



HUMAN RIGHTS SUPPORT SOCIETY (HRSS)

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Human Rights Situation in Bangladesh: January–March 2025

Quarterly Human Rights Observation Report by "HRSS"

Even after 53 years of independence, equality, human dignity, social justice, human rights and democracy have not been established in Bangladesh. The people of the country have yet to receive the true benefits of independence. Following independence, the human rights situation in the past year, 2024, was the most alarming and extremely concerning. After the mass student-people uprising last August, the autocrat Sheikh Hasina fled and a interim government led by Nobel laureate Dr. Muhammad Yunus took responsibility for the country. Although the fall of the Awami League government sparked a desire among students and the masses to truly experience the essence of independence, this has not been realized in practice. The transitional government and its associates have not been able to demonstrate success in facing this challenge. The actual state of human rights during the first three months of 2025 remains disappointing. Despite expectations for an overall improvement in the human rights situation in the new year, not only have previous patterns of human rights violations continued, but new issues have also emerged. Although commodity prices and Eid travel during the holy month of Ramadan were somewhat more tolerable compared to previous years, the law and order situation has not improved as expected.

An analysis of the human rights situation in the first three months of 2025 reveals an increase in political violence-related deaths, mob beatings and killings, violence against women and rape, child abuse and attacks on journalists. There have also been incidents of suppression of freedom of expression, custodial deaths and torture by law enforcement agencies, attacks on workers, persecution of minorities, attacks and vandalism at shrines, deaths in prison, obstruction of public gatherings, and police assaults on protesting non-government primary school teachers. During this period, incidents of extortion, theft, mugging, robbery, and murder have occurred, creating fear and panic among the public.

Following the announcement that a speech by former autocrat Sheikh Hasina would be broadcast at a virtual event organized by the banned organization Chhatra League, outraged students and the public, on February 5th, 6th, and 7th, launched attacks, vandalism and arson at the residence of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at Road 32 in Dhanmondi, Sheikh Hasina's residence at Sudha Sadan and at various Awami League offices and leaders' homes across the country.

Tensions and clashes among student organizations at educational institutions across the country have created panic among students. In the capital, road blockades during protests to press for various demands caused public suffering. There were also attacks on political activists in court premises and in several cases, political affiliates allegedly attacked police stations and law enforcement to snatch away accused individuals.

A special joint operation called "Operation Devil Hunt", conducted to combat terrorism, improve law and order, and bring terrorists to justice, has come under scrutiny for alleged irregularities. Furthermore, incidents at the Indian border—including clashes, provocations, illegal border fence construction by the BSF in violation of international law, and the killing, injury, and arrest of innocent Bangladeshis—along with the detention of a Bangladeshi ship by Myanmar's Arakan Army and explosions from gunfire, mines, and mortar shells at the border have raised serious concerns about the overall human rights situation.



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Based on news published in various media outlets and information collected by the Human Rights Support Society (HRSS), the following findings have emerged in the human rights observation report for the first three months of 2025:

- **Political Violence:**

Between January and March, at least 325 incidents of political violence occurred, resulting in at least 47 deaths and at least 2,475 injuries. Most of these incidents stemmed from turf wars, political revenge, extortion, and control over various establishments.

Among the 325 incidents, 190 occurred due to internal conflicts within the BNP, leaving 1,673 injured and 27 dead; 58 incidents occurred between BNP and Awami League, with 273 injured and 8 dead; 16 between BNP and Jamaat, with 147 injured and 2 dead; 5 between BNP and NCP, with 42 injured; 9 between Awami League and NCP, with 44 injured and 1 dead; 3 between Awami League and Jamaat, with 5 injured; 6 incidents within the Awami League, with 91 injured and 5 dead; 9 internal clashes within NCP, with 29 injured; and 29 incidents between various other parties.

Among the 47 deceased: 31 were from BNP, 10 from Awami League, 1 from Jamaat, 1 student from an anti-discrimination group, and 2 from UPDF. Political identity of 2 individuals (including 1 woman) could not be determined.

269 of the 325 incidents involved internal BNP conflicts or clashes between BNP and other political parties.

Compared to January and February, clashes between BNP and Awami League decreased in March, while confrontations with Jamaat and NCP increased.

Additionally, at least 34 attacks on political activists by miscreants were reported, leaving at least 30 people dead, including 12 from Awami League, 13 from BNP, 1 female member of Jamaat, and 4 from extremist groups.

More than 70 people were shot, and over 400 homes, political offices, businesses, and vehicles were vandalized, set on fire, or looted during this period.

- **Freedom of Press:**

In the last three months, at least 91 journalists were subjected to violence and harassment in 67 incidents. Among them, 58 were injured, 6 humiliated, 11 threatened, and 4 arrested.

In 10 cases, 24 journalists were accused. Under the Cyber Security Act 2023, 2 cases were filed against journalists: 1 arrested, 3 accused.

Furthermore, 8 additional cases under the Cyber Security Act led to 6 arrests and 13 accusations.

- **Border Violence:**

During the first three months of 2025, in 18 border incidents, Indian Border Security Force (BSF) shootings killed 5 Bangladeshi nationals, injured 10, and 15 were detained.

In Sylhet, Indian Khasi people shot and killed Shahed Ahmed (25) and injured 2 others in a separate event.

