

# Bangladesh

## The Case for Establishing OHCHR Field Office

A briefing paper for the 58th Session of the UN Human Rights Council



### Dr Yunus' Human Rights Record

- Weaponisation of justice system by filing criminal cases against 492,835 political opponents
- Suppression of media freedom by filing criminal cases against 147 journalists & continuing arrests under the draconian Cyber Security Act of 2023
- Removal of 21 Supreme Court & High Court judges through the Anti Discrimination Students Movement's protests
- Dissolution of National Human Rights Commission by forcing resignation of all members
- Effectively banning Awami League & restricting the right freedom of association and peaceful assembly of indigenous peoples and minorities
- No democracy in the CHTs & increased attacks on indigenous peoples
- Over 2,000 attacks on minorities justified as 'politically motivated'
- Secularism up for deletion through the Constitutional Reforms Commission
- Weaponisation of the Anti Discrimination Students Movement for establishing mob rule



**RIGHTS AND RISKS ANALYSIS GROUP**

# Bangladesh :

## The Case for Establishing OHCHR Field Office

*A briefing paper for the  
58<sup>th</sup> Session of the  
UN Human Rights Council*

**Bangladesh:**

The Case for Establishing OHCHR Field Office

First published: Embargoed for 8th February 2025

© Rights and Risks Analysis Group (RRAG), 2025.

No part of this publication can be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, without prior permission of the publisher.

Published by:



**RIGHTS AND RISKS ANALYSIS GROUP (RRAG)**

C-3/441, Janakpuri, New Delhi-110058, India

Phone: +91 11 35631078

Email: [director@rightsrisks.org](mailto:director@rightsrisks.org); Website: [www.rightsrisks.org](http://www.rightsrisks.org)

# Table of Contents

1.	The case for the UN Human Rights Council to act for “a strengthened presence” of the OHCHR .....	5
2.	The weaponisation of the justice system against political opponents: Cases filed against 492,835 political opponents .....	13
3.	The status of freedom of expression: Cases filed against 147 journalists during post July 2024 uprising .....	16
4.	The status of independence of judiciary: 21 Supreme Court and High Court judges removed by student protestors .....	20
5.	The status of NHRC: Dissolved without new appointments .....	21
6.	The status of freedom of association and peaceful assembly: Banned for the Awami League and restricted for religious minorities & indigenous peoples .....	22
7.	The status of indigenous peoples: No democracy in the CHTs & increased attacks .....	23
8.	The status of religious minorities: Over 2,000 attacks justified as ‘politically motivated’ .....	27
9.	The status of reforms: Means to target religious minorities by deleting “secularism” from the Constitution of Bangladesh .....	31
10.	The weaponisation of the Anti Discrimination Students Movement to establish the mob rule .....	33



# 1. The case for the UN Human Rights Council to act for “a strengthened presence” of the OHCHR

*“Yet, since the fall of authoritarianism, we have seen a troubling rise in partisanship, extortion, illegal occupation, and efforts to dominate the political landscape nationwide. .... Rampant partisanship, illegal occupation, and extortion have emerged across various sectors—land, businesses, leases, public transport—along with unhealthy competition for positions within government institutions.”*<sup>1</sup> - Dr. Iftekharuzzaman, Chairman, Anti-Corruption System Reform Commission of the Interim Government of Bangladesh on 11 September 2024

*“We cannot say the human rights situation has improved”*<sup>2</sup> - Noor Khan Liton, member of the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances established by the Interim Government of Bangladesh on 2 January 2025

*“The people expect this government to perform its duties impartially and take steps to strengthen democracy. But when we hear ‘reform first, then elections,’ it sounds like an echo of Sheikh Hasina’s words, ‘development first, then democracy.’ Such statements should not come from any adviser’s mouth.”*<sup>3</sup> - Ruhul Kabir Rizvi, Senior Joint Secretary General of the Bangladesh National Party on 24 January 2025 on Interim Government’s decision for not holding elections till reforms are completed.<sup>4</sup>

After the fall of the Awami League government headed by former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina’s government on 5 August 2024 following uprising by the Anti Discrimination Students Movement (ADSM) that witnessed deaths of over 1,000 persons,<sup>5</sup> an Interim Government headed by Nobel Laureate Dr Mohammed Yunus was sworn in on 8 August 2024.<sup>6</sup> Dr Yunus was expected to usher Bangladesh into a new era for democracy, rule of law and further hold free and fair elections. After five months, the Interim Government appears in no mood to hold elections until June 2026<sup>7</sup> under the garb of completing reforms while mob rule runs the country. In the meanwhile, the Bangladesh National Party (BNP) has raised questions about the formation of King’s Party by the Anti Discrimination Students Movement, whose two advisors Nahid Islam and Asif Mahmud, already serve in the Interim Government and therefore, raising serious questions about the neutrality of the Interim Government.<sup>8</sup>

As unelected advisors of the Interim Government attempt to establish their political roots, Bangladesh is all but about to implode.

The human rights situations under the Interim Government have clearly deteriorated as described below:

*Weaponisation of justice system by filing criminal cases against 492,835 political opponents*

- Dr Mohammed Yunus appears to have surpassed records of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on **arbitrary arrest and detention for political repression** during her 15 year rule and weaponised the justice system against political opponents. As per the *Manabadhikar Shongskriti Foundation* headed by prominent human rights activist Sultana Kamal, a total of the 4,92,835 persons including 68,368 persons named and 424,479 persons unnamed were accused in 1,520 cases by 31 December 2024.<sup>9</sup> Out of the 68,368 persons named, about 13,468 persons<sup>10</sup> have been arrested and these arrests are mostly arbitrary as per “**Category III**” of **arbitrary detention as defined by the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention**.<sup>11</sup> As late as 6 January 2025, the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka directed to investigate ousted Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and 344 former members of parliament (MPs) for allegedly attempting to kill one Aladul Islam, a garment worker, during a student-public protest against discrimination.<sup>12</sup> In the meanwhile, the Interim Government of Bangladesh also continues to use the discredited International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) against political opponents belonging to the ousted Awami League government and about 80 complaints of crimes against humanity and genocide had been filed as of 4 November 2024.<sup>13</sup> Many of these false cases have become a means of extortion from the accused persons.

*Suppression of media freedom by filing criminal cases against 147 journalists & continuing arrests under the draconian Cyber Security Act of 2023*

- There is little or no improvement on **freedom of opinion and expression** – the repression of the journalists by then Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has been replaced by the repression on the journalists by the Interim Government. As per the *Manabadhikar Shongskriti Foundation*, about 740 journalists were targeted in 178 cases during 2024. Five journalists were killed and 448 were injured and assaulted while performing their professional duties. Out of the 206 journalists subjected to judicial harassment, 147 journalists were accused in 21 cases including murder cases in the aftermath of the Students Uprising.<sup>14</sup> Investigation has been launched against at least 34 journalists for alleged money laundering without any tangible proof.<sup>15</sup> The Anti Discrimination Students Movement violently attacked several offices belonging to the independent dailies, *The Daily Star* and *Prothom Alo* in November 2024,<sup>16</sup> while protestors forcibly trespassed into the office of *Somoy TV* forcing the owners to sack five journalists in December 2024.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, at least 167 journalists were denied accreditation for their alleged links with the previous government as of 13 November 2024<sup>18</sup> while the government of Bangladesh issued an order suspending journalists’ access to the Secretariat on 29 December 2024 following a fire

incident at the Secretariat, a move condemned by Editors Council of Bangladesh.<sup>19</sup> During 2024, the Interim Government has filed 34 cases and arrested 24 persons under the draconian Cyber Security Act of 2023<sup>20</sup> with no signs of repealing the Act. The *Reporters Sans Frontières* described Bangladesh among the most dangerous countries for journalists in 2024<sup>21</sup> clearly indicating that attacks further intensified under Dr Mohammed Yunus.

*Removal of 21 Supreme Court & High Court judges through the Anti Discrimination Students Movement's protests*

- It will not be an understatement to state that **independence of judiciary** does not exist in Bangladesh as the judges are unable to take any independent decision regarding alleged members or associates of the ousted Awami League leaders without the fear of reprisals from the Anti Discrimination Students Movement. On 10 August 2024, five judges of the Supreme Court including Chief Justice were removed<sup>22</sup> while on 16 October 2024, 12 High Court judges were barred from judicial work because of the protests by the Anti Discrimination Students Movement.<sup>23</sup> These tactics continue unabated and on 19 November 2024, three more judges of the High Court had to resign after students belonging to the Anti Discrimination Students Movement made allegations of corruption against them.<sup>24</sup> The Interim Government has bludgeoned the judiciary into submission through the Anti Discrimination Students Movement.

*Dissolution of NHRC by forcing resignation of all members*

- There is no **National Human Rights Commission** in Bangladesh as the Interim Government forced all members of the Bangladesh NHRC to resign on 7 November 2024 after its monthly report for October 2024 highlighted poor law and order situation.<sup>25</sup> No new member of the NHRC has been appointed and the Bangladesh NHRC remains dissolved.

*Effectively banning Awami League & restricting the right freedom of association and peaceful assembly of indigenous peoples and minorities*

- There is little or no improvement of regarding the enjoyment of **the right to freedom of association and peaceful assembly**. While former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina government restricted the activities of the opposition Bangladesh National Party (BNP), the Interim Government has effectively banned the Awami League's political activities through banning of its students wing, Chhatra League, on 24 October 2024.<sup>26</sup> The Interim Government further restricted the right to freedom of association and peaceful assembly of indigenous peoples and religious minorities by (i) organised killings of indigenous peoples and burning down of their houses, properties and places of worship on 19-20 September in Khagrachari and Rangamati district following their 'March For Identity' on 18 September;<sup>27</sup> (ii) by burning down of the headquarters of the Jatiya Party, formed by late President Hussain Muhammad Ershad, on the night of 31 October 2024 at Kakrail area in the heart of the capital Dhaka;<sup>28</sup> (iii) by attacking the Hindu minorities for organising a peaceful assembly on 22 November 2024 at Rangpur,<sup>29</sup> and (iv) further violently attacking indigenous



students who were protesting in Dhaka on 15 January 2025 against the removal of a graffiti with the word “Adivasi” (indigenous).<sup>30</sup> In the meanwhile, the Interim Government continues to oppose bail to Hindu monk Chinmoy Krishna Das Brahmachari, who remains in jail since 25 November 2024 after being arrested in a trumped up sedition case to send a clear message to the religious minorities and indigenous peoples against exercising the right to freedom of association and peaceful assembly.<sup>31</sup>

*No democracy in the CHTs & increased attacks on indigenous peoples*

- As the Human Rights Watch stated on 23 January 2025, “*there is still one place where human rights monitors cannot travel or work freely in Bangladesh: the Chittagong Hill Tracts.*”<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, under the Interim Government, **Indigenous Peoples** of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHTs) faced increased attacks. In the attacks by the Bangladesh Army and the illegal<sup>33</sup> plain settlers from 19 September to 1 October 2024, at least four indigenous persons were killed, 75 indigenous Jumma people were seriously injured and at least 142 houses, shops and other business establishments, properties, Buddhist temples were looted, destroyed or set ablaze.<sup>34</sup> On 26 September 2024, a seven-member inquiry committee headed by Additional Divisional Commissioner of Chittagong Division Mr Mohammad Nurullah Noori was formed to submit the report within two weeks and the Inquiry Commission visited the affected areas on 30 September 2024.<sup>35</sup> However, as on date, the Inquiry Commission report headed by Mr Noori has not been made public as the Interim Government remains committed to provide impunity to the perpetrators.

*Over 2,000 attacks on minorities justified as ‘politically motivated’*

- The **Hindu minorities** faced unprecedented attacks after the fall of Sheikh Hasina regime. On 19 September 2024, the Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council in its findings disclosed to media stated that 2,010 incidents of communal violence took place across 68 districts and metropolitan areas between 4-20 August 2024 including deaths of nine persons, injuries to 38 others, four sexual assaults, one of which was a gang rape, and attacks on 69 places of worship, including acts of vandalism and arson.<sup>36</sup> Yet, on 5 September 2024, Dr Yunus without any investigation into these allegations stated that Hindus faced attacks because “*there is no clear distinction between Awami League supporters and Hindus*”.<sup>37</sup> On 10 January 2025, the Bangladesh Police claimed that 1,769 cases of attacks and vandalism were reported to police, out of which investigation into 1,415 incidents were completed. Of the 1,254 complaints substantiated, 1,234 incidents (98.4%) were politically motivated, and 20 cases (1.59%) were communal in nature.<sup>38</sup> The Bangladesh Police effectively manufactured the justification for the averments made by Dr Yunus earlier. On one hand, Dr Yunus states that the attacks on Hindu minorities are ‘politically motivated’; on the other hand, the Interim Government vociferously defends these

*Secularism up for deletion through the Constitutional Reforms Commission*

‘politically motivated’ cases to deny bail to Chinmoy Das and others. The denial of bail to Chinmoy Das indicates collusion between the Interim Government, prosecutors and judges.

