



# HUMAN RIGHTS SUPPORT SOCIETY (HRSS)

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## Human Rights Situation in Bangladesh – February 2025 Monthly Human Rights Monitoring Report by HRSS

Even after 53 years of independence, the people of Bangladesh have yet to fully experience the true benefits of freedom. The human rights situation in 2024 was the most frightening and gravely concerning since independence. Following the mass uprising during the student-public movement, the then-autocratic Prime Minister fled, and an interim government led by Nobel laureate Dr. Muhammad Yunus came to power creating a public aspiration for experiencing the true essence of freedom. However, this aspiration was not fully realized. The government and relevant authorities failed to effectively address the challenges. As of February 2025, the human rights situation remains disappointing.

A review of the human rights situation in February reveals numerous incidents of political violence, mob lynchings, journalist oppression, restrictions on freedom of speech, extrajudicial killings, violence against women and children, and attacks on shrines in different parts of the country. Additionally, crimes such as extortion, theft, robbery, murder, and rape have increased, instilling fear among the public. Following the announcement that the speech of former autocrat Sheikh Hasina would be broadcast at a virtual event of the banned organization Chhatra League, enraged students and the public launched protests on February 5, 6, and 7, attacking and vandalizing Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's house at Dhanmondi 32, Sheikh Hasina's residence at Sudha Sadan, and various Awami League offices and leaders' homes across the country. The growing tension and conflicts among student organizations in educational institutions have caused widespread fear among general students. Roads in the capital are frequently blocked by protests for various demands, causing severe public suffering. Additionally, political activists were attacked in courts, incident has also occurred where detained political associates were freed by attacking a police station and the police. A special operation named 'Operation Devil Hunt' has been launched by the joint forces to combat terrorism and improve law enforcement, but reports of irregularities have emerged. Furthermore, incidents such as the killing, injury, and arrest of innocent Bangladeshis at the Indian border and mortar shell explosions near the Myanmar border have raised serious human rights concerns.

Based on reports from various media outlets and information gathered by Human Rights Support Society (HRSS), the following key findings have emerged from the human rights monitoring report for February 2025:

- In February, at least 104 incidents of "political violence" were reported, resulting in the deaths of at least 9 individuals and injuries to at least 755 people. Political violence saw a slight decrease in February compared to January, when 124 incidents led to 15 deaths and 987 injuries. Of the 104 incidents in February, 58 were internal conflicts within the BNP, resulting in 494 injuries and 5 deaths. There were 25 incidents of clashes between the BNP and Awami League, leading to 115 injuries and 2 deaths. Additionally, 3 incidents occurred between BNP and Jamaat, resulting in 6 injuries, 3 incidents within anti-discrimination student movements, 3 between student organizations and anti-



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discrimination students, and 12 incidents between various political parties. Among the 9 fatalities, 5 were from the BNP, 1 from Awami League, and 1 from the anti-discrimination student movement. The political identities of the remaining 2 victims, including 1 woman, could not be determined. In addition, 16 attacks by miscreants targeting political party leaders and activists were reported, resulting in the deaths of at least 14 individuals, including 5 from Awami League, 5 from BNP, 1 female member of Jamaat, and 3 from extremist parties. On campuses and educational institutions, at least 6 incidents of political violence occurred, injuring at least 57 people. Protests broke out on February 5, 6, and 7 in Dhaka, following former dictator Sheikh Hasina's speech being broadcasted at a virtual event of the banned student organization, Chhatra League. Outraged students, public, and supporters of various political parties attacked and vandalized more than 100 murals and sculptures of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Sheikh Hasina at locations across the country, including at the residence of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in Dhanmondi 32, and at Sudha Sadan, Sheikh Hasina's residence in the capital. In addition, at least 20 Awami League offices and the homes of over 100 leaders were targeted with vandalism and arson. Many of these attacks involved the use of excavators and bulldozers. Several clashes occurred between Awami League leaders, local residents, and protesting students. On the night of February 7, an attack on the residence of former Liberation War Affairs Minister AKM Mozammel Haque in Gazipur resulted in the death of student Abul Kasem and injuries to 15 to 16 other students. At KUET (Khulna University of Engineering and Technology), nearly fifty students were injured in clashes between general students, the anti-discrimination student movement, and the student wings of BNP (Chhatra Dal) and its youth wing (Jubo Dal). In addition, at least 5 political offices of BNP, 1 of Jamaat, and 1 of Jasad have been attacked and vandalized."

