



HUMAN RIGHTS SUPPORT SOCIETY (HRSS)

D-3, # 3rd floor, Plot # 2, Nur-Jehan Tower, 2nd Link Road, Bangla Motor, Dhaka-1000,
Bangladesh. E-mail: hrssbd14@gmail.com, Web: www.hrssbd.org

Human Rights Situation in Bangladesh – March 2025

Monthly Human Rights Observation Report by HRSS

The actual human rights situation during March 2025 remained disappointing. Although the cost of living and Eid travel during the holy month of Ramadan were somewhat more tolerable compared to previous years, there was no significant improvement in the law-and-order situation.

A review of the human rights situation in the month of March reveals a noticeable increase in incidents of political violence resulting in deaths, violence against women including rape, child abuse, mob beatings leading to torture and killings, labor exploitation and attacks on journalists. Incidents of curbing freedom of expression, persecution of minorities, deaths in custody and prisons, police attacks on protesting non-government primary school teachers, and attacks and vandalism at several shrines across the country have also been reported. Moreover, various social crimes, including extortion, theft, robbery and murder, have instilled fear and panic among the public. Several police personnel were injured in attacks on law enforcement and there were incidents of accused persons being forcefully taken from police custody following attacks on police stations. Additionally, events such as killings and injuries of innocent Bangladeshis at the Bangladesh-India border and mortar shell explosions at the Myanmar border have raised concerns about the overall human rights situation.

Based on reports published in various media outlets and data collected by Human Rights Support Society (HRSS), the following information has been compiled in the Human Rights Observation Report for March 2025:

- **Political Violence:** At least 97 incidents of political violence occurred in March, resulting in the deaths of at least 23 people and injuries to no fewer than 733 individuals. Most of the violence stemmed from dominance disputes, political revenge, extortion, and control over establishments. Although the number of violent incidents slightly decreased compared to February (104 incidents), the death toll more than doubled from 9 to 23. Of the 97 incidents:
 - 64 incidents of internal conflict within BNP: 502 injured, 17 dead.
 - 11 incidents of clashes between BNP and Awami League: 52 injured, 2 dead.
 - 10 incidents of BNP and Jamaat: 81 injured, 1 dead.
 - 3 incidents of BNP and NCP: 31 injured, 2 dead.
 - 2 incidents of Awami League's internal conflict: 40 injured, 1 dead.
 - 2 incidents of NCP's internal conflict: 10 injured.
 - 5 incidents of other political group clashes.

Of the 23 killed, 18 were from BNP, 3 from Awami League, and 2 from UPDF. 88 out of 97 incidents involved BNP's internal conflicts or clashes with other parties. Compared to February, clashes between BNP and Awami League decreased, while clashes with Jamaat and NCP increased. At least 8 separate attacks by miscreants targeted political activists, resulting in the deaths of 9 individuals (4 from Awami League, 4 from BNP, and 1 from a far-left group). Additionally, over 30 individuals were shot, and vandalism, arson, and looting were reported at over 50 homes, vehicles, and businesses. At least 4 BNP party offices were attacked and vandalized by their own activists.



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- **Attacks on Journalists:** At least 41 journalists were subjected to violence or harassment in 29 incidents. Among them, 23 were injured, 4 were assaulted, 5 were threatened and 2 were arrested. In 3 cases, 7 journalists were sued. Tragically, a female journalist working as a senior reporter for a newspaper was gang-raped in the capital while gathering news. Under the Cyber Security Act 2023, 2 cases were filed this month leading to the arrest of 1 person and accusations against 3 others.
- **Violence Against Women and Children:** At least 284 women and girls were victims of abuse in March. Among them, 133 were raped, 83 (62%) of whom were under 18. Alarming, 30 (23%) were gang-raped. Two rape victims were killed and one committed suicide. Additionally, 102 cases of sexual harassment were reported, including 65 involving children. In Magura, an 8-year-old named Achia was raped and nearly killed by her sister's father-in-law; she died after 8 days in the hospital. In Munshiganj, a 6-year-old named Fatema was strangled to death and dumped in a pond after a failed rape attempt. In Laxmipur, a 16-year-old girl committed suicide after receiving no justice from a local arbitration following a rape. Dowry-related abuse resulted in 6 deaths, 2 injuries, and 1 suicide. Domestic violence led to the deaths of 20 women, injuries to 6, and suicides of 11. Meanwhile, 207 children were victims of abuse: 18 died, and 189 suffered physical and psychological harm.
- **Border Incidents:** Six attacks were reported along the India-Bangladesh border. Two Bangladeshi citizens were shot dead and two were injured by the Indian Border Security Force (BSF). In Sylhet, a young man named Shahed Ahmed (25) was killed, and two others injured, by Indian Khasia gunfire. On the Bangladesh-Myanmar border, two were injured in gunfire by the Arakan Army in Bandarban's Naikhongchhari area. Additionally, two people, including an Ansar member, were injured in a landmine explosion planted by the Arakan Army in the same region.
- **Mob Violence:** At least 40 mob attacks resulted in 12 deaths and 44 injuries. In Habiganj's Bahubal area, a young man named Zahed Mia (28) was tied to a tree, brutally beaten, and then set on fire on suspicion of mobile phone theft. In Ishwardi, Pabna, a woman was tied to an iron pole, beaten, and humiliated with a garland of shoes for alleged theft.
- **Labor Rights Violations:** 21 incidents of labor abuse resulted in 7 deaths and over 120 injuries. At least 75 garment workers were injured in clashes with police while protesting for unpaid wages and Eid bonuses. Five workers died in workplace accidents due to poor safety conditions. One child domestic worker was killed, and another critically injured, due to employer abuse.
- **Political Arrests and Cases:** At least 22 cases were filed in March against former authoritarian Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Awami League activists. These cases included 2,115 named individuals and 2,738 unidentified accused. At least 1,665 people were arrested in political cases, 1,644 of whom were Awami League members. Additionally, police arrested at least 45 members of the banned organization Hizb ut-Tahrir.
- **Custodial and Prison Deaths:** At least 4 individuals died in prison in March, including 2 convicted prisoners and 2 detainees. One man, Hejaz Bin Alam (alias Ejaz, 37), died



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in police custody while undergoing treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital. Three attacks on minority communities were recorded, injuring 2 individuals and resulting in the vandalism of 2 religious idols.

Establishing the rule of law, democracy and human rights requires dialogue among political parties, civil society, journalists, students, and citizens. Fundamental and constitutional rights of the people must be ensured through proper law enforcement. Without such implementation, the overall human rights situation in the country will continue to deteriorate. Therefore, HRSS urges the government to take a responsible role in protecting human rights and calls on all conscious citizens, journalists, students, civil society, political leaders and both domestic and international human rights organizations to raise their voices more strongly.