- The Interim Government of Dr Yunus not only failed to include any member of indigenous peoples or religious minorities in the Constitutional Reforms Commission, in fact, the Constitutional Reforms Commission recommended removal of “**secularism**” from the Constitution of Bangladesh, thereby removing equal protection of the religious beliefs of the minorities in the Muslim majority country. This effectively begins the debate to turn Bangladesh effectively into an Islamic republic.
- Interim government has **weaponised the Anti Discrimination Students Movement** to carry out the tasks illegally, which cannot be done by the Interim Government legally. The Anti Discrimination Students Movement secured resignation of 21 Supreme Court and High Court judges without any inquiry and sought to secure resignation of President of Bangladesh Mohammed Shahabuddin, justified burning down of the headquarters of the Jatiya Party in the heart of the capital Dhaka. The ADSM continues to intimidate political opponents, journalists, media houses with impunity; and they have been emboldened with impunity given to them: the Interim government barred the law enforcement personnel from arresting or filing cases against anyone involved in the July-August uprising<sup>39</sup> in which at least 44 policemen were killed!<sup>40</sup> Further, mob justice has replaced justice in Bangladesh. The *Ain o Salish Kendra* (ASK), another prominent Bangladeshi NGO, in its 2024 Annual Assessment stated that “*during the Interim Government lynching people to death in the name of mob justice has been worrying*” as mob lynching death of 128 persons were recorded during 2024.<sup>41</sup> In 2023, about 51 persons were lynched to death<sup>42</sup> and therefore, under the rule of the Interim Government, there was an increase of 131% mob-lynching death in 2024 with 128 persons during the year.

*Weaponisation of the Anti Discrimination Students Movement for establishing mob rule*

## Why “a strengthened presence” of the OHCHR in Bangladesh is indispensable

*“I was encouraged that in many of my discussions, there was a call for enhanced support of my Office, including through a strengthened presence. We look forward to concluding the discussions on the modalities of our enhanced presence in Bangladesh with the interim government.*

*The invitation for my Office to deploy a fact-finding mission on human rights violations in the context of protests which took place in July and August this year was an important initiative by the interim authorities. A stronger presence in Bangladesh will enable my Office to accompany and support the transition process in this area and in other areas, including by offering advice on legal, institutional, economic and social reforms, transitional justice, reconciliation, and healing.” - UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk after the conclusion of his visit to Bangladesh on 30 October 2024<sup>43</sup>*

Bangladesh has traditionally been characterised by chronic political instability, *coup d'état*, vendetta politics since its independence in 1971: assassination of founder Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1975, assassination of Zia-ur Rahman in 1981, fall of the President H M Ershad in 1990; neither the BNP nor the Awami League willing to hold general elections under caretaker governments whether in 1996, 2001, 2006 and in 2014, 2019 and 2024.

Nobel Laureate Dr Yunus is exactly repeating the history – he has done everything except holding elections. He has announced plans to hold elections by around June 2026.<sup>44</sup> If the elections are delayed till June 2026 and the King's Party is formed by the Anti Discrimination Students Movement, Bangladesh will most probably implode once again sooner than later.

If the OHCHR country office is not established in Bangladesh with proper decision of the UN Human Rights Council during its 58<sup>th</sup> Session from 24 February to 4 April 2025<sup>45</sup>, the country will not be able to establish democracy and address the issues relating to “transitional justice”.<sup>46</sup>

Furthermore, the OHCHR is also at risk of being used for national political purposes by the Interim Government. The Interim government headed by Dr Mohammed Yunus invited the OHCHR Fact-Finding Team to conduct an independent and impartial fact-finding into alleged human rights violations that occurred in the context of protests which took place from 1 July to 15 August 2024.<sup>47</sup> The restriction on the OHCHR to not cover the violations and excesses committed during the tenure of the Interim Government is fraught with risks, more so because the Interim Government gave impunity to the protestors and barred the law enforcement personnel from arresting or filing cases against them. At least 44 policemen were killed during the protests.<sup>48</sup> While those responsible for the violations during 1 July to 15 August 2024 must be held accountable, the law must equally apply to all.

The OHCHR has 18 country or stand-alone offices including in Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Chad, Colombia, Guatemala, Guinea, Honduras, Liberia, Mauritania, Mexico, Niger, the State of Palestine, the Syrian Arab Republic (based in Beirut), Sudan, Tunisia, and Yemen; one field-based structure in Seoul that covers the Democratic People's Republic of Korea; and the Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine.<sup>49</sup>

The situation in Bangladesh is far graver than many countries which have OHCHR field offices. Therefore, the recommendations of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to allow his office to be established in Bangladesh to support the “*transition process*” including by “*offering advice on legal, institutional, economic and social reforms, transitional justice, reconciliation, and healing*”<sup>50</sup> remain indispensable.

At the time of writing of this report, the Interim Government has not extended the mandate of the OHCHR beyond 15 August 2024, has not invited the OHCHR to establish its country office and has not withdrawn impunity to those who also committed crimes such as murdering policemen during the students' uprising.

In order to establish “a strengthened presence” of the OHCHR as urged by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk,<sup>51</sup> the 58<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN Human Rights Council ought to take a decision on Bangladesh by passing a resolution or adopting a President's statement on the issue.

---

<sup>1</sup>. Widespread extortion and partisan capture of political and governance space contradictory to the vision of ‘New Bangladesh’; Political parties urged to take lessons of anti-discrimination movement: TIB , 11 September 2024, <https://www.ti-bangladesh.org/articles/press-release/7074>

<sup>2</sup>. Bangladesh saw surge of mob killings in 2024: Rights groups, The Hindu, 2 January 2025, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/bangladesh-saw-surge-of-mob-killings-in-2024-rights-groups/article69050374.ece>

- <sup>3</sup>. Rizvi compares call for reforms before polls to AL putting development before democracy, The Financial express, 24 January 2025, <https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/national/politics/rizvi-compares-call-for-reforms-before-polls-to-al-putting-development-before-democracy>
- <sup>4</sup>. Rizvi compares call for reforms before polls to AL putting development before democracy, The Financial express, 24 January 2025, <https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/national/politics/rizvi-compares-call-for-reforms-before-polls-to-al-putting-development-before-democracy>
- <sup>5</sup>. More than 1,000 killed in Bangladesh violence since July, health ministry chief says, Reuters 29 August 2024, <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/more-than-1000-killed-bangladesh-violence-since-july-health-ministry-chief-says-2024-08-29/>
- <sup>6</sup>. Muhammad Yunus takes oath as head of Bangladesh's interim government, Aljazeera, 8 August 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/8/8/muhammad-yunus-takes-oath-as-head-of-bangladeshs-interim-government>
- <sup>7</sup>. Election likely by mid-2026, The Daily Star, 17 December 2024, <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news/election-likely-mid-2026-3777971>
- <sup>8</sup>. Rizvi: State agency trying to form King's Party, Dhaka Tribune, 26 December 2024, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/politics/369191/rizvi-claims-state-agency-to-try-to-form-a-king-s>
- <sup>9</sup>. Human Rights Situation in Bangladesh- 2024, Manabadhikar Shongskriti Foundation, Dhaka, 31 December 2024, [http://www.msf.org.bd/press\\_release\\_183.php](http://www.msf.org.bd/press_release_183.php)
- <sup>10</sup>. Human Rights Situation in Bangladesh- 2024, Manabadhikar Shongskriti Foundation, Dhaka, 31 December 2024, [http://www.msf.org.bd/press\\_release\\_183.php](http://www.msf.org.bd/press_release_183.php)
- <sup>11</sup>. About arbitrary detention by the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/about-arbitrary-detention>
- <sup>12</sup>. Case filed against 344 former MPs, Prothom Alo, 8 January 2025, <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/lj3dpgoplf>
- <sup>13</sup>. ICT prosecution so far received 80 complaints over genocide, crimes against humanity, The Business Standard, 4 November 2024, <https://www.tbsnews.net/bangladesh/crime/ict-prosecution-so-far-received-80-complaints-over-genocide-crimes-against-humanity>
- <sup>14</sup>. Human Rights Situation in Bangladesh- 2024, Manabadhikar Shongskriti Foundation, Dhaka, 31 December 2024, [http://www.msf.org.bd/press\\_release\\_183.php](http://www.msf.org.bd/press_release_183.php)
- <sup>15</sup>. Bangladesh: RSF condemns unacceptable acts of intimidation against two independent newspapers, Reporters Sans Frontières, 27 November 2024, <https://rsf.org/en/bangladesh-rsf-condemns-unacceptable-acts-intimidation-against-two-independent-newspapers>
- <sup>16</sup>. Bangladesh: RSF condemns unacceptable acts of intimidation against two independent newspapers, RSE, 27 November 2024, <https://rsf.org/en/bangladesh-rsf-condemns-unacceptable-acts-intimidation-against-two-independent-newspapers>
- <sup>17</sup>. Bangladesh Protesters Enter TV Station Owners, Journalists Sacked, 24 December 2024, <https://www.barrons.com/news/bangladesh-protesters-enter-tv-station-owners-journalists-sacked-d8adb8b0>
- <sup>18</sup>. Rights groups condemn Bangladesh for canceling accreditation of 167 journalists, AP, 13 November 2024, <https://www.ap.org/media-center/ap-in-the-news/2024/rights-groups-condemn-bangladesh-for-canceling-accreditation-of-167-journalists/>
- <sup>19</sup>. Editors Council strongly protests cancellation of journalists' entry to Secretariat, Dhaka Tribune, 29 December 2024, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/369412/editors-council-strongly-protests-cancellation-of>
- <sup>20</sup>. ANNUAL Human Rights Monitoring Report 2024, Manabadhikar Shongskriti Foundation, [https://www.msf.org.bd/press\\_release\\_183.php](https://www.msf.org.bd/press_release_183.php)
- <sup>21</sup>. RSF: Bangladesh among most dangerous countries for journalists in 2024, Dhaka Tribune, 12 December 2024, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/367910/rsf-bangladesh-among-deadliest-countries-for>
- <sup>22</sup>. Bangladesh chief justice agrees to resign amid new student protests, Aljazeera, 10 August 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/8/10/bangladesh-chief-justice-agrees-to-resign-amid-new-student-protests>
- <sup>23</sup>. 12 HC judges barred from judicial activities amid student protest, The Daily Star, 16 October 2024, <https://www.the-dailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news/12-hc-judges-barred-judicial-activities-amid-student-protest-3728991>
- <sup>24</sup>. 3 High Court Judges resign, Dhaka Tribune, 19 November 2024, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/court/365638/3-high-court-judges-resign>
- <sup>25</sup>. All members of National Human Rights Commission of Bangladesh resign, Bdnews24.com, 07 Nov 2024, <https://bdnews24.com/bangladesh/f731f0f8da2a>
- <sup>26</sup>. Bangladesh bans student wing of ousted Sheikh Hasina's party, Reuters, 24 October 2024 <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/bangladesh-bans-student-wing-ousted-sheikh-hasinas-party-2024-10-24/>
- <sup>27</sup>. 100 Days of Dr Yunus: Mobocracy Imperils Bangladesh's Reforms, Rights & Risks Analysis Group, 18 November 2024, <https://www.rightsrisks.org/by-country/bangladesh/100-days-of-dr-yunus-mobocracy-imperils-bangladeshs-reforms/>
- <sup>28</sup>. Sheikh Hasina's coalition party office in Dhaka attacked, set on fire, The Business Standard, 01 November 2024, [https://www.business-standard.com/world-news/sheikh-hasina-s-coalition-party-office-in-dhaka-attacked-set-on-fire-124110100107\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/world-news/sheikh-hasina-s-coalition-party-office-in-dhaka-attacked-set-on-fire-124110100107_1.html)
- <sup>29</sup>. Bangladeshi Muslims attack and harass Hindus during Rangpur rally, News Intervention Bureau, 23 November 2024, <https://www.newsintervention.com/bangladeshi-muslims-attack-and-harass-hindus-during-rangpur-rally/>

