960044>

<sup>60</sup> Prothom Alo English 25 July 2024; <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/dz51fhhcw6>, Prothom Alo 24 July 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/b7zcbmknqi>

<sup>61</sup> New Age 22 July 2024; <https://www.newagebd.net/post/country/240695/quota-protest-coordinator-nahid-reappears-injured>, Manabzamin 22 July 2024; <https://mzamin.com/news.php?news=119351>

19. On 5 August, when the authoritarian government fell due to the student-led mass-uprisings, the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina fled the country. After her departure, family members of victims of enforced disappearances, as well as some former army officers, positioned themselves at the DGFI headquarters, demanding the return of those who had been captured and taken to “Aynaghar,” a name given by people to denote the secret detention centers (joint interrogation cell). Barrister Mir Ahmad bin Quasem Arman and former Brigadier General Abdullahil Aman Azmi<sup>62</sup> were released on 6 August after eight years of being disappeared by the Awami League regime. UPDF leader Michael Chakma was released on 7 August after enduring five years of disappearance.<sup>63</sup>



*Barrister Mir Ahmad bin Quasem Arman, Former Brigadier General Abdullahil Aman Azmi, UPDF Leader Michael Chakma (left to right). Photos: Prothom Alo, 6 August 2024; Banijjo Protidin, 8 August 2024; Photo: Prothom Alo, 7 August 2024.*

## ***Illegal detentions, mass arrests, torture***

20. On 26 July, Nahid Islam, Asif Mahmud Shojib Bhuiyan, and Abu Baker Majumder, three coordinators of the Anti-Discrimination Students Movement, were picked up from Dhaka’s Gonoshathaya Nagar Hospital by DB Police for “security” reasons.<sup>64</sup> Using the same excuse, DB Police picked up Sarjis Alom and Hasnat Abdullah, two more coordinators of the Movement from the Science

<sup>62</sup> Prothom Alo English 6 August 2024; <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/axj3uuswcp>

<sup>63</sup> Prothom Alo 7 August 2024; <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/czennpwfpd>

<sup>64</sup> Samakal English 27 July 2024; <https://en.samakal.com/bangladesh/170831586/-coordinators-of-quota-protesters-are-in-db-custody>, Samakal 27 July 2024; <https://samakal.com/bangladesh/article/247773/>

Laboratory area on 27 July, and Nusrat Tabassum from Mirpur on 28 July.<sup>65</sup> They were all illegally detained at Dhaka's DB Police Headquarters, but later released on 1 August under pressure from protesters.

21. During the protests of July-August, the government began country-wide mass arrests, of opposition party leaders and activists as well as student protesters.<sup>66</sup> The police launched campaigns and indiscriminately arrested people without warrants, not only from the homes of opposition party members, but also from the homes of regular citizens.<sup>67</sup> In police stations all over the country, police and government supporters were plaintiffs in cases filed regarding the movement, most of which were fabricated and falsified.<sup>68</sup> Police indiscriminately arrested children, teenagers, youth, and labourers during this time. Several children, including seventh grader Nayeem Islam<sup>69</sup>, 13-year-old Al Amin, 15-year-old Sifat<sup>70</sup>, and ninth grader Amir Hamza<sup>71</sup>, were arrested by the police.<sup>72</sup> Lower courts granted remand despite repeated requests following the mass arrests, and relatives and lawyers of victims alleged that people were being tortured after being remanded.<sup>73</sup> Members of law enforcement agencies did not follow the directives from the High Court with regards to investigations after arrests and remand. Even when instances of human rights violations, including torture, came to the court's attention, there were no consequences.<sup>74</sup> At a press

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<sup>65</sup> Prothom Alo 1 August 2024; <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/p5yj72kys4>, Prothom Alo 1 August 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/vt91qmdtcb>

<sup>66</sup> Manabzamin 26 July 2024; <https://mzamin.com/news.php?news=119958>

<sup>67</sup> Prothom Alo English 30 July 2024; <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/jf0izqcw38>, Samakal 28 July 2024; <https://samakal.com/bangladesh/article/247961/>

<sup>68</sup> Prothom Alo English 25 July 2024; <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/q5tgzqk6gf>, Daily Nayadiganta 26 July 2024; <https://www.dailynayadiganta.com/first-page/850974/>, New Age 23 July 2024; <https://www.newagebd.net/post/country/240514/boy-with-disability-not-spared-in-wholesale-arrest>, Jugantor 28 July 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/tp-lastpage/830970>, Jugantor 27 July 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/tp-city/830683>

<sup>69</sup> Manabzamin 24 July 2024; <https://mzamin.com/news.php?news=119357>

<sup>70</sup> Manabzamin 24 July 2024; <https://mzamin.com/news.php?news=119371>

<sup>71</sup> Samakal 26 July 2024; <https://samakal.com/capital/article/247667/>

<sup>72</sup> Manabzamin 24 July 2024; <https://mzamin.com/news.php?news=119371>

<sup>73</sup> Nayadiganta 26 July 2024; <http://www.enayadiganta.com/news.php?nid=850482>

<sup>74</sup> New Age 27 August 2024; <https://www.newagebd.net/post/country/241026/sc-guidelines-largely-ignored-in-wholesale-arrests-remand>, Samakal 29 July 2024; <https://samakal.com/bangladesh/article/248125/>

conference on 27 July Maria Nur, wife of Gono Odhikar Parishad President Nurul Haq Nur, alleged that after her husband was arrested, he was tortured in custody - hung upside down by the feet, given injections, and electrocuted, while his 'confession' was taken.<sup>75</sup>



*Father of 15-year-old Sifat, searching for his son. Photo: Manabzamin, 24 July 2024.*



*Dhaka University student Ibrahim, being carried into court by the police after being taken into remand. Photo: Daily Nayadiganta, 26 July 2024.*

22. On 22 July, members of Chhatra League picked up an intellectually and physically challenged 15-year-old Ashik from his home in Nakhhalpara, Dhaka,

<sup>75</sup> The Daily Star July 29 2024; <https://www.thedailystar.net/opinion/editorial/news/police-must-abide-court-rulings-arrests-and-remand-3665041>, Manabzamin 27 July 2024; <https://mzamin.com/news.php?news=120175>



and brought him to the Tejgaon Police Station.<sup>76</sup> A day-labourer named Saiful was picked up from his home by the police that same night. His poor family paid the police 10,000 Taka for his release. On 18 July, while returning with an exam schedule from his friend's home, HSC candidate Alif Hasan Rahat was shot by the police and a rubber bullet lodged in his right eye. When he and his father Raijuddin were on their way with him to Agargaon Eye Hospital, Uttara police stopped the ambulance and took father and son to the police station. Even though Rahat's father was released at 3:00 a.m., severely injured Ahad was still shown arrested and sent to court.<sup>77</sup>

23. From 26 July, law enforcement agencies all over the country, especially in Dhaka, also conducted "block raids," arresting opposition party members, students, and people from different classes and professions.<sup>78</sup>

## Restrictions to freedom of expression

24. From 1 July to 5 August, Hasina's government drastically curbed freedom of expression. During the movement, mobile internet services shut down from 17 July, and broadband internet was shut down at 9:00 p.m. on 18 July on government orders. Zunaid Ahmed Palak, the then Minister of State for Posts, Telecommunications and Information Technology, stated on 18 July that cybersecurity was being ensured with state and civil safety in mind. On 22 July, mobile phone owners received a small message from the then Minister of State Zunaid Ahmed, stating that internet services had been disrupted across the country due to arson attacks on the data center by terrorists and ISP wires were being burnt. However, operators later stated that internet services were shut