In Kulaura, Moulvibazar, a Bangladeshi youth was hacked to death by Indian nationals.

Dead bodies of Nazim Uddin (from Darsana, Chuadanga) and Kazi Sabir (from the Gomti River bank, Comilla) were recovered from the border.

On the Bangladesh-Myanmar border, 2 were injured by Arakan Army gunfire in Bandarban's Naikhongchhari. In January, mortar shells and bullets fired from Myanmar caused panic in border areas.



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Also, a landmine explosion near the Naikhongchhari border injured 6 people, including an Ansar member.

• **Mob Beatings (Lynching):**

At least 70 mob violence incidents occurred, killing at least 31 people and injuring 64.

Media reports include:

- March 4: Two Iranian nationals were beaten in Bashundhara residential area over suspicion of theft.
- March 3: Two Jamaat members were beaten to death in Ewchia Union, Chattogram after a loudspeaker announcement labeled them as robbers.
- February 28: 5 robbers were killed, 2 injured in Shariatpur after a robbery in Madaripur.
- In Bahubal, Habiganj, a man named Jahed Miah (28) was tied to a tree, tortured, and set on fire on suspicion of stealing a phone.
- In Ishwardi, Pabna, a woman was tied to a metal pole, beaten, and humiliated with a garland of shoes over theft allegations.

• **Law Enforcement-Related Deaths:**

According to media, victims' families, and HRSS data, at least 9 people died due to encounters, torture, or custody-related incidents involving law enforcement. These include:

- 3 deaths labeled as shootouts,
- 4 due to torture,
- 1 in police custody,
- 1 from gunfire.

Examples:

- January 2: An unidentified UPDF member killed in an alleged gunfight in Longadu, Rangamati.
- January 6: Yasin Miah, an auto-rickshaw driver, allegedly beaten to death by police in Katiadi, Kishoreganj.
- In Noakhali's Sonaiaimuri, Abdur Rahman (34) of JCD died in custody from torture and lack of medical care.
- January 25: Milon Bepari (55), a shopkeeper, died in a DB operation in Shariatpur.
- January 31: Towhidul Islam (40) of Jubo Dal died after alleged torture post-detention in Cumilla.
- February 20: Miraj Hossain and Md. Jummon killed in a 'shootout' during a joint operation in Mohammadpur, Dhaka.
- February 24: Shihab Kabir Nahid (30) died in a clash with air force personnel near the Cox's Bazar base.
- Ejaz (37) died while undergoing treatment at Dhaka Medical in police custody.

• **Prison Deaths & Minority Attacks:**

At least 21 inmates died in prison: 9 convicted and 12 under trial.

Among them, two were Awami League leaders — Akhtar Shikdar (Khulna) and Siddiq Hossain (Naogaon).

Minority communities faced at least 7 attacks, resulting in 2 injuries, 10 idol vandalized, and 2 land-grabbing incidents.



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• Labor Rights Violations:

here were 86 incidents of worker abuse, resulting in 45 deaths and at least 294 injuries.

In March, police clashes with protesting garment workers over unpaid wages and Eid bonuses injured 75 workers.

Due to unsafe conditions and lack of protective gear, 19 workers died in workplace accidents. 2 child domestic workers died from abuse, and 1 was critically injured.

• Political Cases and Arrests:

In the past three months, at least 55 cases were filed against former autocratic Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and other Awami League leaders.

These cases involved 4,179 named individuals and 8,291 unnamed ones.

At least 14,312 people were arrested in political cases, among them 14,266 were Awami League affiliates.

Additionally, 45 members of the banned group Hizb-ut-Tahrir were arrested.

On February 7, 15–16 students were attacked at the home of former Minister A K M Mozammel Haque in Gazipur, prompting the Ministry of Home Affairs to launch Operation Devil Hunt with joint law enforcement forces.

The operation has resulted in over 12,500 arrests.

Including other ongoing and past cases, more than 20,000 people were arrested — mostly former Awami League leaders and activists.

• Violence Against Women and Children:

At least 512 women and girl children were victims of violence in the past three months.

Among them, at least 240 were raped, 146 (60%) were under 18.

A shocking 57 (23%) were gang raped, 3 were killed after rape, and 6 committed suicide.

137 women and girls were sexually harassed, including 81 children.

Tragic cases include:

– In March, 8-year-old Achiya died on March 13 at CMH Dhaka after being raped and almost murdered by her sister's father-in-law in Magura.

– In Sirajdikhan, Munshiganj, 6-year-old Fatema was strangled and her body dumped in a pond after a failed rape attempt.

Due to dowry-related violence: 12 women were killed, 4 injured, and 1 committed suicide.

78 women died due to domestic violence, 8 injured, and 31 committed suicide.

Additionally, at least 399 children were abused: 83 died, 316 physically or mentally abused.

Conclusion:

To uphold the rule of law, democracy, and human rights in the country, it is imperative to engage in dialogue with political parties, civil society, journalists, and citizens. Ensuring public safety and protecting constitutional rights through improved law enforcement is essential. Failing to do so will only deteriorate the overall human rights situation. Therefore, HRSS urges the government to take responsible actions to protect human rights and improve the situation, and calls upon all conscious citizens, journalists, civil society members, political leaders, and national and international human rights organizations to become more vocal and active.