- <sup>30</sup>. Removal of word ‘adivasi’: Indigenous group attacked at NCTB; 20 hurt, The Daily Star, 16 January 2025, <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news/removal-word-adivasi-indigenous-group-attacked-nctb-20-hurt-3799851>
- <sup>31</sup>. Bangladesh court rejects arrested Hindu monk Chinmoy Das’s bail plea, India Today, 2 January 2025, <https://www.indiatoday.in/world/story/arrested-hindu-monk-chinmoy-dass-bail-plea-rejected-by-bangladesh-court-2658469-2025-01-02>
- <sup>32</sup>. When will the revolution reach Bangladesh’s hills?, Julia Bleckner, Senior Researcher, Human Rights Watch (HRW), The Daily Star, 23 January 2025, <https://www.thedailystar.net/opinion/views/news/when-will-the-revolution-reach-bangladeshs-hills-3806476>
- <sup>33</sup>. The plains people settled in the Chittagong Hill Tracts are called “illegal” because Article 52 of the CHTs 1900 Regulation governing the region prohibits settlement of non-indigenous peoples as it states, “a) Save as hereinafter provided, no person other a Chakma, Mogh or a member of any hill tribe indigenous to the Chittagong Hill Tracts, the Lushai Hill, the Arakan Hill Tracts, or the State of Tripura shall enter or reside within the Chittagong Hill Tracts unless he is in possession of a permit granted by the Deputy Commissioner at his discretion....”
- <sup>34</sup>. “Conflicts In Bangladesh and Myanmar: The Threat To Regional Peace And Security”, Rights and Risks Analysis Group, 10 October 2024, <http://www.rightsrisks.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/ConflictsinMyanmarBangladesh.pdf>
- <sup>35</sup>. Khagrachari-Rangamati violence inquiry committee visited Rangamati, The Daily Country Today, 30 September 2023, <https://dailycountrytodaybd.com/story/khagrachari-rangamati-violence-inquiry-committee-visited-rangamati>,
- <sup>36</sup>. Report: 2,010 incidents of communal violence occurred from August 4 to 20 in Bangladesh, Dhaka Tribune, 20 September 2024, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/359102/2-010-communal-violence-reported-from-august-4-to>
- <sup>37</sup>. ‘Attacks on Hindus in Bangladesh exaggerated’: Muhammad Yunus questions India, The Hindustan Times, 05 September 2024, <https://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/attacks-on-hindus-in-bangladesh-exaggerated-muhammad-yunus-questions-india-101725527725684.html>
- <sup>38</sup>. Police investigation: 98% of attacks, vandalism on minorities politically motivated, The Dhaka Tribune, 11 January 2025, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/370547/police-investigation-98%25-of-attacks-vandalism-on>
- <sup>39</sup>. Bangladesh immunity order sparks fears of justice denied, RFI, 28/10/2024 <https://www.rfi.fr/en/international-news/20241028-bangladesh-immunity-order-sparks-fears-of-justice-denied>
- <sup>40</sup>. Bangladesh: 44 Policemen killed during July-August uprising, govt says, ANI, 25 October 2024 <https://www.aninews.in/news/world/asia/bangladesh-44-policemen-killed-during-july-august-uprising-govt-says20241025225516/>
- <sup>41</sup>. Human Rights Situation 2024, Ain O Salish Kendra, Dhaka, 31 December 2024, <https://www.askbd.org/ask/2024/12/31/%e0%a6%ac%e0%a6%be%e0%a6%82%e0%a6%b2%e0%a6%be%e0%a6%a8%e0%a6%ac%e0%a6%be%e0%a6%a7%87%e0%a6%b0-%e0%a6%ae%e0%a6%be%e0%a6%a8%e0%a6%ac%e0%a6%be%e0%a6%a7%e0%a6%bf%e0%a6%95%e0%a6%be%e0%a6%b0-%e0%a6%aa-2/>
- <sup>42</sup>. Human Rights Situation 2024, Ain O Salish Kendra, Dhaka, 31 December 2024, <https://www.askbd.org/ask/2024/12/31/%e0%a6%ac%e0%a6%be%e0%a6%82%e0%a6%b2%e0%a6%be%e0%a6%a8%e0%a6%ac%e0%a6%be%e0%a6%a7%87%e0%a6%b0-%e0%a6%ae%e0%a6%be%e0%a6%a8%e0%a6%ac%e0%a6%be%e0%a6%a7%e0%a6%bf%e0%a6%95%e0%a6%be%e0%a6%b0-%e0%a6%aa-2/>
- <sup>43</sup>. UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk concludes official visit to Bangladesh, OHCHR, 30 October 2024, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2024/10/un-high-commissioner-human-rights-volker-turk-concludes-official>
- <sup>44</sup>. Election likely by mid-2026, The Daily Star, 17 December 2024, <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news/election-likely-mid-2026-3777971>
- <sup>45</sup>. Please visit <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/regular-sessions/session58/regular-session> for details on the 58th Session of the UN Human Rights Council
- <sup>46</sup>. UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk concludes official visit to Bangladesh, OHCHR, 30 October 2024, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2024/10/un-high-commissioner-human-rights-volker-turk-concludes-official>
- <sup>47</sup>. OHCHR Fact-Finding Team on Bangladesh (FFTB), <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/fft-Bangladesh/index#:~:text=At%20the%20invitation%20of%20the,July%20to%2015%20August%202024.>
- <sup>48</sup>. Bangladesh: 44 Policemen killed during July-August uprising, govt says, ANI, 25 October 2024 <https://www.aninews.in/news/world/asia/bangladesh-44-policemen-killed-during-july-august-uprising-govt-says20241025225516/>
- <sup>49</sup>. Where we work, OHCHR, accessed on 27 January 2025 @ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/about-us/where-we-work>
- <sup>50</sup>. UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk concludes official visit to Bangladesh, OHCHR, 30 October 2024, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2024/10/un-high-commissioner-human-rights-volker-turk-concludes-official>
- <sup>51</sup>. UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk concludes official visit to Bangladesh, OHCHR, 30 October 2024, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2024/10/un-high-commissioner-human-rights-volker-turk-concludes-official>

## 2. The weaponisation of the justice system against political opponents: Cases filed against 492,835 political opponents

*“It is key that criminal cases are not filed against individuals solely on the basis of their previous political affiliation, including members or supporters of Awami League.”* -UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk in his concluding remarks after official visit to Bangladesh on 30 October 2024.<sup>52</sup>

Dr Mohammed Yunus appears to have surpassed records of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on arbitrary arrest and detention for political repression during her 15 year rule. As per the *Manabadhikar Shongskriti Foundation* headed by prominent human rights activist Sultana Kamal, a total of the 4,92,835 persons including 68,368 persons named and 424,479 persons unnamed were accused in 1,520 cases by 31 December 2024.<sup>53</sup>

Out of the 68,368 persons named as accused, about 13,468 persons<sup>54</sup> have been arrested. These arrests are mostly arbitrary as per **“Category III” of arbitrary detention as defined by the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention** i.e. *“When the total or partial non-observance of the International norms relating to the right to a fair trial, spelled out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the relevant international instruments accepted by the States concerned, is of such gravity as to give the deprivation of liberty an arbitrary character”*.<sup>55</sup>

As late as 6<sup>th</sup> January 2025, the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka directed to investigate ousted Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and 344 former members of parliament (MPs) for allegedly attempting to kill one Aladul Islam, a garment worker, during a student-public protest against discrimination.<sup>56</sup>

Any student of administration of criminal justice will be aware that 344 MPs cannot be part of a conspiracy for attempting to kill a garment worker while participating in protests along with thousands of others. The principle of command responsibility under Article 28 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court<sup>57</sup> also cannot apply to these 344 MPs with respect to the alleged use of force by any law enforcement personnel. However, since the attempt to murder case has been registered under the order of the Chief Judicial Magistrate, the police are duty-bound to investigate and actually summon each of the 344 MPs who have been accused in this complaint.

This case against 344 former MPs accused of hatching to murder one garment worker is not an exception.

### 2.1 Emblematic cases of false prosecution and the issue of extortion

A few of the emblematic cases of false prosecution are given below:

Mr Z I Khan Panna, senior Supreme Court lawyer and chairperson of the human rights organization *Ain o Salish Kendra*, was himself involved in the legal struggle for students’ demands and against their leaders’ arrests. He was implicated in an attempted murder case filed by Mohammad Baker, a 52-year-old vegetable vendor in the Banasree area regarding an attempt to kill his son Ahadul Islam, 25 years, by shooting, at Khilgaon police station on 17 October 2024. Mr Panna was named as an accused. Mr Baker later clarified that he did not know how Panna’s name had appeared in the list of accused and requested the police to relieve the lawyer from the case.<sup>58</sup>

On the murder of Abdul Motalib, 14 years, from Moneshwar Govt Primary School after being shot on 4 August at Jigatola, Dhaka, his father, Abdul Matin, filed a murder case at Dhanmondi police station on 26 August against 20 accused persons. However, in the same case, Hazaribagh police registered a murder case as per court order pursuant to the complaint filed by one Sheikh Md Masum Billah against victim Abdul Motaleb Munna, aged 12. The victim, Abdul Motalib, had no connection to the complainant Sheikh Md Masum Billah. Motalib hailed from Begumganj, Noakhali while Masum Billah hailed from Ulipur, Kurigram.<sup>59</sup> Sheikh Md Masum Billah had no *locus standi* to file a criminal complaint but such cases have been filed across the country.

In the killing of Mirajul Islam, 21 years, in police firing on 5 August on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway, his father, Abdus Salam, filed a murder case at Jatrabari police station on 28 August 2024 accusing 40 persons, as well as 300 unnamed individuals. The accused are all from his home district of the complainant, Lalmonirhat, and most of the accused are associated with the Awami League. Salam, who is a CNG-run auto rickshaw driver, could not justify why so many from his home district were on the list of accused but said they were connected to local and national politics.<sup>60</sup> It is clear that cases have been filed to settle political vendetta.

On 24 November 2024, as per the *Reporters Sans Frontières*, a murder complaint was filed against 14 journalists in Khulna, along with 315 other individuals. The RSF alleged that all of the defendants were accused of orchestrating a student's murder in connection with recent protests. However, the victim's father stated that he had never filed the complaint, and that his name had been used without his consent. The death certificate states that the victim died from electrocution.<sup>61</sup>

A large number of these false cases have also been filed for political vendetta, rivalry, and extortion and it became obvious very soon. As early as 11 September 2024, Dr. Iftekharuzzaman, Chairman, Anti-Corruption System Reform Commission of the Interim Government warned that partisanship, illegal occupation and extortion betray the vision of a "New Bangladesh".<sup>62</sup>

On 13 November 2024, an attempted murder case linked to clashes during the student movement was filed at Mohammadpur Police Station, implicating 76 officials and six employees of the Department of Agricultural Extension, among 265 accused. Many of the accused stated that they were being pressured to leave their projects or pay bribes.<sup>63</sup>

In December 2024, it was reported that Sub-Inspector Anup Biswas, injured during the 18 July Rampura protests, learned he was falsely implicated in an attempted murder case while hospitalized. He claimed extortionists demanded Taka 1,00,000 (one hundred thousand) or face the risk of being implicated in a murder case. Some other accused police officers in the case told *The Daily Star* that the extortionists were demanding Taka 2,00,000 (two hundred thousand) from inspectors, Tk 1,00,000 from sub-inspectors and Tk 50,000 from assistant sub-inspectors.<sup>64</sup>

## **2.2 Abuse of the discredited International Crimes Tribunal by Interim Government**

The International Crimes Tribunal established by Bangladesh has been severely criticized during former Prime Minister Hasina's tenure for vendetta politics.<sup>65</sup> It is now being abused by the Interim Government for the same vendetta politics against Sheikh Hasina and those associated with her. On 14 October, the government reconstituted the International Crimes Tribunal by appointing two High Court judges and a retired District and Sessions judge<sup>66</sup> and started hearing the cases filed over the killings and massacre during the Anti Discrimination Students Movement from 15 October onward.<sup>67</sup>

More than 80 complaints of crimes against humanity and genocide have been filed against Sheikh Hasina and her party leaders by the ICT and the prosecution team as on 4 November.<sup>68</sup> On 17 October, the International Crimes Tribunal had issued an arrest warrant against former prime minister Sheikh Hasina along with warrants for 44 others including Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader.<sup>69</sup>

The absences of compliance with human rights standards raised against International Crimes Tribunal during former Prime Minister Hasina's tenure remain valid under the Interim Government. These concerns include serious procedure flaws at all stages: pre-trial release has been routinely and arbitrarily denied; witnesses intimidated influenced and intimidated; collusion between the Government, prosecutors and judges; denial of due process and fair trial rights to all suspect including the right to a public hearing before a competent, independent and impartial tribunal; the right to be tried in one's presence; the right to counsel and the right to a full defence etc.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>52</sup>. UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk concludes official visit to Bangladesh, OHCHR, 30 October 2024, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2024/10/un-high-commissioner-human-rights-volker-turk-concludes-official>