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<sup>76</sup> New Age 23 July 2024; <https://www.newagebd.net/post/country/240514/boy-with-disability-not-spared-in-wholesale-arrest>, Jugantor 28 July 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/tp-lastpage/830970>

<sup>77</sup> New Age 23 July 2024; <https://www.newagebd.net/post/country/240514/boy-with-disability-not-spared-in-wholesale-arrest>, Jugantor 28 July 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/tp-lastpage/830970>

<sup>78</sup> The Daily Star July 28 2024; <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news/block-raids-unnerv-city-residents-3663396>, Jugantor 27 July 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/tp-lastpage/830660>

down at the instruction of the authorities.<sup>79</sup> The President of Bangladesh Mobile Phone Consumers' Association, Mohiuddin Ahmed, said "Everything that is being said about internet being shut down is incorrect, fabricated and baseless. From 23 July the government restarted broadband internet services on a limited basis." On 28 July, after 10 days, mobile internet was restored at around 3:00 p.m. However, many social media services, including Facebook, Whatsapp, and Tiktok remained off for several days thereafter.<sup>80</sup>

## ***Freedom of news media***

25. Under Sheikh Hasina's authoritarian government, journalists faced cases and were harassed, attacked and killed for carrying out their professional duties during the student movement of July-August. Five journalists were shot to death by the police while collecting news regarding the protests.
26. On 18 July Hasan Mehedi, a journalist at a news portal called Dhaka Times, Shakil Hossein, a reporter for Bhorer Awaj newspaper, and Abu Taher Muhammad Turab, the Sylhet representative of Naya Diganta newspaper, were shot dead by the police.<sup>81</sup> On 19 July journalist Tahir Zaman Priyo was shot dead by members of law enforcement near the Dhaka Science Laboratory area and Central Road, while he was doing his job.<sup>82</sup> On 5 August, Pradip Kumar Bhoumik, a journalist for Sirajganj's "The Daily Khobor Potro," was shot dead by the police.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Prothom Alo English 28 July 2024; <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/iv2dsrbfjk>, Samakal 23 July 2024; <https://samakal.com/bangladesh/article/247239/>

<sup>80</sup> Prothom Alo English 28 July 2024; <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/iv2dsrbfjk>, Prothom Alo 28 July 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/0l53ciu95t>

<sup>81</sup> Voice of America 21 August 2024; <https://www.voanews.com/a/dozens-of-journalists-injured-covering-bangladesh-protests/7751744.html>, Jugantor 22 August 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/national/841348/>

<sup>82</sup> The Daily Star 30 July 2024; <https://www.thedailystar.net/top-news/news/why-isnt-father-calling-me-3665681>, Jugantor 22 July 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/tp-news/833682>

<sup>83</sup> Voice of America 21 August 2024; <https://www.voanews.com/a/dozens-of-journalists-injured-covering-bangladesh-protests/7751744.html>, Jugantor 22 August 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/national/841348/>

27. On 25 July Zubayer Hossain, Natore district representative for Ajker Business newspaper, was arrested by the police for participating in protests in Natore.<sup>84</sup> On 26 July Sayeed Khan, organising secretary of Dhaka Union of Journalists and special representative of The Mirror Asia, was picked up and tortured by DB police from his home in Maghbazar. He was then transferred to Kafrul Police Station and the court granted him remand for five days.<sup>85</sup> On 4 August, local Awami League leader Jalal Uddin trained members and activists of the party to resist the student protests in Sreepur, Gazipur. When Sreepur representative of Manabzamin Enamul Haque Akhand came on scene to collect news, he was attacked and injured by members and activists of the Awami League.<sup>86</sup>
28. Since most Bangladeshi news media channels are owned by supporters of the Awami League, news media has often been controlled. This has resulted in the publishing of much false and misleading journalism. Many subservient journalists loyal to the Awami League regime publicly supported the government during the protests. Advising the authoritarian government to use force to stay in power, they encouraged killings and torture and actively participated in attacks. For example, on 19 July, Shamim Osman's armed forces shot at student protesters in Narayanganj. During this time Raju Ahmed, the Narayanganj representative for DBC and Jugantor newspapers, was seen carrying firearms.<sup>87</sup>
29. **From 1 July to 5 August, five journalists were killed, 33 were injured, four were assaulted, and two were arrested for carrying out their professional duties.**

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<sup>84</sup> Manabzamin 27 July 2024; <https://mzamin.com/news.php?news=120117>

<sup>85</sup> New Age 28 July 2024; <https://www.newagebd.net/post/country/241049/bfuj-duj-journalists-demand-release-of-sayed-khan>, Daily Nayadiganta 27 July 2024; <https://www.dailynayadiganta.com/last-page/851181/>

<sup>86</sup> Manabzamin 5 August 2024; <https://mzamin.com/news.php?news=121371>

<sup>87</sup> The Daily Star Bangla 24 August 2024; <https://bangla.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news-608396>



## ***Disruptions and attacks on meetings and assemblies***

30. During the student-led mass uprisings of July-August, the authoritarian government continued its oppression by violating the right to freedom of assembly.<sup>88</sup> The government banned all meetings, assemblies and processions while the protests were ongoing.<sup>89</sup>
31. On 3 July, Awami League leaders and activists launched attacks on assemblies demanding BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's freedom and rightful medical treatment in Natore and Patuakhali districts. Shahidul Islam Bachchu, BNP convener of Natore district was injured.<sup>90</sup>
32. On 17 July, an 'absentee funeral prayer programme' (gayebana janaza) was held in front of Dhaka University Vice Chancellor's residence for those killed in clashes all over the country. When protesting students attempted to take out a coffin procession they were attacked by the police, who fired tear gas to disperse the protesters.<sup>91</sup>
33. On 30 July, the police hindered a Protest Song March organised by social and cultural organisations, in protest of the mass killings, torture, attacks, cases, and mass arrests.<sup>92</sup>

## **Persecution of Human Rights Activists**

34. Under the authoritarian Awami League regime of Sheikh Hasina, human rights activists affiliated with Odhikar have been subject to intimidation, harassment, and violence, for remaining vocal about human rights violations and for communicating with family members of victims. Odhikar's central organisers

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<sup>88</sup> New Age 20 July 2024; <https://www.newagebd.net/post/politics/240573/bnp-denied-holding-rally>, Jugantor 20 July 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/tp-first-page/829535/>

<sup>89</sup> Prothom Alo English 19 July 2024; <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/city/686ltug3m0>, Prothom Alo 19 July 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/capital/qd8dq97gi7>

<sup>90</sup> Manabzamin 4 July 2024; <https://mzamin.com/news.php?news=117016>

<sup>91</sup> Prothom Alo English, July 17 2024; <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/dwydijar2n>, Prothom Alo 17 July 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/capital/v2hs7kc5cw>

<sup>92</sup> The Business Standard 30 July 2024; <https://www.tbsnews.net/bangladesh/police-foil-protest-march-socio-cultural-organisations-906531>, Manabzamin 30 July 2024; <https://mzamin.com/news.php?news=120573>

and human rights defenders across the country actively participated in the student-led mass uprising of July-August. On the evening of 29 July, Md. Rashedul Islam, a Rajshahi-based human rights activist affiliated with Odhikar, was picked up and severely tortured by DB police for being associated with the movement. They transferred him to Motihar Police Station on 30 July, and he was sent to court in a case filed under the Explosives Substances Act. Following the student's victory on 5 August, he was released from prison on bail on 7 August.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Report sent by local human rights defender associated with Odhikar in Rajshahi.

