



## HUMAN RIGHTS SUPPORT SOCIETY (HRSS)

# D-3, # 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, Plot # 2, Nur-Jehan Tower, 2<sup>nd</sup> Link Road, Bangla Motor, Dhaka-1000,  
Bangladesh. E-mail: [hrssbd14@gmail.com](mailto:hrssbd14@gmail.com), Web: [www.hrssbd.org](http://www.hrssbd.org)

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### **Human Rights Situation in Bangladesh - January 2025 Monthly Human Rights Observation Report by HRSS**

Despite 53 years of independence, the people of Bangladesh have yet to fully experience the true benefits of freedom. The year 2024 saw one of the most alarming and distressing human rights situations in the country. Following the mass uprisings during student and public protests, the then-autocratic Prime Minister fled, leading to the establishment of an interim government under Nobel Laureate Dr. Muhammad Yunus. While this transition initially ushered hope for true freedom, the anticipated changes did not materialize. The government and concerned authorities seldom showed any success in withstanding the challenges. Despite hopes for improvement in January 2025, the human rights situation remains absolutely disappointing. Instead of positive changes, the previous patterns of human rights violations have continued, with new trends of violations emerging.

A review of the human rights situation in January 2025 reveals incidents of political violence, custodial deaths and torture, mob lynching, violence against women and children, attacks on indigenous students, vandalism and attacks on shrines, as well as border conflicts with India and Myanmar. Violations included unauthorized fencing and provocations by the Indian Border Security Force (BSF), extrajudicial killings of innocent Bangladeshis, and incidents involving Myanmar's Arakan Army, such as the detention of Bangladeshi ships and explosions of gunfire, mines, and mortar shells near the border. Additionally, frequent protests in the capital city by blocking roads, causing severe public inconvenience, have been noted. A significant clash took place between Dhaka University students and 7 colleges when students of affiliated colleges took street alleging the pro-vice chancellor of misconduct. Furthermore, at least four incidents of attacks on police stations and prison facilities occurred, involving attempts to free political detainees, allegedly orchestrated by activists of the BNP's affiliated organizations.

Based on information from various media reports and data collected by the Human Rights Support Society (HRSS), the key observations for January 2025 are as follows:

- At least 124 incidents of political violence resulted in 15 deaths and 987 injuries. Of these, 68 internal conflicts within BNP led to 677 injuries and 5 deaths; 22 conflicts between BNP and Awami League caused 106 injuries and 4 deaths; 3 conflicts between BNP and Jamaat resulted in 60 injuries and 1 death; 3 internal Awami League conflicts caused 50 injuries and 4 deaths. Additional political confrontations involved student groups, including 5 cases of intra-group clashes among anti-discrimination student activists and 6 clashes between Chhatra League and anti-discrimination student groups. Of the 15 people killed, 5 were BNP members and 4 were Awami League members due to internal conflicts. The remaining 6 were killed in attacks by opposing groups. Among



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the 15 fatalities, 8 were BNP members, 6 were Awami League members, and 1 was a Jamaat activist or supporter. Additionally, at least 7 more political figures from the Awami League and BNP were killed in attacks by criminals and miscreants across the country.

A total of 25 legal cases were filed against political activists, listing 1,729 individuals by name and implicating another 4,905 as unidentified suspects. At least 306 arrests were made, including 228 Awami League activists.

- At least 19 attacks on journalists were recorded, resulting in 28 journalists facing harassment or violence. Among them, 19 were injured, 2 received threats, 1 was arrested, and 6 were accused in legal cases.
- According to news published in various media outlets in the country, information collected by the victim's family and HRSS, 4 people were killed in custody and torture by law enforcement agencies and 1 person was killed in a gunfight in January. On the morning of January 2, an unidentified UPDF member was killed in an alleged gunfight with law enforcement agencies in Kichingchhara, Kattali Beel area of Ward No. 1 of Sadar Union of Longadu Upazila of Rangamati. On January 6, a CNG-powered autorickshaw driver named Yasin Mia was allegedly beaten to death by police in Katiadi, Kishoreganj. Abdur Rahman (34), former deputy general secretary of Chhatra Dal of Sonapur Union, died in hospital after being tortured and denied medical treatment after being detained in a joint operation by the forces in Sonaimuri, Noakhali. On January 25, during an anti-drug operation by SI Nowsher Ali's Detective Branch (DB) near the Padma Bridge in Naodoba area of Jajira upazila of Shariatpur, a grocery shopkeeper named Milan Bepari (55) was allegedly tortured to death. In addition, Md. Touhidul Islam (40), convener of Panchthubi Union Jubo Dal of Comilla Adarsh Sadar upazila, died due to inhuman torture after being arrested by joint forces from his house at night on January 31. On the other hand, at least 7 convicts have died in prisons across the country this month. Out of the 7, 3 are prisoners and 4 are detainees.
- Five incidents of BSF attacks led to 2 deaths, 2 injuries, and 1 arrest of Bangladeshi nationals. Clashes between Bangladeshis and Indian nationals in Chapainawabganj's Shibganj border left 5 Bangladeshis injured. Besides, a Bangladeshi youth was brutally murdered by Indian citizens in Moulvibazar's Kulaura border. Two dead bodies were recovered from border regions—one from Darshana in Chuadanga and another from the Gomti River bank in Comilla. Myanmar's border conflicts led to heightened fear, as gunfire, mortar shells, and landmine explosions injured 3 Bangladeshis in Bandarban's Naikhongchhari border.
- It is quite alarming that at least 9 people were killed and 7 injured in 13 mob lynching incidents last month. Additionally, 2 idols belonging to the Hindu community were



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vandalized. Furthermore, a clash during a protest by 'Songkhubdho Adibashi Chatrojonota' resulted in 18 injuries in front of the National Curriculum and Textbook Board.

- 39 incidents of labor repression were reported, with 26 workers killed and 87 injured. Due to unsafe work conditions and lack of protective measures, 5 workers died at their workplaces.
- In January, at least 127 women and girls were subjected to violence. Among them, 54 were victims of rape, including 28 minors under the age of 18. Alarming, 14 women and girls were gang-raped. Three women committed suicide after being raped. Additionally, 16 women and girls were victims of sexual harassment, including 9 minors. Five women were killed and 2 were injured due to dowry-related violence. Domestic violence resulted in the deaths of 25 women, while 20 others took their own lives. One woman was killed in an acid attack.

On the other hand, it is concerning that 88 children were subjected to abuse, with 36 losing their lives and 52 suffering physical and mental abuse.

To establish the rule of law, democracy, and improve the human rights situation in the country, it is essential to engage in discussions with political parties, civil society, journalists, and protesting students. The government must ensure public safety and guarantee fundamental and constitutional rights. Failure to address these issues will further deteriorate the country's overall human rights situation. Therefore, HRSS urges the government to take responsible action in protecting human rights and improving the overall situation. It also calls upon all concerned citizens, journalists, students, civil society members, political leaders, and national and international human rights organizations to raise their voices and be more proactive in addressing these issues.