<sup>53</sup>. Human Rights Situation in Bangladesh- 2024, Manabdhikar Shongskriti Foundation, Dhaka, 31 December 2024, [http://www.msf.org.bd/press\\_release\\_183.php](http://www.msf.org.bd/press_release_183.php)

<sup>54</sup>. Human Rights Situation in Bangladesh- 2024, Manabdhikar Shongskriti Foundation, Dhaka, 31 December 2024, [http://www.msf.org.bd/press\\_release\\_183.php](http://www.msf.org.bd/press_release_183.php)

<sup>55</sup>. About arbitrary detention by the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/about-arbitrary-detention>

<sup>56</sup>. Case filed against 344 former MPs, Prothom Alo, 8 January 2025, <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/lj3dpgopl>

<sup>57</sup>. Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court can be accessed at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/rome-statute-international-criminal-court>

<sup>58</sup>. Haphazardly filed cases causing concern, Dhaka Tribune, 29 October 2024, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/363523/haphazardly-filed-cases-causin-concern>

<sup>59</sup>. Haphazardly filed cases causing concern, Dhaka Tribune, 29 October 2024, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/363523/haphazardly-filed-cases-causin-concern>

<sup>60</sup>. Haphazardly filed cases causing concern, Dhaka Tribune, 29 October 2024, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/363523/haphazardly-filed-cases-causin-concern>

<sup>61</sup>. Bangladesh: RSF condemns unacceptable acts of intimidation against two independent newspapers, Reporters Sans Frontières, 27 November 2024, <https://rsf.org/en/bangladesh-rsf-condemns-unacceptable-acts-intimidation-against-two-independent-newspapers>

<sup>62</sup>. Illegal occupation, extortion across country a betrayal to dream of 'New Bangladesh': Iftekharuzzaman, The Business Standard, 11 September 2024, <https://www.tbsnews.net/bangladesh/illegal-occupation-extortion-across-country-betrayal-dream-new-bangladesh-iftekharuzzaman>

<sup>63</sup>. Student protest cases exploited for extortion put police in a pickle, bdnews24.com, 13 December 2024, <https://bdnews24.com/bangladesh/9fbf80495ac6>

<sup>64</sup>. July uprising cases: Police extorting bribes from their own, The Daily Star, 29 December 2024, <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/crime-justice/news/july-uprising-cases-police-extorting-bribes-their-own-3786696>

<sup>65</sup>. Bangladesh International Crimes Tribunal should pursue justice, not vengeance, International Commission of Jurists, 28 February 2013, <https://www.icj.org/bangladesh-international-crimes-tribunal-should-pursue-justice-not-vengeance/>

<sup>66</sup>. Govt reconstitutes ICT, The Financial Express, 15 October 2024, <https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/last-page/govt-reconstitutes-ict-1728928173>

<sup>67</sup>. International Crimes Tribunal to begin hearings on Thursday, Dhaka Tribune, 15 October 2024, <https://www.dhaka.tribune.com/bangladesh/court/361957/international-crimes-tribunal-to-begin-hearings-on>

<sup>68</sup>. ICT prosecution so far received 80 complaints over genocide, crimes against humanity, The Business Standard, 4 November 2024, <https://www.tbsnews.net/bangladesh/crime/ict-prosecution-so-far-received-80-complaints-over-genocide-crimes-against-humanity>

<sup>69</sup>. Arrest warrant issued against Sheikh Hasina, Obaidul Quader among 45, Prothom Alo, 17 October 2024, <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/ii6vln44on>

<sup>70</sup>. Bangladesh International Crimes Tribunal should pursue justice, not vengeance, International Commission of Jurists, 28 February 2013, <https://www.icj.org/bangladesh-international-crimes-tribunal-should-pursue-justice-not-vengeance/>



### 3. The status of freedom of expression: Cases filed against 147 journalists during post July 2024 uprising

*“RSF condemns the unacceptable attacks and attempts of intimidation against The Daily Star and Prothom Alo. The two newspapers tried to maintain their independence at all costs under Sheikh Hasina’s authoritarian regime, despite the legal harassment they suffered in retaliation. It is now up to the interim government to help them to work freely, without restrictions or harassment. An impartial, thorough investigation into the instigators and perpetrators of the recent violent attacks— and the necessary subsequent legal proceedings — are crucial to curbing the development of an unsafe work environment for journalists”.*

- Celia Mercier, Head of RSF’s South Asia Desk on 27 November 2024<sup>71</sup>

While former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina’s regime was infamous for curtailment of press freedom, the situation has actually deteriorated under the Interim Government. The *Reporters Sans Frontières* described Bangladesh among the most dangerous countries for journalists in 2024, ranking 165 out of 180 countries in press freedom,<sup>72</sup> clearly indicating that attacks further intensified under Dr Mohammed Yunus.

During 2024, about 740 journalists were targeted in 178 cases. Of the journalists affected, five journalists were killed, 448 were injured and assaulted while performing their professional duties. Out of the 206 journalists subjected to judicial harassment, 147 journalists were accused in 21 cases including murder cases in the post July 2024 uprising.<sup>73</sup> The Anti Discrimination Students Movement protestors attacked independent dailies *The Daily Star* and *Prothom Alo*<sup>74</sup> and trespassed into *Somoy TV* forcing the owners to sack five journalists from jobs without any ground because of the threat from the student protestors.<sup>75</sup>

Furthermore, at least 167 journalists were denied accreditation for their alleged links with the previous government as of 13 November 2024<sup>76</sup> thereby harming their profession or jobs. The Interim government further issued an order suspending journalists’ access to the Secretariat on 29 December 2024, a move condemned by Bangladesh’s Editors Council, following a fire accident at the Secretariat.<sup>77</sup>

The Interim Government also continued to use the draconian Cyber Security Act with at least 11 cases<sup>78</sup> having been filed in 2024 with no signs of repeal of the Act.

#### 3.1 Emblematic cases of attacks on journalists

On 22 August, a murder case was filed by Kamrul Islam, father of the student Nayeem Howlader who died during protests at Jatrabari in Dhaka against former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and 192 others including seven journalists. The accused journalists are Mozammel Haque Babu, Managing Director and Editor-in-Chief of *Ekattor TV*; Syed Ishtiaque Reza, former Chief News Editor (CNE) of *Ekattor TV*; Ahmed Jobaer, a Director of *Somoy TV*; Munnis Saha, former CNE of *ATN News*; Farzana Rupa, former Principal Correspondent of *Ekattor TV*; Shakil Ahmed, former head of news at *Ekattor TV*; and Nayeemul Islam Khan, former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina’s Press Secretary. Among them, couple Shakil Ahmed and Farzana Rupa were sent for remand for four days in another murder case filed at Uttara East Police Station. They were arrested at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport<sup>79</sup> and remain in jail.<sup>80</sup>

On 29 August, lawyer MH Gazi Tamim filed a complaint with the International Crimes Tribunal against Sheikh Hasina and 52 people including 32 senior journalists on the charge of genocide during

the students' agitation.<sup>81</sup> The accused journalists include Mozammel Babu, Saiful Alam, Noyeem Nizam, Farida Yasmin, Shyamal Dutta, Abed Khan, Prabash Amin, Farzana Rupa, Shakil Ahmed, Mithila Farzana, Zayedul Ahsan Pintu, Nabanita Chowdhury, Subhash Singh Roy, Ahmed Zobair, Tushar Abdullah, Monjurul Islam, Ashish Saikat, Manash Ghosh, Pranab Saha, Masuda Bhatti, Munni Saha, J.E. Mamun, Swadesh Roy, Soma Islam, Shyamal Sarkar and Ajay Das.<sup>82</sup> According to the complaint, lodged by Abdur Razzak, father of Nasib Hasan Riyan, a student killed during the protests, the accused journalists were "sycophants" of the Awami League government and published false news to instigate the genocide and crimes against humanity committed by the then government and law enforcers, thereby giving legitimacy to those crimes.<sup>83</sup> Out of these journalists, Farzana Rupa, Shakil Ahmed, Mozammel Babu and Shyamal Dutta were already in jail in connection with two murder cases during mass protests.<sup>84</sup>

On 16 September, police detained Mozammel Babu, Managing Director of *Ekattor TV*, and Senior Reporter Mahbubur Rahman, along with Shyamal Dutta, Editor of *Bhorer Kagoj*. The following day, a court placed Mozammel Babu and Shyamal Dutta in seven-day police remand, while Mahbubur Rahman and their driver were released.<sup>85</sup>

On 16 September, Shahriar Kabir, journalist, author and activist, was arrested from his residence in connection with a murder case during the Anti Discrimination Students Movement at Jatrabari, Dhaka. On 20 October, Shahriar Kabir was placed on two-day remand by a court.<sup>86</sup>

On 11 September, a murder case was filed against former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, 25 journalists and 139 others over the death of a 31-year-old man at Bhasantek in Dhaka during the mass uprising.<sup>87</sup>

On 18 October, daily *Samakal* journalist Raihan was sent to jail after being arrested in a murder case related to the Anti Discrimination Students Movement in Habiganj.<sup>88</sup>

On 22 October, journalist Pranab Barua Arnab was arrested in four cases filed with Patia Police Station in Chittagong. Police claimed that Pranab Barua was trying to flee to India through Akhaura.<sup>89</sup>

On 25 October, Pradip Chowdhury, the President of the Khagrachari Journalist Union and a district correspondent for the daily *Samakal*, was arrested by police in Khagrachari. After the fall of Sheikh Hasina government five separate cases were filed against him at Khagrachari Sadar, Manikchhari, Panchhari and Dighinala police stations by the BNP leaders and activists, accusing him of various offenses including attacks on BNP leaders and vandalism of BNP offices. He was also named in a case related to a clash with anti-discrimination student protesters on 4 August. Apart from Pradip Chowdhury, six other journalists from Khagrachari were also implicated in these cases.<sup>90</sup>

In addition, the Interim Government has launched investigations into financial matters of at least 34 journalists with the sole aim to intimidate. On 24 November 2024, as per the *Reporters Sans Frontières*, the central bank's financial intelligence agency, the Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit ordered the bank accounts of 10 (ten) journalists to be frozen for a renewable period of one month. According to official statements, this measure is intended to combat money laundering, although no tangible proof has been provided. An investigation into the accounts of 28 other journalists is also underway following a request from the Ministry of Information.<sup>91</sup>

On 24 December 2024, a gang of Bangladesh student protesters led by Hasnat Abdullah, Convener of the Anti Discrimination Students Movement, entered the offices of the City Group, who invest in *Somoy Television* and accused it of "spreading propaganda, twisting my comments, and accommodating the views of a fallen political party". Immediately, five journalists including one Omar Faroque, a

senior editor, were terminated from job without any reason because of the intimidation from the students led by Hasnat Abdullah.<sup>92</sup>

### 3.2 Cancellation of press accreditation

The Interim Government has been using press accreditation as a weapon to target journalists for their work. Press accreditation cards are required for access to the Secretariat.<sup>93</sup> The government revoked press accreditation of at least 167 journalists for their alleged links with the previous government including revocation of accreditation of 20 journalists on 29 October,<sup>94</sup> 30 journalists on 3 November,<sup>95</sup> and 118 journalists on 7 November<sup>96</sup> thereby crippling press freedom. The Interim government altogether suspended journalists' access to the Secretariat on 29 December 2024 following a fire accident at the Secretariat, a move condemned by Editors Council.<sup>97</sup>

### 3.3 Online Space: Abuse of the Cyber Security Act by the Interim Government

The Interim Government has filed 34 cases and arrested 24 persons under the draconian Cyber Security Act of 2023.<sup>98</sup>

The Cyber Security Act, 2023 was known for being abused to stifle freedom of expression and suppress dissent under former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Prime Minister Hasina enacted the Digital Security Act of 2018 which she was forced to repeal and enact the Cyber Security Act, 2023.