## **(B) Reporting Period: 9 August – 30 September 2024**

### **The Interim Government**

35. On 5 August, the authoritarian Sheikh Hasina was ousted through the mass uprisings, and she was forced to flee the country.<sup>94</sup> This was an unprecedented event in Bangladesh's history. The vast numbers of people shot and killed by security forces, is also unprecedented in the political history of Bangladesh. The country had no government from 5-8 August. In the wake of these events, opportunists carried out vandalism, looting, and arson attacks in many parts of the country. There were also allegations of attacks on the Hindu community<sup>95</sup>. On 8 August, an interim government, headed by Nobel Peace Prize winner Dr. Muhammad Yunus, took oath. By this time, Sheikh Hasina and her associates were already facing charges of crimes against humanity and genocide at the International Crimes Tribunal (located in Dhaka's former High Court building), for the indiscriminate shooting and killing of students during the mass movement.<sup>96</sup>

### ***Interim Government and Reforms***

36. Over the past 15-and-a-half years, Sheikh Hasina's regime used politicization to transform all the state institutions of the country into their own subservient organisations. The Judiciary, Election Commission, Anti-Corruption Commission and National Human Rights Commission were some of the many important state

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<sup>94</sup> The Daily Star 6 August 2024; <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news/hasina-falls-flees-3670201>, Prothom Alo 6 August 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/gte32912v1>

<sup>95</sup> BBC 18 August 2024; <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cx2n8pzk7gzo>, Samakal 19 August 2024; <https://samakal.com/bangladesh/article/251520/>

<sup>96</sup> The Daily Star 20 August 2024; <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/crime-justice/news/hasina-faces-another-ict-case-3681431>

institutions that the Awami League government used for the implementation of their political plans. The inefficacy of these institutions has resulted in the absence of effective roles to prevent political intolerance, undemocratic behavior of the state, and human rights violations. Consequently, there have been many human rights violations during this time. After the fall of Sheikh Hasina's regime, the interim government established six commissions to restore the functionality of state institutions. They are the Electoral Reform Commission, the Police Reform Commission, the Judiciary Reform Commission, the Anti-Corruption Reform Commission, the Public Administration Reform Commission, and the Constitution Reform Commission.<sup>97</sup>

## ***Enforced Disappearances***

37. On 29 August, the interim government acceded to the "International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance." Odhikar has been campaigning for 14 long years for this Convention to be approved.
38. On 15 September, the government formed a five-member inquiry commission to provide recommendations on recovering victims of enforced disappearances, identifying people, organisations, or institutions affiliated with enforced disappearances and taking appropriate legal action against them, and to provide recommendations on necessary law reform for criminalizing and preventing enforced disappearances.<sup>98</sup> The inquiry commission then issued a public notice which stated that any victim of enforced disappearance, family members or relatives of victims, or witnesses to an enforced disappearance, can file a complaint through mail, electronic mail (at [edcommission.bd@gmail.com](mailto:edcommission.bd@gmail.com)), or by

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<sup>97</sup> The Daily Star 12 September 2024; <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news/yunus-charts-path-reforms-3700751>, Jugantor 11 September 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/national/851113>

<sup>98</sup> In the public notice regarding the formation of the commission, it states that the government established the commission to find people who had been disappeared by members of the country's law enforcement agencies from 1 January 2010 to 5 August 2024.

directly visiting the commission office (located at 96 Gulshan Avenue, Dhaka 1212).<sup>99</sup>

39. On 23 September, a businessman named Enamul Kabir filed a case against former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and 25 others at the International Crimes Tribunal, accusing them of enforced disappearance. There were also demands for investigations into all the incidents of enforced disappearance that occurred during the Awami League government's reign from 2009 to 5 August 2024.<sup>100</sup>
40. **There have been no cases of alleged enforced disappearances from 9 August to 30 September 2024.**

### ***Extrajudicial Killings***

41. After the ouster of the Sheikh Hasina regime, the interim government deployed joint forces to keep the country's law and order situation under control. However, these forces have also been accused of committing extrajudicial killings.
42. On 8 September a man named Elahi Sikdar died at Gopalganj General Hospital, while under police custody at Gopalganj District Prison. He was arrested on 3 September for attacking army personnel. Jibitesh Biswas, a doctor at the Gopalganj General Hospital, stated that the lower half of Elahi Sikdar's body had multiple signs of injury.<sup>101</sup>
43. On 10 September, members of law enforcement agencies in Gaibandha arrested Saghata Awami League President and Saghata Union Parishad Chairman Mosharof Hossain Sweet, Shafiqul Islam, Shahadat Hossain Polash, Riyajul Islam Rocky, and Sohrab Hossain Apel. Of those arrested, Shafiqul Islam died while

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<sup>99</sup> Prothom Alo, 7 September 2024; <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/a3nmm1qgx1> Prothom Alo 12 September 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/sm9v0oivct>

<sup>100</sup> New Age 23 September 2024; <https://www.newagebd.net/print/post/246025>, Samakal 24 September 2024; <https://samakal.com/bangladesh/article/257314/>

<sup>101</sup> The Daily Star 9 September 2024; <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/crime-justice/news/man-dies-jail-custody-3697841>

undergoing treatment at Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital, Bogura, and Sohrab Hossain Apel died while undergoing treatment at Gaibandha General Hospital. Relatives of the deceased allege that Shafiqul and Apel died from being tortured after they were detained.<sup>102</sup>

44. From 1 July to 5 August 1581 persons were reportedly killed. Most of these people are assumed to be killed extra-judicially by different law enforcement agencies. However, Odhikar is still investigating the exact number of extrajudicial killings committed during the July-August massacre. While the interim government was in power, eight people were killed extrajudicially. Of these eight, one died due to torture by the police, one died due to torture by members of the Department of Narcotics Control (DNC), and three died due to torture by the joint forces. Additionally, three people were shot dead by the joint forces.

## ***Criminalization of Politics and Violence***

45. After Hasina's authoritarian government was overthrown on 5 August, accusations were brought against members and activists of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), alleging that they had attacked, looted the homes of, and carried out arson attacks against members and activists of the Awami League. Babul Baksh, an Awami League member in Morrelganj, Bagerhat, was killed in an attack by miscreants<sup>103</sup> and in Satkaniya, Chattogram, miscreants gouged out the eyes of Awami League leader Jeyabul Hossain Ledu (51).<sup>104</sup> Former Jubo Dal<sup>105</sup> leader Rafiqul Islam Rafiq ordered Awami League members

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<sup>102</sup> Dhaka Tribune 10 September 2024; <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/nation/358012/2-die-in-gaibandha-after-joint-operation-detention>, Samakal 10 September 2024; <https://samakal.com/whole-country/article/255301/>

<sup>103</sup> Manabzamin 22 August 2024; <https://mzamin.com/news.php?news=123920>

<sup>104</sup> Samakal 22 August 2024; <https://samakal.com/whole-country/article/252062/>