- According to news published in various national media outlets, information gathered from the victim's family and HRSS, three individuals were killed in clashes with law enforcement agencies in February. On the night of February 20, during a joint forces operation in the Chand Uddan area of Mohammadpur in the capital, two youths, Miraj Hossain and Md. Jumman, were killed in an alleged "gunfight." Additionally, on February 24, around 12:00 PM, in a clash between the local residents of Samitipara near the Air Force Base in Cox's Bazar, 30-year-old Shihab Kabir Nahid was killed, and several others were injured. Nahid's family members claim that he was shot dead by Air Force personnel during the clash. In this incident, four members of the Air Force were also injured. In February, at least 12 prisoners died in jails across the country, including 5 convicts and 7 detainees. Among them, two deaths occurred in the Khulna and Naogaon jails—those of Awami League leaders Aktar Sikdar and Siddiq Hossain. It is alarming that at least 17 incidents of public lynching occurred this month, resulting in 10 deaths and 13 injuries.
- At least 34 journalists faced violence and harassment in 19 separate incidents. Of these, 16 were injured, 2 were humiliated, 4 received threats, and 1 was arrested. Additionally, 11 journalists were accused in 5 lawsuits. Under the Cyber Security Act 2024, 6 cases were filed, leading to 5 arrests and 10 individuals being charged.



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- On February 8, the interim government launched a special operation called "Operation Devil Hunt," coordinated by joint forces, aimed at combating terrorism, improving law and order, and bringing terrorists under the law. On the night of February 7, in Gazipur, 15 to 16 students were attacked at the residence of former Minister of Liberation War Affairs, AKM Mozammel Haque. Following this, the Ministry of Home Affairs decided to conduct Operation Devil Hunt, coordinated by law enforcement agencies. From the night of February 8 to February 28, a total of 11,931 people were arrested during the ongoing nationwide operation. In addition to Operation Devil Hunt, more than 20,000 individuals have been arrested in various new and old cases. Most of those arrested are party leaders and activists from the previous Awami League government.
- The Indian Border Security Force (BSF) was responsible for 7 violent incidents in February, resulting in 1 Bangladeshi being killed, 6 injured, and 14 arrested. Additionally, at the Myanmar border in Naikhongchhari, Bandarban, a landmine explosion severely injured 18-year-old Tariq Uddin. At least 3 incidents targeted religious minorities, including the vandalization of 6 idols and 1 case of land grabbing.
- February saw 26 incidents of labor abuse, resulting in 12 deaths and at least 87 injuries. Due to an unhealthy working environment and the lack of protective gear for workers, 9 workers have died in workplace accidents.
- At least 107 women and girls were victims of abuse. Among them, 53 were raped, including 38 minors (under the age of 18). Disturbingly, 13 women and girls were gang-raped, and 2 committed suicide. Additionally, 13 women and girls, including 7 minors, were sexually harassed. Domestic violence resulted in 33 deaths, while dowry-related abuse led to 1 fatality. Furthermore, at least 104 children were victims of abuse, with 29 deaths and 75 cases of physical and mental torture.

To establish the rule of law, democracy, and an improved human rights situation in Bangladesh, it is crucial to engage in discussions with political parties, civil society, journalists, and student activists. Ensuring fundamental and constitutional rights through law enforcement is essential. Failure to do so will lead to further deterioration of the human rights situation. Therefore, HRSS urges the government to take responsible action to protect human rights and calls upon all conscious citizens, journalists, students, civil society members, political leaders, and both national and international human rights organizations to raise their voices for justice.