The Interim Government of Bangladesh despite its promise to repeal the Cyber Security Act, 2023 has failed to take any measure as on 25 January 2025. It introduced draft Cyber Protection Ordinance 2024 and the draft has been condemned by several victims of the Digital Security Act and the Cyber Security Act as “repressive’ or similar to its predecessors.”<sup>99</sup>

On 24 September, Hafez Md Saifuddin, Joint Convener of Fatikchari Upazila Chhatra Dal was a case filed before the Chittagong Cyber Tribunal against Moktar Hossain, a resident of West Nanupur village in Fatikchari Upazila, Chittagong under Cyber Security Act for allegedly insulting the Quran and posting a social media video targeting Chief Adviser Dr Muhammad Yunus, Information Adviser Nahid Islam and the Army Chief. The Chittagong Cyber Tribunal directed the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) to investigate the complaint.<sup>100</sup>

---

<sup>71</sup>. Bangladesh: RSF condemns unacceptable acts of intimidation against two independent newspapers, Reporters Sans Frontières, 27 November 2024, <https://rsf.org/en/bangladesh-rsf-condemns-unacceptable-acts-intimidation-against-two-independent-newspapers>

<sup>72</sup>. RSF: Bangladesh among most dangerous countries for journalists in 2024, Dhaka Tribune, 12 December 2024, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/367910/rsf-bangladesh-among-deadliest-countries-for>

<sup>73</sup>. Human Rights Situation in Bangladesh- 2024, Manabdhikar Shongskriti Foundation, Dhaka, 31 December 2024, [http://www.msf.org.bd/press\\_release\\_183.php](http://www.msf.org.bd/press_release_183.php)

<sup>74</sup>. Bangladesh: RSF condemns unacceptable acts of intimidation against two independent newspapers, RSE, 27 November 2024, <https://rsf.org/en/bangladesh-rsf-condemns-unacceptable-acts-intimidation-against-two-independent-newspapers>

<sup>75</sup>. Bangladesh Protesters Enter TV Station Owners, Journalists Sacked, 24 December 2024, <https://www.barrons.com/news/bangladesh-protesters-enter-tv-station-owners-journalists-sacked-d8adb8b0>

<sup>76</sup>. Rights groups condemn Bangladesh for canceling accreditation of 167 journalists, AP, 13 November 2024, <https://www.ap.org/media-center/ap-in-the-news/2024/rights-groups-condemn-bangladesh-for-canceling-accreditation-of-167-journalists/>

- <sup>77</sup> Editors Council strongly protests cancellation of journalists' entry to Secretariat, Dhaka Tribune, 29 December 2024, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/369412/editors-council-strongly-protests-cancellation-of>
- <sup>78</sup> 100 Days of Dr Yunus: Mobocracy Imperils Bangladesh's Reforms, Rights & Risks Analysis Group, 18 November 2024, <https://www.rightsrisks.org/by-country/bangladesh/100-days-of-dr-yunus-mobocracy-imperils-bangladeshs-reforms/>
- <sup>79</sup> Hasina, 7 journos sued for murder, The Daily Star, 25 August 2024, <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/crime-justice/news/hasina-7-journos-sued-murder-3685491>
- <sup>80</sup> Legal team files UN complaint over jailed Bangladeshi journalists, Voice of America, 24 January 2025, <https://www.voanews.com/a/legal-team-files-un-complaint-over-jailed-bangladeshi-journalists-/7949488.html>
- <sup>81</sup> Human Rights Monitoring report AUGUST 2024, Manabadhikar Shongskriti Foundation (MSF), 31 August 2024, [https://www.msf.org.bd/press\\_release\\_172.php](https://www.msf.org.bd/press_release_172.php)
- <sup>82</sup> Complaint lodged against 53 including Hasina, 28 journalists for inciting genocide, United News of Bangladesh 29 August 2024, <https://unb.com.bd/category/Bangladesh/complaint-lodged-against-53-including-hasina-28-journalists-for-inciting-genocide/141844>
- <sup>83</sup> Crimes against humanity: Hasina, over two dozen journos sued in ICT case, The Daily Star, 29 August 2024, <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/crime-justice/news/crimes-against-humanity-hasina-over-two-dozen-journos-sued-ict-case-3689551>
- <sup>84</sup> Journalists supportive of ousted Bangladesh leader targeted with arrest, criminal cases, CPJ, 19 September 2024, <https://cpj.org/2024/09/journalists-supportive-of-ousted-bangladesh-leader-targeted-with-arrest-criminal-cases/>
- <sup>85</sup> Journalists supportive of ousted Bangladesh leader targeted with arrest, criminal cases, CPJ, 19 September 2024, <https://cpj.org/2024/09/journalists-supportive-of-ousted-bangladesh-leader-targeted-with-arrest-criminal-cases/>
- <sup>86</sup> Shahriar Kabir placed on two-day remand in Jatrabari murder case, The Business Standard, 20 October 2024, <https://www.tbsnews.net/bangladesh/shahriar-kabir-placed-two-day-remand-jatrabari-murder-case-971386>
- <sup>87</sup> Hasina, 25 journos sued for murder, The Daily Star, 13 September 2024, <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/crime-justice/news/hasina-25-journos-sued-murder-3702016>
- <sup>88</sup> Human Rights Situation Monitoring Report October 2024, Manabadhikar Shongskriti Foundation (MSF), 31 October 2024, [https://www.msf.org.bd/press\\_release\\_178.php](https://www.msf.org.bd/press_release_178.php)
- <sup>89</sup> Journalist leader Pranab Barua shown arrested in four cases, The Business Standard, 23 October 2024, <https://www.tbsnews.net/bangladesh/journalist-leader-pranab-barua-shown-arrested-four-cases-974376>
- <sup>90</sup> Journalist arrested in Khagrachari, Dhaka Tribune, 25 October 2024, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/nation/363166/journalist-arrested-in-khagrachari>
- <sup>91</sup> Bangladesh: RSF condemns unacceptable acts of intimidation against two independent newspapers, Reporters Sans Frontières, 27 November 2024, <https://rsf.org/en/bangladesh-rsf-condemns-unacceptable-acts-intimidation-against-two-independent-newspapers>
- <sup>92</sup> Bangladesh Protesters Enter TV Station Owners, Journalists Sacked, 24 December 2024, <https://www.barrons.com/news/bangladesh-protesters-enter-tv-station-owners-journalists-sacked-d8adb8b0>
- <sup>93</sup> Govt strips 118 more journos of accreditation, Dhaka Tribune, 11 November 2024, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/364880/govt-strips-118-more-journos-of-accreditation>
- <sup>94</sup> Press accreditation cards of 20 journalists canceled, Dhaka Tribune, 29 October 2024, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/363584/press-accreditation-cards-of-20-journalists>
- <sup>95</sup> Press accreditation cards of 30 more journalists scrapped, The Business Standard, 5 November 2024, <https://www.tbsnews.net/bangladesh/press-accreditation-cards-30-more-journalists-scrapped-985316>
- <sup>96</sup> Govt strips 118 more journos of accreditation, Dhaka Tribune, 11 November 2024, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/364880/govt-strips-118-more-journos-of-accreditation>
- <sup>97</sup> Editors Council strongly protests cancellation of journalists' entry to Secretariat, Dhaka Tribune, 29 December 2024, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/369412/editors-council-strongly-protests-cancellation-of>
- <sup>98</sup> ANNUAL Human Rights Monitoring Report 2024, Manabadhikar Shongskriti Foundation, [https://www.msf.org.bd/press\\_release\\_183.php](https://www.msf.org.bd/press_release_183.php)
- <sup>99</sup> DSA, CSA victims reject draft of cyber protection ordinance, The New Age Staff Correspondent 12 January, 2025, 02:01
- <sup>100</sup> CSA case filed in Chittagong over Quran insult, defamation of Prof Yunus, Dhaka Tribune, 24 September 2024, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/court/359590/csa-case-filed-in-chittagong-over-quran-insult>

## 4. The status of independence of judiciary: 21 Supreme Court and High Court judges removed by student protestors

There is no independence of the judiciary in Bangladesh to ensure fair trial as the judges are unable to take any independent decision without the fear of reprisals from the mob in the name of Anti Discrimination Students Movement.

The Anti Discrimination Students Movement leaders forced 21 Supreme Court and High Court judges including Chief Justice of Bangladesh through protests.

On 10 August 2024, six judges of the Supreme Court including Chief Justice Obaidul Hassan, and Justice M Enayetur Rahim, Justice Md Abu Zafor Siddique, Justice Jahangir Hossain Selim, Justice Md Shahinur Islam and Justice Kashefa Hussain were forced to resign following protests by the Anti Discrimination Students Movement.<sup>101</sup>

On 16 October 2024, 12 High Court judges were barred from judicial work because of the protests by the Anti Discrimination Students Movement.<sup>102</sup>

On 19 November 2024, three judges of the High Court Justice Salma Masud Chowdhury, Justice Kazi Reza-ul-Haque, and Justice AKM Zahirul Haque had to resign after the Anti Discrimination Students Movement made allegations of corruption.<sup>103</sup>

For sacking of the judges of the Supreme Court and the High Court, there is no need for any inquiry by any authority but protests by the Anti Discrimination Students Movement are enough. Under the current situation, if any judge dares to release any leader or activist connected with former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina government or Awami League, the judge will face the fury of mob justice led by the Anti Discrimination Students Movement.

---

<sup>101</sup>. CJ, 5 other SC judges resign, The Daily Star, <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news/cj-5-other-sc-judges-resign-3674021> <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news/cj-5-other-sc-judges-resign-3674021>

<sup>102</sup>. Student protest on SC premises: 12 HC judges barred from judicial work, The Daily Star, 17 October 2024, <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news/student-protest-sc-premises-12-hc-judges-barred-judicial-work-3729306>

<sup>103</sup>. 3 High Court Judges resign, Dhaka Tribune, 19 November 2024, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/court/365638/3-high-court-judges-resign>

## **5. The status of NHRC: Dissolved without new appointments**

On 7 November 2024, the Government of Bangladesh forced all members of Bangladesh's NHRC including Chairman Kamal Uddin Ahmed and five other members i.e. Md Salim Reza, Aminul Islam, Kongjari Chowdhury, Biswajit Chanda, and Tania Haque who submitted their resignation letters to the President of Bangladesh. On 5<sup>th</sup> November 2024, the NHRC of Bangladesh released its monthly report for October 2024 and the report based on the facts highlighted a rise in crimes such as mob beatings, rapes, and other offences as well as political harassment, assaults on political leaders, and other violent acts.<sup>104</sup>

The Interim Government of Bangladesh has not appointed any member of the NHRC and the NHRC remains dissolved.

---

<sup>104</sup>. All members of National Human Rights Commission of Bangladesh resign, Bdnews24.com, 07 Nov 2024, <https://bdnews24.com/bangladesh/f731f0f8da2a>

## 6. The status of freedom of association and peaceful assembly: Banned for the Awami League and restricted for religious minorities & indigenous peoples

There is little or no improvement of the freedom of association and peaceful assembly. While former Prime Minister Hasina government restricted the activities of the opposition Bangladesh National Party, the Interim Government has effectively banned the Awami League's political activities through banning of its students wing, Chhatra League, on 24 October 2024.<sup>105</sup>

The Interim Government further restricted the right to freedom of association and peaceful assembly of indigenous peoples and religious minorities by (i) organising killings of indigenous peoples and burning down of their houses, properties and places of worship on 19-20 September in Khagrachari and Rangamati district following their 'March For Identity' on 18 September;<sup>106</sup> (ii) by burning down of the headquarters of the Jatiya Party, formed by late President Hussain Muhammad Ershad, on the night of 31 October 2024 at Kakrail area in the heart of the capital Dhaka;<sup>107</sup> (iii) by attacking the Hindu minorities for organising a peaceful assembly on 22 November 2024 at Rangpur,<sup>108</sup> and (iv) further violently attacking indigenous students who were protesting in Dhaka on 15 January 2025 against the removal of a graffiti with the word "Adivasi" (indigenous).<sup>109</sup> In the meanwhile, the Interim Government continues to oppose bail to Hindu monk Chinmoy Krishna Das Brahmachari, who remains in jail since 25 November 2024 after being arrested in a trumped up sedition case to send a clear message to the religious minorities and indigenous peoples against exercising the right to freedom of association and peaceful assembly.<sup>110</sup>

---

<sup>105</sup>. Bangladesh bans student wing of ousted Sheikh Hasina's party, Reuters, 24 October 2024 <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/bangladesh-bans-student-wing-ousted-sheikh-hasinas-party-2024-10-24/>

<sup>106</sup>. 100 Days of Dr Yunus: Mobocracy Imperils Bangladesh's Reforms, Rights & Risks Analysis Group, 18 November 2024, <https://www.rightsrisks.org/by-country/bangladesh/100-days-of-dr-yunus-mobocracy-imperils-bangladeshs-reforms/>

<sup>107</sup>. Sheikh Hasina's coalition party office in Dhaka attacked, set on fire, The Business Standard, 01 November 2024, [https://www.business-standard.com/world-news/sheikh-hasina-s-coalition-party-office-in-dhaka-attacked-set-on-fire-124110100107\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/world-news/sheikh-hasina-s-coalition-party-office-in-dhaka-attacked-set-on-fire-124110100107_1.html)