<sup>105</sup> Youth wing of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)

and activists be beaten to death if spotted on the roads of Kushtia.<sup>106</sup> Apart from this, BNP members and activists have been accused of extortion<sup>107</sup> and occupying structures such as bazars, fish markets, and sand banks formerly owned by Awami League members and activists.<sup>108</sup> In fact, in some places, members and activists of both BNP and Awami League have collaborated to participate in looting.<sup>109</sup> Even though BNP's central leadership has announced a zero-tolerance policy towards illegal occupation and extortion, this has not proved very effective. BNP's central leadership has expelled several members and activists involved in such incidents.<sup>110</sup>

46. After the fall of the authoritarian government, cases were filed en masse all over the country. For most of these cases, local BNP leaders and activists prepared public statements even before they were filed at police stations. Allegedly, many innocent people were accused in these cases, to further hurt the opponents. Apparently, members and activists of both Awami League and BNP were convicted over internal party conflicts. There are also severe accusations of extortion under the threat of being roped into cases.<sup>111</sup> Even dead people have been convicted in some of these cases.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Dhaka Tribune 10 September 2024; <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/politics/357991/jubod-leader-orders-to-beat-awami-league>, Manabzamin 11 September 2024; <https://mzamin.com/news.php?news=126979>

<sup>107</sup> The Business Standard 12 September 2024; <https://www.tbsnews.net/features/panorama/gap-between-bnps-words-and-actions-939281>, Samakal 19 September 2024; <https://samakal.com/whole-country/article/256564/>

<sup>108</sup> Dhaka Tribune 30 August 2024; <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/politics/356621/extortion-in-savar-bnp-in-awami-league-out>, Prothom Alo 22 August 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/district/n0y099xl4y>, Prothom Alo 28 August 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/district/n961lze2so>

<sup>109</sup> Samakal 2 October 2024; <https://samakal.com/index.php/bangladesh/article/258568/>

<sup>110</sup> Prothom Alo English 12 October 2024; <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/politics/15efrsc76s>, Manabzamin 3 September 2024; <https://mzamin.com/news.php?news=125766#gsc.tab=0>

<sup>111</sup> The Daily Star 15 September 2024; <https://www.thedailystar.net/opinion/editorial/news/no-innocent-should-be-harassed-legally-3703861>, Samakal 4 September 2024; <https://samakal.com/bangladesh/article/254244/>, Daily Nayadiganta 2 September 2024; <https://www.dailynayadiganta.com/last-page/860395/>, Samakal 8 September 2024; <https://samakal.com/bangladesh/article/254879/>

<sup>112</sup> New Age 5 September 2024; <https://www.newagebd.net/post/country/244448/case-filed-against-dead-bcl-leader-in-jamalpur>, Samakal 4 September 2024; <https://samakal.com/index.php/whole-country/article/254308/>

47. Even though Hasina's government was overthrown, Awami League miscreants are still active. Campaigns to arrest and confiscate the firearms of Awami League members and activists who shot at student protesters during the July-August movement, have not been successful. Despite the fall of their government, Awami League members and activists are continuing their attacks on BNP members and activists.<sup>113</sup> On 5 September, supporters of Aatur Rahman Attab, Joint General Secretary of Swechchasebak League<sup>114</sup>, Kanchanpur Village in Kaliya Upazila, Narail, attacked Union BNP leader Milon Mollah and his associates. The injured were admitted to Khulna's 250-Bed General Hospital.<sup>115</sup> On 13 September, on the way to visit his parents' grave in Tungipara, Gopalganj, Swechchasebak Dal President S M Zilani's fleet of vehicles were attacked by Awami League members and activists. Sports affairs secretary of the Swechchasebak Dal central committee, Shawkat Ali Didar, was killed and 50 people were injured.<sup>116</sup> On 22 September, Awami League members and activists carried out attacks in Madaripur Sadar Upazila, vandalising 50 homes and carrying out arson attacks on 10, because the residents participated in the student protests.<sup>117</sup>

48. There is still conflict amidst Awami League members and activists. On 23 August two Awami league leaders, Idris Hawladar and Shagor Hawladar, were hacked to death by miscreants under the leadership of Union Awami League General Secretary and UP Chairman Shahin Hawlader, in Shatla Union of Uzirpur, Barisal.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Prothom Alo 7 September 2024: <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/district/4adrmorvms>

<sup>114</sup> Volunteer wing of the Bangladesh Awami League

<sup>115</sup> Daily Nayadiganta 5 September 2024; <https://www.dailynayadiganta.com/more-news/861202/>

<sup>116</sup> The Daily Star 14 September 2024;

<https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/politics/news/swechchasebak-dal-leader-killed-attack-al-men-3702481>, Jugantor 14 September 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/tp-firstpage/852053>

<sup>117</sup> Samakal 23 September 2024

<sup>118</sup> Samakal 26 August 2024



49. BNP members and activists have also clashed among themselves due to conflicts relating to territorial dominance and vested interest.<sup>119</sup> Ordinary people have also been killed in these incidents.<sup>120</sup>
50. On 5 August, there were clashes among two BNP groups regarding the managing committee of Gollak Adarsha Degree College in Faridpur, Chandpur.<sup>121</sup> On 6 August, a BNP leader named Emdadul Haq Aqlu was hacked to death in Moktarpur Union, Kaliganj, Gazipur during BNP infighting, centered around factional strife and dominance.<sup>122</sup> On 11 September, in Lohagara, Narail, Upazila Jubo Dal convener Khan Mahmud Rahman's men attacked and killed Ziarul Sheikh and Miran Sheikh, brothers of BNP leader Murad Sheikh.<sup>123</sup> On 20 September, a man named Jubayer Uddin was killed in Chandgao, Chattogram, during clashes over dominance between two factions of Jubo Dal.<sup>124</sup>
51. **From 1 July to 5 August 2024, at least 107 people were killed and 2953 people were injured in political violence. From 6 August to 8 August, when there was no government, at least four people were killed and nine were injured in political violence. From 9 August to 30 September, at least 52 people were killed and 1308 people were injured in political violence.**

## ***Freedom of Media***

52. Cases have been filed with the International Crimes Tribunal against 52 people including the former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for the mass killings that were perpetrated in July. Furthermore, 32 senior journalists have been accused of

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<sup>119</sup> Daily Nayadiganta 17 April 2024; <https://www.dailynayadiganta.com/city/828449/>

<sup>120</sup> Daily Nayadiganta 12 May 2024; <https://www.dailynayadiganta.com/city/834332/>, Samakal 27 June 2024; <https://samakal.com/whole-country/article/243718>

<sup>121</sup> Jugantor 7 September 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/tp-news/848118>

<sup>122</sup> New Age 7 September 2024; <https://www.newagebd.net/post/politics/244600/bnp-leader-beaten-to-death-in-kaliganj>, Daily Nayadiganta 7 September 2024; <https://www.dailynayadiganta.com/city/861744/>

<sup>123</sup> Samakal 12 September 2024

<sup>124</sup> Dhaka Tribune 21 September 2024; <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/politics/359196/jubo-dal-activist-killed-in-clash-chittagong>, Prothom Alo 20 September 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/j60nibsr1y>

inciting genocide.<sup>125</sup> On 14 September, the Editor's Council<sup>126</sup> said in a statement that the onslaught of murder cases against journalists goes against the interim government's commitment to independent journalism. The statement further reads, that if journalists have committed any crimes based on specific allegations, legal action can be taken against them following appropriate procedures.<sup>127</sup>

53. Even during the time of the interim government, there have been incidents of prosecution and persecution of journalists.

54. On 18 August, Shahnaj, the wife of a fishmonger named Milon who was killed during protests in Narayanganj's Siddhirganj, filed a murder case accusing 62 people at Siddhirganj Police Station. Billal Hossain Robin, Vice President of Narayanganj Press Club and staff reporter for Manabzamin newspaper, was accused in the case. The incident was heavily condemned in an executive council meeting of the Narayanganj Press Club on 19 August.<sup>128</sup>

55. On 15 September, two factions clashed over the chairman of Raipara Union Parishad in Dohar, Dhaka. When he went to collect news about the issue, Kazi Zubayer (editor of the local weekly Asia Barta) was threatened by many including Amir Shikdar, president of the Raipara Union BNP. Zubayer was later attacked and badly injured.<sup>129</sup>

**56. According to statistics collected by Odhikar, from 9 August to 30 September, four journalists were injured, two were assaulted, three were threatened, and three were sued while carrying out their professional duties.**

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<sup>125</sup> 29 August 2024; <https://m.mzamin.com/news.php?news=125049>

<sup>126</sup> National organisation of newspaper editors in Bangladesh

<sup>127</sup> Prothom Alo 14 September 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/5tnig3z6yj>

<sup>128</sup> Bhorer Kagoj 21 August 2024; <https://www.bhorerkagoj.com/media/730940>, Manabzamin 20 August 2024; <https://mzamin.com/news.php?news=123602>

<sup>129</sup> Prothom Alo 16 September 2024; <https://epaper.prothomalo.com/Home/ShareArticle?OrgId=169a2018090&eid=1&imageview=0&epedate=16/09/2024&sedId=1>, Jugantor 15 September 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/country-news/852853>

## ***Assault on accused in court premises***

57. On 5 August, central Awami League members and their affiliates, members and activists of 14 political parties, pro-regime journalists, intellectuals, judges, and police officers fled, to save themselves from public outrage and escape the law. When some of them were arrested and brought to court, chaos unfolded. When they were being brought into court, former Justice of the Appellate Division, Shamsuddin Manik<sup>130</sup>, former Social Welfare Minister Dipu Moni<sup>131</sup>, former Minister of Information Hasanul Haq Inu and former minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Rashed Khan Menon<sup>132</sup> were physically assaulted and beaten by pro-BNP lawyers, regular lawyers, as well as a mass of outraged people inside the court premises.

## **Conditions of Ready-Made Garments Industry Workers**

58. Even after the fall of the authoritarian regime, RMG workers feel discontent. During this reporting period, a group has been creating unrest at several RMG factories in an attempt to weaken the interim government. Factory workers at Beximco (owned by Salman F Rahman, former private industries adviser to Sheikh Hasina and currently imprisoned), launched attacks on many RMG factories in Gazipur.<sup>133</sup>

59. On 17 September, workers at a factory named Mascot Knits in the Zirabo area of Ashulia, Dhaka, ended up in three-way clashes with workers at nearby Radiance

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<sup>130</sup> The Daily Star 25 August 2024; <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/crime-justice/news/justice-manik-hospitalised-critical-injuries-3685676>, The Daily Star Bangla 26 August 2024; <https://bangla.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news-609021>

<sup>131</sup> The Daily Star 20 August 2024; <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/crime-justice/news/dipu-moni-arif-khan-joy-assaulted-and-after-remand-hearing-3682041>, Prothom Alo 21 August 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/ict8fdsh2u>

<sup>132</sup> Dhaka Tribune 28 August 2024; <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/court/356366/court-security-under-scrutiny-as-inu-memon>, Prothom Alo 28 August 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/dx58ol458m>

<sup>133</sup> Prothom Alo English 11 September 2024; <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/local-news/o9xpdlto7s>, Jugantor 12 September 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/tp-firstpage/851202>

and Southern garments factories, and a female worker named Rokeya Begum was killed.<sup>134</sup> The workers held a rally and blocked roads with demands such as payment of outstanding salary and reopening factories. The interim government decided to review the minimum wage for garments' workers in the wake of worker dissatisfaction.<sup>135</sup> After talks between the government and labour representatives, the RMG factory owners were forced to accept the 18-point demands of the workers, due to the government's resolute stance.<sup>136</sup>

60. On 30 September, there were three-way discussions between law enforcement agencies, workers, and factory owners regarding many topics, including the reopening of Mondol Knitwear factory in the Shilpanchal area of Dhaka's Ashulia, the matter of two allegedly missing workers, and assault on workers. When rumors spread that Mondol Knitwear workers were being detained and beaten at the Natural Denim and Natural Indigo factories, incited factory workers rallied and vandalised police and military vehicles. Clashes then broke out between workers and law enforcement agencies.<sup>137</sup> During this time, 30 workers were injured and four of them were shot, and Kawsar Hossen Khan (27), a worker at Mango Tex Limited, was shot dead.<sup>138</sup> 51 people were detained by the police.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> The Daily Star 17 September 2024; <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news/female-garment-worker-killed-two-groups-clash-ashulia-3704821>, Samakal 17 September 2024; <https://samakal.com/whole-country/article/256251/>

<sup>135</sup> Samakal English 12 September 2024; <https://en.samakal.com/business/170832997/-factories-closed-in-ashulia>, Prothom Alo 12 September 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/business/industry/w63ulms1gs>

<sup>136</sup> Prothom Alo English 24 September 2024; <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/wh0bn3mdy6>, Prothom Alo 25 September 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/zjw1ynbubf>

<sup>137</sup> The Business Standard, 30 September 2024; <https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/rmg/one-dead-2-injured-ashulia-clash-954196>, Samakal 1 October 2024; <https://samakal.com/whole-country/article/258398/>

<sup>138</sup> The Daily Star 30 September 2024; <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/rmg/news/bullet-hit-rmg-worker-dies-following-clash-law-enforcers-ashulia-3716126>, Jugantor 1 October 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/tp-firstpage/859270>

<sup>139</sup> The Business Standard, 30 September 2024; <https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/rmg/one-dead-2-injured-ashulia-clash-954196>, Manabzamin 1 October 2024; <https://m.mzamin.com/news.php?news=129761>

## Demolition of shrines and attacks on religious dissidents

61. During this reporting period, Muslim and Sufi shrines were vandalised and attacked. On 25 August, Aynal Shah's shrine in Sonmandi Union, Sonargaon, Narayanganj, and on 29 August, Ali Pagla's shrine in Kazipur, Sirajganj, were vandalised. On 3 September, Ismail Pagla's shrine in Sirajganj Sadar Upazila was vandalised, and on 6 September, miscreants carried out arson attacks and vandalism on Narayanganj's Dewanbag shrine.<sup>140</sup> On 29 September, miscreants carried out arson attacks and vandalism during the annual Mahfil at Rashidiya Darbar Sharif, Kumarkhali, Kushtia. That night, miscreants attacked the home of Sufi saint Kazi Zaber Ahmed in Savar and attempted to vandalise a shrine. 20/25 people were injured in the attack. On 30 September, miscreants torched and vandalised Lalon Anand Dham in Bhanga, Faridpur. During this time, Lalon Fakir's pictures, valuable books, and some periodicals were burned in the fire. Several instruments including ektaras, dotaras, bayas, joris, and guitars were also set ablaze. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar's statue was also vandalised.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> BBC News Bangla, 7 September 2024; <https://www.bbc.com/bengali/articles/ckg2xygly1no>

<sup>141</sup> The Daily Star 1 October 2024; <https://images.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/accidents-fires/news/miscreants-set-fire-lalon-anand-dham-3716171>, Prothom Alo 30 September 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/district/8344iugroy>