<sup>108</sup>. Bangladeshi Muslims attack and harass Hindus during Rangpur rally, News Intervention Bureau, 23 November 2024, <https://www.newsintervention.com/bangladeshi-muslims-attack-and-harass-hindus-during-rangpur-rally/>

<sup>109</sup>. Removal of word 'adivasi': Indigenous group attacked at NCTB; 20 hurt, The Daily Star, 16 January 2025, <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news/removal-word-adivasi-indigenous-group-attacked-nctb-20-hurt-3799851>

<sup>110</sup>. Bangladesh court rejects arrested Hindu monk Chinmoy Das's bail plea, India Today, 2 January 2025

## 7. The status of indigenous peoples: No democracy in the CHTs & increased attacks

*“For the first time in over a decade, human rights defenders can meet freely in Dhaka without fear of arrest, surveillance, harassment, or worse. After the student-led mass uprising that ousted the repressive Sheikh Hasina government in August, many Bangladeshis can hope for a democratic and rights-respecting future.*

*However, there is still one place where human rights monitors cannot travel or work freely in Bangladesh: the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT). The region, which borders India and Myanmar in southeastern Bangladesh, is home to just under a million Indigenous people. Over the last five decades, the policies of the Bangladesh government aimed at controlling the region have displaced many members of the Indigenous population, not giving them their due rights to their land and identity.”* - Julia Bleckner, Senior Researcher, Human Rights Watch (HRW) on 23 January 2025<sup>111</sup>

### 7.1 Increased attacks on indigenous peoples in the CHTs

After Dr Mohammed Yunus took over, on 18 September 2024, the indigenous hill tribe students under the banner of the “*Sanghat O Boishamyo Birodhi Pahari Chhatra Andolan*” (Anti Conflict & Discrimination Tribal Students Movement) organised “March For Identity” at Khagrachari demanding constitutional recognition of the identities of indigenous peoples, inquiry into corruption in the local councils created for the hill tribes, implementation of the 1997 CHTs Peace Accord, etc. About 40,000 indigenous peoples, unseen in the history of indigenous peoples in the region, had participated in the protest.<sup>112</sup>

The participation of about 40,000 indigenous peoples in the March For Identity on 18 September 2024 rattled the Bangladesh Army, who had been given a free hand to run the CHTs region under operation Uttaran.<sup>113</sup>

From 19 September to 1 October 2024, the illegal plain settlers<sup>114</sup> and Bangladesh Army led organized assaults on indigenous peoples in Dighinala and Khagrachari Sadar under Khagrachari district on 19 September, followed by further attacks on Rangamati Sadar on 20 September, and Khagrachari district again on 1 October. The Bangladesh Army and the illegal settlers specifically targeted shops and other business establishments of indigenous peoples and Buddhist temples. In these attacks by the illegal plain settlers and Bangladesh Army, at least four indigenous persons i.e. Mr Dhana Ranjan Chakma, Mr Junan Chakma, Mr Rubel Tripura, and Mr Anik Chakma were killed, at least 75 indigenous Jumma people were seriously injured while at least 142 houses, shops and other business establishments, properties, Buddhist temples that were looted, destroyed or set ablaze.<sup>115</sup>



A number of international organizations such as Amnesty International on 20 September 2024,<sup>116</sup> the Minority Rights Group International on 24 September 2024,<sup>117</sup> International Work Group on Indigenous Affairs on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2024<sup>118</sup> and the Chairperson of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and the UN Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Rights on 14 October 2024<sup>119</sup> condemned the attacks and demanded impartial inquiry.

On 21 September 2024, three Advisors to the Interim government visited the region and announced formation of a high-level committee to investigate the recent incidents.<sup>120</sup> On 26 September 2024, the Chittagong Divisional Commissioner formed a seven-member inquiry committee headed by Additional Divisional Commissioner of Chittagong Mr Mohammad Nurullah Noori to submit the report within the next 14 working days. On 30 September 2024, Mr Noori while visiting the affected areas at Rangamati told the journalists that he would submit the report to the government within 14 days after finding the root cause of the recent violent incidents, making a list of the victims and informing the government of their losses and making recommendations to prevent recurrence of such violent incidents.<sup>121</sup> On 2 October 2024, the Committee visited Larma Square Bazar, Dighinala.<sup>122</sup>

However, as on date, the Inquiry Commission report headed by Mr Noori has not been made public as the Interim Government led by Dr Yunus remains committed to provide impunity to the perpetrators.

The Interim Government is indeed following the same footsteps as those of all the previous governments.

During the insurgency from 1975 to 1997, the Government of Bangladesh ordered only one inquiry by retired Justice Sultan Hossain Khan in May 1992 to investigate the Logang massacre of 10 April 1990. The inquiry by Justice Khan confirmed the killing of 12 tribal villagers, injuries to 13 others, missing of two persons and burning down of 550 huts by the Village Defence Party and the Ansars acting together with Bengali settlers. The government had stated that some of those apparently responsible for the extrajudicial executions were said to be in custody and proceedings against them were reported to have begun. However, the terms of reference and the investigation procedures employed were never made public.<sup>123</sup>

The climate of fear created by impunity forced indigenous Buddhist monks in the CHTs for the first time in their history to not celebrate *Kathin Chibar Dan*, one of the largest annual religious festivals of the Buddhist community, during 2024.<sup>124</sup>

## **7.2 Exclusion of indigenous peoples from constitutional reform processes**

The Interim Government completely excluded indigenous peoples and religious minorities from the constitutional reforms process by failing to include a single member of indigenous peoples and religious minorities into the Constitutional Reforms Commission. On 8 October 2024, the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) and Rights and Risks Analysis Group (RRAG) urged Dr Yunus to reconstitute the commission and include representatives of indigenous peoples and minorities who together constitute about 17.6 million population. The Vatican too had made similar request to the Government of Bangladesh.<sup>125</sup>

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights at the conclusion of his visit to Bangladesh on 30 October 2024 had reiterated that, “*The participation of ethnic and religious minorities in the reform structures, as well as of Indigenous Peoples, is also crucial*”.<sup>126</sup>

However, Interim Government of Dr Yunus took no action to include indigenous peoples.

The intolerance by Dr Yunus government against indigenous peoples has reached such a stage that the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) of Bangladesh had to remove the image of a graffiti with the word “Adivasi” (indigenous) from the back cover of the ninth and tenth-grade Bangla Grammar and Composition textbook on 12 January 2025 after facing protests from a group of Islamic students.<sup>127</sup> When indigenous students went to protest against the decision of the NCTB in Dhaka on 15 January 2025, they were attacked by the Islamic fundamentalists, and at least 20 persons were injured.<sup>128</sup>

---

<sup>111</sup>. When will the revolution reach Bangladesh’s hills?, Julia Bleckner, Senior Researcher, Human Rights Watch (HRW), The Daily Star, 23 January 2025, <https://www.thedailystar.net/opinion/views/news/when-will-the-revolution-reach-bangladeshs-hills-3806476>

<sup>112</sup>. Renewed Violence in Chittagong Hill Tracts: Bengali Settlers Target Indigenous Jumma Communities, Cultural Survival, 24 September 2024, <https://www.culturalsurvival.org/news/renewed-violence-chittagong-hill-tracts-bengali-settlers-target-indigenous-jumma-communities>

<sup>113</sup>. Peace still elusive for hill people in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, International Affairs Review, 13 January 2021, <https://internationalaffairsreview.com/2021/01/13/peace-remains-elusive-for-hill-people-in-the-cht/>

<sup>114</sup>. The plains people settled in the Chittagong Hill Tracts are called “illegal” because Article 52 of the CHTs 1900 Regulation governing the region prohibits settlement of non-indigenous peoples as it states, “a) Save as hereinafter provided, no person other a Chakma, Mogh or a member of any hill tribe indigenous to the Chittagong Hill Tracts, the Lushai Hill, the Arakan Hill Tracts, or the State of Tripura shall enter or reside within the Chittagong Hill Tracts unless he is in possession of a permit granted by the Deputy Commissioner at his discretion....”

<sup>115</sup>. “Conflicts In Bangladesh and Myanmar: The Threat To Regional Peace And Security”, Rights and Risks Analysis Group, 10 October 2024, <http://www.rightsrisks.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/ConflictsinMyanmarBangladesh.pdf>

<sup>116</sup>. Amnesty International, 20 September 2024, See <https://x.com/amnestysasia/status/1837114994753687692>

<sup>117</sup>. Bangladesh: MRG condemns renewed violence and hate speech against indigenous peoples, Minority Group International, 24 September 2024, <https://minorityrights.org/bangladesh-mrg-condemns-renewed-violence-and-hate-speech-against-indigenous-peoples/>

- <sup>118</sup>. Joint Statement: Call for Urgent Action on Repeated Violence in CHT, IWGIA, AIPP & CHTs Commission , 8 October 2024, <https://iwgia.org/en/news/5566-joint-statement-urgent-action-repeated-violence-cht.html>
- <sup>119</sup>. UN bodies urge govt to invite UN to investigate rights violations in CHT, The Daily Star, 15 October 2024, <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news/un-bodies-urge-govt-invite-un-investigate-rights-violations-cht-3728076>
- <sup>120</sup>. Uneasy calm in CHT, advisers visit hills, The Business Standard, 21 September 2024, <https://www.tbsnews.net/bangladesh/three-advisers-begin-meeting-local-leaders-orgs-cht-situation-946656>
- <sup>121</sup>. Khagrachari-Rangamati violence inquiry committee visited Rangamati, The Daily Country Today, 30 September 2023, <https://dailycountrytodaybd.com/story/khagrachari-rangamati-violence-inquiry-committee-visited-rangamati>,
- <sup>122</sup>. Probe body begins inquiry into recent CHT violence, The New Age, 20 September 2023, <https://www.newagebd.net/post/country/246496/probe-body-begins-inquiry-into-recent-cht-violence>
- <sup>123</sup>. BANGLADESH: A summary of human rights concerns, Amnesty International, April 1993, AI Index: ASA 13/01/93 <https://www.amnesty.org/es/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/asa130011993en.pdf>
- <sup>124</sup>. Bangladesh: Indigenous Buddhist will not celebrate Katin Chibar Dan festival for security concerns, The Borderlens, 6 October 2024, <https://www.borderlens.com/2024/10/06/bangladesh-indigenous-buddhist-will-not-celebrate-katin-chibar-dan-festival-for-security-concerns/>
- <sup>125</sup>. Calls to make Bangladesh constitution reform body inclusive, UCAN News, 28 October 2024, <https://www.ucanews.com/news/calls-to-make-bangladesh-constitution-reform-body-inclusive/106839>
- <sup>126</sup>. UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk concludes official visit to Bangladesh, OHCHR, 30 October 2024, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2024/10/un-high-commissioner-human-rights-volker-turk-concludes-official>
- <sup>127</sup>. Ethnic minority students protest ‘adivasi’ graffiti removal from textbook, The Business Standard, 13 January 2025, <https://www.tbsnews.net/bangladesh/nctb-removes-adivasi-graffiti-textbook-after-students-protest-1041691>
- <sup>128</sup>. Removal of word ‘adivasi’: Indigenous group attacked at NCTB; 20 hurt, The Daily Star, 16 January 2025, <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news/removal-word-adivasi-indigenous-group-attacked-nctb-20-hurt-3799851>

## 8. The status of religious minorities: Over 2,000 attacks justified as ‘politically motivated’

While the religious minorities consistently faced grave human rights violations in Bangladesh irrespective of the party in power, the violations increased manifold with hundreds of acts of violence and religious intolerance after the fall of the Sheikh Hasina government on 5 August 2024.

### 8.1 Scale of the attacks on religious minorities, in particular, the Hindus

A report published by *Prothom Alo*, one of the most prominent news dailies in Bangladesh on 12 September 2024 documented at least 1,090 attacks on minority communities between 5-20 August, following the fall of Sheikh Hasina’s government. These attacks include damage to 1,068 houses and business establishments and 22 places of worship, as well as the murders of two minority Hindus, Mrinal Kanti Chatterjee and Swapan Kumar Biswas. The most affected region was Khulna with 295 damaged properties, followed by Rangpur (219), Mymensingh (183), Rajshahi (155), Dhaka (79), Barishal (68), Chattogram (45) and Sylhet (25). Attacks also targeted Christians, Ahmadiyyas and other minority groups, including vandalism of churches and religious statues.<sup>129</sup>

On 19 September 2024, the Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council in its findings disclosed to media stated that 2,010 incidents of communal violence took place across 68 districts and metropolitan areas between 4-20 August, resulting in the deaths of nine persons, injuries to 38 others, four sexual assaults, one of which was a gang rape, and attacks on 69 places of worship, including acts of vandalism and arson. A total of 915 homes and 953 business establishments were attacked, looted or set on fire, and about 1,705 families were directly affected in these communal attacks, with 157 of these families having lost everything.<sup>130</sup>

Despite being provided unprecedented security during the Durga Puja celebrations from 1 to 11 October 2024, Inspector General of Police of Bangladesh Police, Md Mainul Islam stated that at least 35 attacks around the Durga Puja celebrations were recorded from 1 to 11 October.<sup>131</sup> Radical Islamist groups had threatened Durga Puja committees and temples, demanding extortion money amounting 5,00,000 (five hundred thousand) Bangladeshi Taka to allow the celebration to proceed or face consequences if they failed to pay.<sup>132</sup>

On 10 January 2025, the Bangladesh Police claimed that out of 1,769 cases of reported attacks and vandalism, police investigated 1,415 incidents, with 354 cases still under investigation. Among the investigated cases, 1,254 were found to be substantiated, while 161 lacked evidence. Of the verified cases, 1,234 incidents (98.4%) were politically motivated, and 20 cases (1.59%) were communal in nature.<sup>133</sup>

The conclusion of the Bangladesh Police that 98.4% of the attacks on Hindu minorities were “politically motivated” was manufactured to substantiate the statement of Chief Advisor Dr Mohammed Yunus who on 5 September 2024 without any investigation into any of the acts of violence against the Hindus had stated that the attacks were ‘politically motivated’. Dr Yunus had stated that “*there is no clear distinction between Awami League supporters and Hindus*”.<sup>134</sup>

Religious minorities from government service have also been purged. Teachers from Hindu, Buddhist and Christian communities have been forced to resign from their jobs, with the Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council reporting that at least 49 teachers were forced to resign between 5 and 30 August.<sup>135</sup> As per verification done by the Rights and Risks Analysis Group, out of the 252 trainee Sub-Inspectors (SIs) at the Bangladesh Police Academy dismissed from service, 99 trainees belonged to the Hindu religious minority communities.<sup>136</sup>

The attacks on Hindu minorities continue to take place on a daily basis but seldom reported. As per the Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council from 21 August to 31 December 2024, it recorded least cases of at least 23 deaths, 13 cases of rape and at least 15 forcible conversions of minority girls, among others.<sup>137</sup>

## **8.2 Silencing freedom of association and assembly by sending Hindu monks to jail under trumped up charges**

On 25 October 2024, in one the biggest rallies, thousands of minority Hindus gathered the Lal Dighi ground to demand formation of a tribunal to speedily try those involved in minority atrocities, appropriate compensation to victims and their rehabilitation, enacting a minority protection law without delay, formation of a ministry of minority affairs, building of places of worship for minorities in every educational institution and prayer rooms in every hostel, modernisation of Sanskrit and Pali Education Board and a 5-day holiday for Durga Puja.<sup>138</sup> The protest was peaceful and no complaint was lodged.

However, the protest by the minority Hindus rattled the administration and the Interim Government.

On 31 October 2024, one Md Firoz Khan, former General Secretary of Mohora ward of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, filed a private complaint with Kotwali Police Station, Chittagong, accusing Chinmoy Das Brahmachari and 18 others of disrespecting Bangladesh’s national flag in Chattogram’s New Market area during a rally of the Hindu community on October 25. A bare perusal of the two page complaint (written in Bengali) filed by Md Firoz Khan shows that the entire first page of the complaint pertains to description of the accused. The second page which contains half a page text alleged that “under the instigation of the accused persons, at New Market Zero Point, Chittagong, unknown persons had put up saffron colour flags of the ISKCON over the national flags put by the Anti Discrimination Students Movement. The putting up of the saffron flag is equivalent to challenging territorial integrity of Bangladesh, and creating disturbance and enmity between the communities/groups”. The complainant Md Firoz Khan provided no evidence whatsoever to substantiate his allegations. There was no allegation that Chinmoy Krishna Das Brahmachari and other accused were directly involved in the alleged putting up of the ISKCON flag over Bangladeshi national flag. The actual alleged offenders were not named. Most importantly, there is no evidence that those who had put up the alleged flags were even ISKCON activists, and not of any other party or individuals. Even if several flags are put on a pillar, it is natural that the flags move around because of the winds and it can never constitute an offence of sedition. However, as on date Chinmoy Das remains in prison accused of sedition from 25 November 2025.<sup>139</sup>

On one hand the Interim Government alleges the attacks on Hindu minorities are ‘politically motivated’ and filed by political activists, on the other, it vociferously defends these ‘politically motivated’ cases to deny bail to Chinmoy Das and others.

The denial of bail to Chinmoy Das indicates collusion between the Interim Government, prosecutors and judges.

### **8.3 Hindu monk Chinmoy Das remains in prison but terror convicts are allowed to walk free**

While Chinmoy Das remains in prison for purportedly putting flag of International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKON) over Bangladesh national flag, the Interim Government has been releasing terror convicts from custody under dubious circumstances.

By 18 September 2024, at least 43 high-profile convicted criminals and militants had walked out of jail on bail.<sup>140</sup> The terrorists who were released on bail include Mufti Jashimuddin Rahmani, chief of the Ansarullah Bangla Team, an Al-Qaeda-inspired militant outfit now known as Ansar al Islam convicted for the murder of Rajib Haider, a blogger who still has four cases, including those under anti-terrorism and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) laws pending against him.<sup>141</sup>

Other top terrorists released include Abbas Ali alias ‘Killer Abbas’ of Mirpur, Sheikh Mohammad Aslam alias Sweden Aslam of Tejgaon, Imamul Hasan Helal alias Picchi Helal of Mohammadpur and Sanjidul Islam alias Emon who were named in the list of 23 top terrorists published by the home ministry on 26 December 2001. In addition, two of Dhaka’s underworld dons, Aim Ahmed alias Titon and Khorshed Alam Rasu alias Freedom Rasu were also released.<sup>142</sup>

Furthermore, on 18 December 2024, the High Court of Bangladesh acquitted former state minister for home affairs Lutfozzaman Babar and five other death row inmates accused in the 2004 10-truck arms smuggling case in Chittagong. On 1 April 2004 when the BNP was in power, the Bangladeshi authorities seized 10 truckloads of arms at the Chittagong Urea Fertilizer Limited jetty. Two cases – one under the Arms Act and another under the Special Powers Act – were filed at Karnaphuli police station the following day, naming 50 people as accused in the arms case and 52 in the other. On 30 January 2014, Chittagong Metropolitan Sessions Judge SM Mujibur Rahman sentenced 14 people to death under the Special Powers Act.<sup>143</sup>

---

<sup>129</sup>. Communal violence: 1068 houses and business establishments attacked, Prothom Alo, 12 September 2024, <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/97chuvmupe>

<sup>130</sup>. Report: 2,010 incidents of communal violence occurred from August 4 to 20 in Bangladesh, Dhaka Tribune, 20 September 2024, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/359102/2-010-communal-violence-reported-from-august-4-to>

<sup>131</sup>. 35 untoward incidents centring Durga Puja so far, The Dhaka Tribune, 12 October 2024, <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news/35-untoward-incidents-centring-durga-puja-so-far-3725496>

<sup>132</sup>. Hindu temples in Bangladesh receive extortion threats ahead of Durga Puja, India Today, 25 September 2024, <https://www.indiatoday.in/world/story/bangladesh-durga-puja-hindu-temples-extortion-threat-letters-islamist-groups-2606385-2024-09-25>

<sup>133</sup>. Police investigation: 98% of attacks, vandalism on minorities politically motivated, The Dhaka Tribune, 11 January 2025, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/370547/police-investigation-98%25-of-attacks-vandalism-on>

<sup>134</sup>. 'Attacks on Hindus in Bangladesh exaggerated': Muhammad Yunus questions India, The Hindustan Times, 05 September 2024, <https://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/attacks-on-hindus-in-bangladesh-exaggerated-muhammad-yunus-questions-india-101725527725684.html>

<sup>135</sup>. At least 49 minority teachers forced to resign since Aug 5, The Daily Star, 31 August 2024, <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/crime-justice/news/least-49-minority-teachers-forced-resign-aug-5-3691011>

<sup>136</sup>. The verified list of the dismissed SIs belonging to the Hindu religious minorities is available with the RRAG and can be shared if required.

<sup>137</sup>. Please visit <https://bhbcop.org/> for further details

<sup>138</sup>. Chittagong sees biggest rally in months by Hindus, The Times of India, 26 October 2024, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/south-asia/chittagong-sees-biggest-rally-in-months-by-hindus/articleshow/114605254.cms>

<sup>139</sup>. Bail denial to Chinmoy Das: Rights Body dubs it an attempt to silence minority voice in Bangladesh ENEWSTIME Desk, 02 Jan 2025, <https://enewstime.in/enews/bail-denial-to-chinmoy-das-rights-body-dubs-it-an-attempt-to-silence-minority-voice-in-bangladesh-26918.html>

<sup>140</sup>. 43 top criminals, militants freed on bail since Aug 5, <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/crime-justice/news/43-top-criminals-militants-freed-bail-aug-5-3705401>

<sup>141</sup>. Ansarullah Bangla Team chief released on bail from Kashmir jail, The Dhaka Tribune, 26 August 2024, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/nation/356166/ansarullah-bangla-team-chief-freed-from-kashimur>

<sup>142</sup>. Fear of escalation in crime as top criminals freed from jail, The Prothom Alo, 9 September 2024, <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/crime-and-law/bp4rsp1xtt>

<sup>143</sup>. High Court acquits Babar in 10-truck arms haul case, Dhaka Tribune, 18 December 2024, <https://www.dhaka.tribune.com/bangladesh/court/368445/high-court-acquits-babar-in-10-truck-arms-haul>

## 9. The status of reforms: Means to target religious minorities by deleting “secularism” from the Constitution of Bangladesh

The Interim Government whose exclusive mandate is to install a democratic government. However, it launched much vaunted reforms of the Constitution, Electoral System, Police Administration, Judicial Reform, Anti-Corruption, Public Administration,<sup>144</sup> mass media, health, labour rights and women affairs.<sup>145</sup> A number of stakeholders in the International community including the UN agencies have been almost blindly supporting these reform measures without any critical view including whether the Interim Government has even the mandate to carry out the reforms.

Increasingly, these proposed reforms have become means to cling onto power. On 24 January 2025, Ruhul Kabir Rizvi, Senior Joint Secretary General of Bangladesh National Party on Interim Government’s decision to not hold elections till reforms are completed, stated, *“The people expect this government to perform its duties impartially and take steps to strengthen democracy. But when we hear ‘reform first, then elections,’ it sounds like an echo of Sheikh Hasina’s words, ‘development first, then democracy.’ Such statements should not come from any adviser’s mouth”*.<sup>146</sup>

As stated, the Constitutional Reform Commission did not include any member of indigenous peoples or religious minorities<sup>147</sup> despite specific recommendations of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights at the conclusion of his visit to Bangladesh on 30 October 2024.

The end result of the Constitutional Reforms Commission is the recommendation for removal of “secularism” in the Muslim majority country,<sup>148</sup> thereby removing equal protection of the religious freedom of the religious minorities in the country.

It is clear that without parliament, the Interim government cannot give effect to the recommendations of these reform commissions. Therefore, the entire exercise for reforms has become an exercise in futility.

---

<sup>144</sup>. Yunus: Government to establish commissions for reforming six key sectors, Bangla Outlook, 11 September 2024, <https://en.banglaoutlook.org/news/234703>

<sup>145</sup>. Govt forms 4 more commissions, The Daily Star, 18 October 2024, <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news/govt-forms-4-more-commissions-3730196>



<sup>146</sup>. Rizvi compares call for reforms before polls to AL putting development before democracy, The Financial express, 24 January 2025, <https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/national/politics/rizvi-compares-call-for-reforms-before-polls-to-al-putting-development-before-democracy>

<sup>147</sup>. 9-member constitution reform commission announced, Dhaka Tribune, 7 October 2024, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/361122/9-member-constitution-reform-commission-announced>

<sup>148</sup>. Reform commissions suggest dropping secularism, other major changes, Dhaka Tribune, 15 January 2025, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/370929/reform-commissions-suggest-dropping-secularism>

## 10. The weaponisation of the Anti Discrimination Students Movement to establish the mob rule

There is indeed no visible difference between the Anti Discrimination Students Movement and the Interim Government.