## **(C) Other Human Rights Violations from 1 July to 30 September**

### **The Death Penalty and Human Rights**

62. The death penalty still prevails in Bangladesh's legal system. On reviewing the matter of capital punishment, it has been observed that lower courts are increasingly giving out the death penalty, despite there being alternative sentences. Death row inmates continue to languish in condemned cells year after year, due to the slow hearing of appeals. It is unreasonable and a violation of human rights to keep death row convicts imprisoned in condemned cells until their appeals have been exhausted.
63. **Courts have sentenced 56 people to death from the three months of July to September 2024.**

### **Public Lynching**

64. Many people were killed by public lynchings during the authoritarian regime. Due to state and constitutional institutions becoming dysfunctional, the country witnessed impunity and lack of accountability, for which the people developed a tendency of taking the law into their own hands. As a result, a disturbing trend of beating people to death had emerged. Even after 5 August there have been many incidents of public lynching. The people have had a severe crisis of confidence towards law enforcement agencies and the judicial system, which is believed to be the reason behind increased public lynchings. Chhatra League and Jubo League also continue their efforts of destabilizing the country by planning such events. The interim government formed after the student-led mass uprisings must overcome this crisis of confidence.

65. While the student protests were still underway on 4 August, demonstrators in Narsingdi's Madhabdi beat to death six Awami League members and activists, including Chardighaldi Union Parishad Chairman and Awami League leader Delowar Hossain Shahin.<sup>142</sup>
66. On 7 September, a mob beat to death Abdullah Al Masud, a disabled former Chhatra League leader at Rajshahi University, near the university premises.<sup>143</sup>
67. On 18 September, Tofazzal, a mentally unstable man, suspected of being a thief, was lynched by students at Dhaka University's Fazlul Haq Hall. A video of him being fed a meal before being beaten to death went viral on social media.<sup>144</sup> The police arrested six people, including a former Chhatra League leader, in a murder case filed by Dhaka University in this regard.<sup>145</sup>
68. On 21 September a man named Nazmul Mollah (45) was beaten to death in Kalukhali, Rajbari, under suspicions of being a thief. Nazmul Mollah had gone to visit his daughter at her home in Kalukhali.<sup>146</sup>
69. **67 people have been killed in public lynchings from July to September 2024. Of these, 36 were killed in public lynchings from 1 July to 5 August. 31 were killed from 9 August to 30 September.**

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<sup>142</sup> The Daily Star 5 August 2024; <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news/six-al-activists-beaten-death-narsingdi-3669686>, Manabzamin 5 August 2024; <https://mzamin.com/news.php?news=121406>

<sup>143</sup> The Daily Star 9 September 2024; <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/crime-justice/news/mob-beats-ex-bcl-leader-death-3697221>, Prothom Alo 8 September 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/district/dkayzgg8zz>

<sup>144</sup> The Daily Star September 20 2024; <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/crime-justice/news/mob-beating-du-six-students-confess-involvement-3707911>, Jugantor 20 September 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/tp-firstpage/854400>

<sup>145</sup> The Daily Star September 20 2024; <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/crime-justice/news/mob-beating-du-six-students-confess-involvement-3707911>,

<sup>146</sup> The Daily Star 23 September 2024; <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/crime-justice/news/mob-kills-man-accusing-him-theft-3709076>, Jugantor 22 September 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/tp-lastpage/855233>

# Freedom of Expression and the Repressive Cyber Security Act

70. Although the authoritarian regime has been overthrown, many of the government's repressive laws, such as the Cyber Security Act, are still in place. On 30 September, a news bulletin from the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs stated that the government had decided to withdraw all the cases filed under the Cyber Security Act. Additionally, if anyone has been arrested on these charges, they will be released shortly, following the due legal process.<sup>147</sup>

## Prisons and Human Rights

71. There have been no changes in prisons with regards to corruption and misconduct. Prisoners have been tortured for speaking out against these conditions. There are several accusations of corruption and ill-treatment in the female ward of Chattogram Central Jail.<sup>148</sup> On 8 August, prisoners protested at Gazipur District Jail against Anwarul Karim, Jail Superintendent, who was accused of severe corruption and irregularities. Then, at the Superintendent's instructions, 48 prisoners were tied to trees and beat up inside the jail.<sup>149</sup>

72. On 8 August, prisoners set Jamalpur Jail ablaze, took the jailer hostage, and tried to escape. Six prisoners were shot dead by the military. On 9 August, when prisoners attempted to escape Chattogram Central Jail, many of them were injured by the prison guards' gunfire.<sup>150</sup> On 16 August at Rangpur Jail, a prisoner

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<sup>147</sup> New Age 30 September 2024; <https://www.newagebd.net/post/country/246583/bangladesh-to-withdraw-1340-dsa-csa-ict-cases-due-to-making-remarks>, Jugantor 1 October 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/tp-lastpage/859274>

<sup>148</sup> Jugantor 28 August 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/tp-city/843699/>

<sup>149</sup> Jugantor 27 August 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/tp-city/843253/>

<sup>150</sup> New Age 9 August 2024; <https://www.newagebd.net/post/country/242082/6-inmates-killed-in-jamalpur-jail-shooting>



named Rafiqul was beaten by another prisoner named Baharam Badshah over the plucking of a hog-plum from a tree. Two prison guards reprimanded Baharam Badshah by beating him fatally.<sup>151</sup> Additionally, prisons lack adequate healthcare professionals, because of which many inmates have been dying.

**73. In the three months from July to September, 11 people have died in custody.**

## **Aggressive policies of the Indian government and Human Rights Violations at the Bangladesh-India border**

74. The unprecedented student-led mass uprising in Bangladesh provoked Indian authorities to question the movement in many ways. At the time, Indian news media channels spread inauthentic and fabricated news regarding attacks on Hindu minorities<sup>152</sup>, and the Indian establishment implemented several plans to destabilize Bangladesh.<sup>153</sup> The information spread during these events has been proven false through fact-checking<sup>154</sup> On 6 August, Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, at the armed forces' Joint Commander's Conference, mentioned Bangladesh's situation alongside references to the ongoing war in Russia-Ukraine and violence between Israel-Hamas, stating that there may be a need to prepare for future conflict.<sup>155</sup> It is obvious that no war-like situation has been created in Bangladesh that can be likened to that of these nations. The fall of the Hasina regime backed by Indian support came through a student-led mass uprising and not a 'war.'

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<sup>151</sup> New Age 16 August 2024; <https://www.newagebd.net/post/country/242749/inmates-clash-in-rangpur-jail-over-killing-of-death-row-convict>, Daily Nayadiganta 17 August 2024; <https://www.dailynayadiganta.com/first-page/856244/>

<sup>152</sup> Daily Nayadiganta 16 September 2024; <https://www.dailynayadiganta.com/first-page/864407/>

<sup>153</sup> Daily Nayadiganta 2 September 2024; <https://www.dailynayadiganta.com/first-page/860408/>

<sup>154</sup> BBC 18 August 2024; <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cx2n8pzk7gzo>, Samakal 19 August 2024; <https://samakal.com/bangladesh/article/251520/>, BBC News Bangla, 18 August 2024; <https://www.bbc.com/bengali/articles/c5y8qdex205o>

<sup>155</sup> Prothom Alo English 7 September 2024; <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/0otreniaf3>, Prothom Alo 7 September 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/ck7heitdcv>

75. The Padma basin is already in a very dire state due to the Farakka dam. The Indian government creates artificial floods in Bangladesh by opening the sluice gates of the Farakka and Gazoldoba barrages during the monsoon season. As a result, there has been severe flooding in some districts of Bangladesh. Alongside the humanitarian disasters, the flooding has brought significant material losses to the people, and many have lost their lives. Additionally, human rights violations on Bangladeshi citizens by the Indian Border Security force, BSF, along the Bangladesh-India border continue. BSF members have killed and tortured many Bangladeshis.<sup>156</sup>
76. Bangladeshi citizens who have been shot dead by the Indian Border Security force BSF include: Raju Miya at the Nagarbhita border, Baliyadangi, Thakurgaon on 5 July<sup>157</sup>; a 14-year-old teenager named Shorna Das at Lalarchak border, Moulvibazar, on 3 August<sup>158</sup>; Abdullah at the Shibganj border, Chapainawabganj, on 11 August<sup>159</sup>; and a 15-year-old teenager named Jayanta Kumar Singh at Baliyadangi border, Thakurgaon, on 8 September<sup>160</sup>. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Bangladesh has released a statement strongly condemning these killings.<sup>161</sup> Additionally, on 8 July, Kiran, a Bangladeshi citizen was tortured and left by BSF members at the Banglabandha border, Tetulia.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> The Daily Star 22 August 2024; <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news/bgb-halts-bsfs-construction-barbed-wire-fence-haripara-border-3683611>, Prothom Alo 21 August 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/district/jzq7f1epqs>

<sup>157</sup> New Age 5 July 2024; <https://www.newagebd.net/post/country/239358/bangladesh-national-shot-dead-by-bsf-along-thakurgaon-border>, Daily Nayadiganta 6 July 2024; <https://www.dailynayadiganta.com/first-page/847470/>

<sup>158</sup> The Daily Star 3 September 2024; <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news/16-year-old-bangladeshi-girl-shot-dead-bsf-moulvibazar-border-3693301>, Daily Nayadiganta 4 September 2024; <https://www.dailynayadiganta.com/city/860914/>

<sup>159</sup> Prothom Alo English 13 August 2024; <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/local-news/rzaurw87ip>, Samakal 13 August 2024; <https://samakal.com/whole-country/article/250529/>

<sup>160</sup> Prothom Alo English 9 September 2024; <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/local-news/ey6pv1rxqd>, Prothom Alo 9 September 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/district/hvdjuikisk>

<sup>161</sup> Jugantor 6 September 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/tp-city/847835>

<sup>162</sup> The Daily Star 8 July 2024; <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/cross-border/news/hijra-tortured-bsf-along-banglabandha-border-3652016>, Prothom Alo 8 July 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/district/879hai940z>

77. From July to September 2024, four Bangladeshi citizens were shot dead and nine were injured by BSF firing.

## Religious Minority Community

78. After the Hasina government was overthrown on 5 August, there were allegations of attacks on citizens of the Hindu community across the country. Two organisations called the Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council and the Bangladesh Puja Celebration Council claimed that there have been 200 incidents of attacks against minorities in around fifty districts after Sheikh Hasina's ouster. On the other hand, the Chief of Army Staff of Bangladesh has stated that there have been 30 cases of such attacks, which were politically – and not religiously – motivated.<sup>163</sup> Meanwhile, videos of arson attacks and various kinds of torture being carried out upon Bangladeshi Hindu citizens circulated social media. However, the BBC fact-finding division found the allegations to be false.<sup>164</sup> There are accusations against members and activists of the ousted Awami League party of carrying out attacks on the Hindu community in secret and labeling them as acts of “communal” violence. It is also alleged that fugitives and central Awami League leaders are behind these attacks.<sup>165</sup> For instance, villagers in Thakurgaon caught an Awami League activist named Samiul attempting to flee after carrying out an arson attack at the residence of Mohen Chandra and videotaping the incident on his mobile phone.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> BBC 18 August 2024; <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cx2n8pzk7gzo>, Samakal 19 August 2024; <https://samakal.com/bangladesh/article/251520/>, BBC News Bangla 18 August 2024; <https://www.bbc.com/bengali/articles/c5y8qdex205o>

<sup>164</sup> BBC 18 August 2024; <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cx2n8pzk7gzo>

<sup>165</sup> Daily Nayadiganta 12 August 2024; <https://www.dailynayadiganta.com/first-page/854993/>

<sup>166</sup> Daily Nayadiganta 16 August 2024; <https://www.dailynayadiganta.com/last-page/855987/>

79. On 18 August, a Hindu man named Nepal Chandra Ghosh (34) was caught by villagers in Purbadhala, Netrokona, while attempting to set fire to a temple.<sup>167</sup> On 14 September, a temple was vandalised in Bhanga upazila, Faridpur. On 15 September, the police arrested a Hindu man named Sanjib Biswas allegedly involved in the incident.<sup>168</sup> There are various allegations of land-grabbing and persecuting Hindu minority communities against Awami League leaders.<sup>169</sup> During their time in power, the Hindu community has been severely oppressed and often attacked. In the past, those accused in these incidents have not faced trials due to the politicization of these incidents.<sup>170</sup>

## Violence in Chittagong Hill Tracts

80. On 18 September, members of an ethnic minority group were accused of lynching a Bangali man named Mohammad Mamun for allegedly stealing a motorcycle in Khagrachari.<sup>171</sup> Local Bangalis and ethnic minorities clashed over the incident. On 19 September, Bangalis held a rally protesting Mamun's death, and they clashed with ethnic minorities while crossing Boalkhali Bazar. At some point during the clashes, several homes and stores in Larma Square, Dighinala, were set ablaze. 78 stores owned by ethnic minorities and 24 stores owned by Bangalis were burnt in the fire. News of the clashes spread quickly to Khagrachari Sadar district, Panchhari, and neighbouring areas. At night, there were shots fired in Khagrachari Sadar District. Junan Chakma (20), Dhananjay Chakma (50), and Rubel Tripura (25) were killed in the violence, and at least 15

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<sup>167</sup> Daily Nayadiganta 19 August 2024; <https://www.dailynayadiganta.com/first-page/856761/>

<sup>168</sup> New Age 16 September 2024; <https://www.newagebd.net/post/country/245431/indian-citizen-held-in-faridpur-for-vandalising-temple>

<sup>169</sup> Bangladesh Protidin 9 November 2024; <https://en.bd-pratidin.com/special/2024/11/09/22493>, Samakal 16 September 2024; <https://samakal.com/capital/article/256133/>

<sup>170</sup> Samakal 1 October 2024; <https://samakal.com/bangladesh/article/258396/>

<sup>171</sup> The Daily Star 21 September 2024; <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/crime-justice/news/cht-tense-4-killed-violence-3708026>, Samakal 21 September 2024; <https://samakal.com/bangladesh/article/256847/>

people were injured. On 20 September, the Inter-Services Public Relations Department (ISPR) said in a statement that at around 10:30 p.m. on 19 September, a patrol team of Khagrachari Zone was in the process of transferring a very critical patient. When they reached the city's Swanirbhar area, protesting ethnic minorities positioned there, under the leadership of the UPDF, created hindrances, and some men shot at the military patrol team.<sup>172</sup> The army returned fire in self-defense. Three people died in this shooting, and some were injured.