After induction of the Anti Discrimination Students Movement leaders i.e. Nahid Islam as Adviser for Posts, Telecommunications, Information Technology and Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to the Interim Government and Asif Mahmud as the Advisor of the Ministry of Youth and Sports,<sup>149</sup> Hasnat Abdullah has been appointed as the Convener of the movement.<sup>150</sup>

Indeed, Dr Yunus has been running the country through mob rule by letting Anti Discrimination Students Movement leaders carry out the tasks illegally which cannot be done by the Interim Government legally. These students, after securing the resignation of the Supreme Court and High Court judges, also sought to secure the resignation of the President of Bangladesh Mohammed Shahabuddin through public protest.

The Interim Government has emboldened these student protestors by giving impunity: it barred the law enforcement personnel from arresting or filing cases against anyone involved in the July-August uprising<sup>151</sup> in which at least 44 policemen were killed!<sup>152</sup>

The Anti Discrimination Students Movement leaders are acting and treated as above the law and their writ run across the length and breadth of the country.

### 10.1 Yunus ruling through the mob rule of the Anti Discrimination Students Movement

About 21 Supreme Court and High Court judges were forced to resign because of the protests by the Anti Discrimination Students Movement.

On 10 August 2024, six judges of the Supreme Court including Chief Justice Obaidul Hassan, and Justice M Enayetur Rahim, Justice Md Abu Zafor Siddique, Justice Jahangir Hossain Selim, Justice Md Shahinur Islam and Justice Kashefa Hussain were forced to resign following protests by the Anti Discrimination Students Movement.<sup>153</sup>

On 15 October 2024, Hasnat Abdullah announced a siege of the High Court demanding the resignation of pro-Awami League judges. Abdullah announced that, “*The streets will be shaken again to drive out the black vultures.*”<sup>154</sup> On 16 October 2024, 12 High Court judges were barred from judicial work because of the protests by the Anti Discrimination Students Movement.<sup>155</sup>

On 19 November 2024, three judges of the High Court Justice Salma Masud Chowdhury, Justice Kazi Reza-ul-Haque, and Justice AKM Zahirul Haque had to resign after students made allegations of corruption.<sup>156</sup>

After forcing the resignation of the judges, Dr Yunus had set the sight on removing the President of Bangladesh. On 3 October 2024, Hasnat Abdullah demanded the removal of President Mohammed Shahabuddin from his verified Facebook account.<sup>157</sup> By 23 October, the Anti Discrimination Students Movement set a two-day deadline for Shahabuddin to step down. The students attempted to storm the presidential palace.<sup>158</sup> The President survived the protest.

Thereafter, the student protestors burnt down the headquarters of the Jatiya Party, formed by late President Hussain Muhammad Ershad on the night of 31 October 2024 at Kakrail area in the heart of the capital Dhaka.<sup>159</sup> Hasnat Abdullah, the student leader, claimed in a Facebook post that the Jatiya party was “*a national betrayer*” and justified the attacks.<sup>160</sup>

The Anti Discrimination Students Movement also continues to target journalists and others associated with Awami League and other 14 party alliances.

On 14 December 2024, Hasnat Abdullah threatened to “*break the pens*” of journalists, university teachers, intellectuals who advocate for the Awami League’s human rights, and have long supported fascism. He stated, “*The pens that write in favour of fascism-we will break those pens again*”.<sup>161</sup>

On 24 December 2024, a gang of Bangladesh student protesters led by Hasnat Abdullah, convener of the Anti Discrimination Students Movement, entered the offices of the City Group, who invest in *Somoy Television* and accused it of “*spreading propaganda, twisting my comments, and accommodating the views of a fallen political party*”. Immediately, five journalists including one Omar Faroque, a senior editor, were terminated from jobs without any reason because of intimidation by Hasnat Abdulla.<sup>162</sup>

On 8 January 2025, Hasnat Abdullah while speaking to journalists had issued a stern warning against extortionists, saying, “*Whoever engages in extortion will have their hands broken.*”<sup>163</sup>

No case has been registered against Hasnat Abdullah despite clear acts of criminal intimidation, and acts of violence as Hasnat Abdullah acts as the extra-constitutional authority in Bangladesh.

## 10.2 Mob justice has replaced justice in Bangladesh

The *Ain O Salish Kendra* based in Dhaka in its Annual Report 2024 stated that “*during the Interim Government lynching people to death in the name of mob justice has been worrying*”. The *Ain O Salish Kendra* cited mob lynching death of 128 persons including the death of 57 persons in Dhaka division, 19 persons in Rajshahi Division, 17 persons in Chittagong Division, 14 persons in Khulna Division, 7 persons in Barisal Division, 5 persons in Mymensingh Division, 5 persons in Rangpur Division and 4 persons in Sylhet Division”.<sup>164</sup> In 2023, about 51 persons were lynched to death were 51 persons,<sup>165</sup> thereby an increase of 131% mob lynching deaths in the country, in particular capital Dhaka region, under the Interim Government.

The looting of 5,818 weapons<sup>166</sup> including rifles, SMGs, LMGs, and pistols and about 300,000 rounds of ammunition<sup>167</sup> and killing of 44 police personnel by protestors<sup>168</sup> have made the country more lawless. While over 2,000 inmates escaped from 17 jails, more than 900, including 70 militants are yet to be arrested.<sup>169</sup>

On 18 September 2024, the Interim Government empowered the Bangladesh Army officers to exercise the magisterial powers.<sup>170</sup> This failed to improve the situation. On 12 January 2025, the magistracy powers of officers from the Army, Navy and Air Force were extended for another 60 days with effect from 14 January 2025<sup>171</sup>, thereby admitting that the Interim Government has lost control over the law and order situation.

Bangladesh effectively remains under undeclared military rule.

---

<sup>149</sup>. Nahid gets ICT Ministry, Asif to head Sports Ministry, Banglanews24.com, 09 August 2024, <https://www.banglanews24.com/english/politics/news/bd/153028.details>

<sup>150</sup>. Hasnat named convener of Anti Discrimination Students Movement Committee, Dhaka Tribune, 22 Oct 2024, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/362799/hasnat-named-convener-of-anti-discrimination>

<sup>151</sup>. Bangladesh immunity order sparks fears of justice denied, RFI, 28/10/2024 <https://www.rfi.fr/en/international-news/20241028-bangladesh-immunity-order-sparks-fears-of-justice-denied>

<sup>152</sup>. Bangladesh: 44 Policemen killed during July-August uprising, govt says, ANI, 25 October 2024 <https://www.aninews.in/news/world/asia/bangladesh-44-policemen-killed-during-july-august-uprising-govt-says20241025225516/>

<sup>153</sup>. CJ, 5 other SC judges resign, The Daily Star, <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news/cj-5-other-sc-judges-resign-3674021> <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news/cj-5-other-sc-judges-resign-3674021>

<sup>154</sup>. Coordinator Hasnat announces siege of High Court, bdnews24.com, 16 October 2024, <https://bdnews24.com/bangladesh/6f653bfd7bff>

<sup>155</sup>. Student protest on SC premises: 12 HC judges barred from judicial work, The Daily Star, 17 October 2024, <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news/student-protest-sc-premises-12-hc-judges-barred-judicial-work-3729306>

<sup>156</sup>. 3 High Court Judges resign, Dhaka Tribune, 19 November 2024, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/court/365638/3-high-court-judges-resign>

<sup>157</sup>. Hasnat demands removal of president, The Daily Star, 4 October 2024, <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news/hasnat-demands-removal-president-3718971>

<sup>158</sup>. Tensions grip Bangladesh as student protesters demand president's resignation, Voice of America, 23 October 2024, <https://www.voanews.com/a/tensions-grip-bangladesh-as-student-protesters-demand-president-s-resignation/7836343.html>

<sup>159</sup>. Sheikh Hasina's coalition party office in Dhaka attacked, set on fire, The Business Standard, 01 November 2024, [https://www.business-standard.com/world-news/sheikh-hasina-s-coalition-party-office-in-dhaka-attacked-set-on-fire-124110100107\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/world-news/sheikh-hasina-s-coalition-party-office-in-dhaka-attacked-set-on-fire-124110100107_1.html)

- <sup>160</sup>. Attackers set fire to the headquarters of a Bangladesh party that backed ousted leader Sheikh Hasina, Associated Press, 1 November 2024, <https://apnews.com/article/bangladesh-sheikh-hasina-muhammad-yunus-jatiya-party-8cfdec3ca4eca91a72c7bafc9c2b028b>
- <sup>161</sup>. Hasnat reiterates strong stance against media biased towards fascism, The Financial Express, 15 January 2025, <https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/politics-policies/hasnat-reiterates-strong-stance-against-media-biased-towards-fascism-1736873219>
- <sup>162</sup>. Bangladesh Protesters Enter TV Station Owners, Journalists Sacked, 24 December 2024, <https://www.barrons.com/news/bangladesh-protesters-enter-tv-station-owners-journalists-sacked-d8adb8b0>
- <sup>163</sup>. Hands of extortionists will be broken: Hasnat Abdullah, Bangladesh First, 8 January 2025, <https://bfirst.news/bangladesh/15190/hands-of-extortionists-will-be-broken-hasnat-abdullah>
- <sup>164</sup>. Human Rights Situation 2024, Ain O Salish Kendra, Dhaka, 31 December 2024, <https://www.askbd.org/ask/2024/12/31/%e0%a6%ac%e0%a6%be%e0%a6%82%e0%a6%b2%e0%a6%be%e0%a6%a6%e0%a7%87%e0%a6%b6%e0%a7%87%e0%a6%b0-%e0%a6%ae%e0%a6%be%e0%a6%a8%e0%a6%ac%e0%a6%be%e0%a6%a7%e0%a6%bf%e0%a6%95%e0%a6%be%e0%a6%b0-%e0%a6%aa-2/>
- <sup>165</sup>. Human Rights Situation 2024, Ain O Salish Kendra, Dhaka, 31 December 2024, <https://www.askbd.org/ask/2024/12/31/%e0%a6%ac%e0%a6%be%e0%a6%82%e0%a6%b2%e0%a6%be%e0%a6%a6%e0%a7%87%e0%a6%b6%e0%a7%87%e0%a6%b0-%e0%a6%ae%e0%a6%be%e0%a6%a8%e0%a6%ac%e0%a6%be%e0%a6%a7%e0%a6%bf%e0%a6%95%e0%a6%be%e0%a6%b0-%e0%a6%aa-2/>
- <sup>166</sup>. 1,885 Weapons and 300,000 Rounds of Ammunition Still Unrecovered, The Financial Post, 7 September, 2024, <https://thefinancialpostbd.com/main/article/3970>
- <sup>167</sup>. Report: 5,818 weapons looted nationwide, 3,933 recovered, The Dhaka Tribune, 7 September, 2024, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/357584/police-report-5-818-weapons-looted-nationwide>
- <sup>168</sup>. Mob justice goes against the spirit of the student movement, The Daily Star, 16 August 2024, <https://www.thedailystar.net/opinion/views/news/mob-justice-goes-against-the-spirit-the-student-movement-3678906>
- <sup>169</sup>. Bangladesh: 500 Inmates Escape District Jail As Anti-Govt Protests End With Sheikh Hasina's Departure, News18, 6 August 2024, <https://www.news18.com/world/bangladesh-500-inmates-escape-district-jail-as-crisis-ends-with-leader-sheikh-hasinas-exit-8991500.html>
- <sup>170</sup>. Army given magistracy power, The Daily Star, 18 September 2024, <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news/army-given-magistracy-power-3705246>
- <sup>171</sup>. Armed Forces' magistracy power extended by 60 days, Prothom Alo, 12 January 2025 [https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/3maycc92ck#:~:text=The%20magistracy%20power%20of%20officers,on%20Sunday%20\(12%20Jan\).](https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/3maycc92ck#:~:text=The%20magistracy%20power%20of%20officers,on%20Sunday%20(12%20Jan).)



## Attacks on indigenous peoples and religious minorities under the Interim Government

The Rights & Risks Analysis Group (RRAG) is an independent think-tank based in New Delhi. It conducts risks analysis to prevent violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms with a specific focus on the threats to the rule of law and democracy. It provides early warnings on impending conflicts and analysis of policies and programmes of the State and non-State actors contributing to the proliferation or perpetuation of conflicts. Its special focus remains to change the current narrative on counter-terrorism.



**RIGHTS AND RISKS ANALYSIS GROUP**  
C-3/441, Janakpuri, New Delhi-110058, India  
Phone: +91 11 35631078  
Email: [director@rightsrisks.org](mailto:director@rightsrisks.org)  
Website: [www.rightsrisks.org](http://www.rightsrisks.org)