81. On 20 September, there was a rally organised by the "Anti-Conflict and Anti-Discrimination Hill Movement" over the deaths of three individuals from an ethnic minority community. When clashes erupted between Bangalis and ethnic minorities due to stones being thrown during the rally, 30-40 buildings and stores, including the Regional Council office, were vandalised and set on fire. At least 55 people from both sides of the clashes were injured, and a man named Anik Kumar Chakma was killed.<sup>173</sup>

## Violence Against Women

82. In the three months from July to September 2024, there have been several cases of violence against women. There is an urgent need to reform the criminal justice system and law enforcement, to prevent perpetrators from evading justice.

## Rape

83. During this reporting period, there have been many incidents of rape. Victims of rape, both women<sup>174</sup> and children<sup>175</sup>, have even been murdered afterwards. One

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<sup>172</sup> The Daily Star 20 September 2024; <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/local-news/8g5rr5mma1>

<sup>173</sup> Prothom Alo English 20 September 2024; <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/local-news/ha7f04q4vr>, Prothom Alo 21 September 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/qznwfalykd>

<sup>174</sup> The Daily Star 28 August 2024; <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/crime-justice/news/two-girls-found-dead-3-days-after-going-missing-3688336>, Prothom Alo 27 October 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/district/rst3dp2325>

<sup>175</sup> Daily Nayadiganta 29 September 2024; <https://www.dailynayadiganta.com/bangla-diganta/19653618/>

died by suicide after being raped.<sup>176</sup> Local influential people of the area and political leaders have been known to cover up rape cases through local unofficial arbitration.

84. On 20 July, a schoolgirl (15) in Barhatta, Netrokona was raped by an unruly man named Akash Hossain Prantor. The victim took her own life after returning home from school.<sup>177</sup>

## ***Sexual Harassment***

85. In the three months from July to September, there have been many incidents of sexual harassment. Women have been sexually harassed by males of different backgrounds. Students have also been sexually harassed at school by teachers.<sup>178</sup>
86. On 14 July, several students and their guardians complained to the headteacher of Taltola Govt. Primary School, Chuadanga Municipality, about assistant teacher Muktar Ali, alleging him of sexual harassment.<sup>179</sup>

## ***Dowry Violence***

87. Cases of violence against women due to demands for dowry were widespread in July-September. During this time, people were beaten<sup>180</sup> and suffocated to death<sup>181</sup>, and women sustained grave injuries by burning.<sup>182</sup>
88. On 25 August, a pregnant housewife named Sanjida Aktar (20) was murdered by her in-laws in Kasba, Brahmanbaria. It was reported that they spread a rumor about her having committed suicide, after hanging her corpse.<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> Daily Nayadiganta 4 July 2024; <https://www.dailynayadiganta.com/barishal/847104/>

<sup>177</sup> Prothom Alo 24 July 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/district/4zbzhjb8ii>

<sup>178</sup> Samakal 17 July 2024; <https://samakal.com/whole-country/article/247030/>

<sup>179</sup> Daily Nayadiganta 16 July 2024; <https://www.dailynayadiganta.com/khulna/850095/>

<sup>180</sup> Samakal 4 July 2024; <https://samakal.com/whole-country/article/244810/>

<sup>181</sup> Daily Nayadiganta 29 July 2024; <https://www.dailynayadiganta.com/dhaka/851699/>

<sup>182</sup> Ittefaq 5 July 2024; <https://www.ittefaq.com.bd/692637/>

<sup>183</sup> Jugantor 26 August 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/tp-bangla-face/842875>



## ***Acid Violence***

89. From July-September 2024, cases of acid violence have been documented.

90. It was reported that on 5 July in Kendua, Netrokona, housewife Hafsa Aktar's ex-husband Humayun Kabir Baki threw acid on her because she had divorced him.<sup>184</sup>

## **Human Rights Violations against the Rohingya community**

91. Amidst fierce battles between the military junta and armed rebels in Arakan, Myanmar, Rohingya homes have been burnt down. Many Rohingya left the village. Thousands of Rohingya have sought refuge at the banks of Naf River, Myanmar, on the way to Bangladesh.<sup>185</sup> Meanwhile, at least 8000 Rohingya have entered Bangladesh through the Ukhiya-Teknaf border during this reporting period. Rohingya people have stated that villagers have abandoned their homes in Maungdaw Town and its neighbouring areas. Many have died in the shootings.<sup>186</sup> BGB personnel have been accused of taking away about 50000-100000 Taka per person from Rohingya that have been able to enter Bangladesh.<sup>187</sup> On 6 August, a boat of Rohingya people escaping Myanmar capsized at Teknaf, Cox's Bazar while entering Bangladesh. 10 dead bodies, including those of women and children, were found.<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>184</sup> Jugantor 7 July 2024; <https://www.jugantor.com/tp-city/825110>

<sup>185</sup> Prothom Alo English 10 September 2024; <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/sipy4z5ta5>, BBC News Bangla, 21 September 2024; <https://www.bbc.com/bengali/articles/c4g5zkd2q3no>

<sup>186</sup> The Daily Star September 9 2024; <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news/rohingyas-sneaking-thru-naf-river-3697776>, Manabzamin 11 September 2024; <https://mzamin.com/news.php?news=126891>

<sup>187</sup> Prothom Alo English 10 September 2024; <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/sipy4z5ta5>, Daily Nayadiganta 9 September 2024; <https://www.dailynayadiganta.com/first-page/862323/>

<sup>188</sup> Dhaka Tribune 6 August 2024; <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/nation/353867/10-rohingyas-die-as-boat-capsizes-while-fleeing-to>, Prothom Alo 6 August 2024; <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/district/yc83zwdh2q>

## Recommendations:

1. Members of law enforcement agencies who were involved in extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, torture, and inhumane incidents throughout the Awami League government's reign, must face trial.
2. Torture and Custodial Death (Prevention) Act 2013 must be implemented and directives from the High Court and Appellate Division in BLAST vs Bangladesh must be followed to stop torture under the guise of remand. The government must sign the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture.
3. Enforced disappearance must be criminalized to ensure that those involved in forcibly disappearing people face justice. Victim families must be provided with compensation.
4. Investigations must be conducted into allegations of indiscipline, negligence, corruption and human rights violations by prison workers and administration.
5. Freedom of expression and mass media must be ensured at all levels. All cases of harassment against human rights defenders, including journalists, must be withdrawn and fair investigations must be conducted regarding attacks faced by them.
6. All restrictive laws, including The Special Powers Act 1974, Information and Communications Technology Act 2006, Anti-Terrorism Act 2009, and Cyber Security Act 2023, must be repealed immediately.
7. Perpetrators need to be arrested and stand trial to end violence against women and children. Arbitration for acts of violence against women is not a judicial solution. The police must conduct thorough investigations, arrest the accused, and ensure they face trials for women to obtain justice. Violence against women is a criminal offence.

8. All human rights violations perpetrated against Bangladeshi citizens by Indian BSF, including torture and border killings, must be put to end, and the government must pressure India to provide compensation to the families of victims. India must abide by the India-Bangladesh Land Boundary Agreement and the Memorandum of Understanding. India must put an end to its hegemony and aggression towards Bangladesh.

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**Notes:**

1. Odhikar seeks to uphold the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of the people.
2. Odhikar documents and records violations of human rights and receives information from its network of human rights defenders and monitors media reports.
3. Odhikar conducts detailed fact-finding investigations into some of the most significant violations, with assistance from trained local human rights defenders.
4. Odhikar is consistent in its human rights reporting and is committed to remain so.