



HUMAN RIGHTS SUPPORT SOCIETY (HRSS)

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Press Release

Human Rights Observation Report of Bangladesh 2023

Though Bangladesh have been celebrating the 52nd anniversary of her independence yet the people don't have the actual benefits of it and it is hampered to some extent. Equity, human dignity, social justice, democracy and human rights are the dreamy words to the citizens in 2023. Among last 5 years, 2023 was the worst in case of human rights violation. According to Constitutional obligations and international law, Bangladesh is bound to respect human rights. Among many visible achievement of the government, rule of law, democracy, right to vote, freedom of expression, right to gathering and social security situations were downward in the human rights index. The national elections of 2014 and 2018 were erroneous and controversial where most of the citizens were deprived of their voting rights and now today, another national election is about to stage without any actual opposition party in 2024.

Throughout the year, the trend of violating human rights and political rights was well noticed. Citizens were tensed regarding the application of force against peaceful gatherings, false and fabricated cases, mass arrests, political arrests, illegal and brutal force by the law enforcing agencies. A mentionable number of journalists were arrested, tortured and detained illegally. BSF killed the innocent Bangladeshi citizens all around the year.

From 28th October, 2023, the human rights situation took a brutal turn. Especially massive clashes and anarchies were noticed National Election ahead. Excessive use of lethal forces against the opposition by the law enforcing agencies were brutal and at high rise. Government along with the LEAs tried to keep the people away from attending the peaceful political gatherings and assemblies by unnecessary checking, tapping mobile phone and mass arrests which pictured a heinous act of oppression against the oppositions. There were incidents of clashes, act of aggressions against the oppositions after 28th October incident and caused a large number of deaths and injuries of the journalists, transportation workers, general citizens, political activists even a member of Law enforcing agencies. Besides the arrests and detentions against the oppositions parties' activists to oppress their voices around the year by the government. Freedom of expression was violated when journalists were arrested and harassed



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under the controversial Digital Security Act, 2018. On September this year, Human rights defender and secretary of 'Adhikar' Adilur Rahman Khan and Executive Director Nasiruddin Elan were arrested and punished under the same act. Which set an example on narrowing the scope of freedom of expression and established a fear mongering conditions among general people. Moreover, silent attack, mass arrests, violence after election schedule, attack on the house of the opposition activists, arrests of their family members and demanding ransom from them were largely noticeable at the end of the year.

The neutrality and efficiency of judicial system was questioned when it came to any political violence case, arrests, death or enforced disappearance by the government fostered law enforcing agencies. One party government culture and biased attitude of administration and judiciary against people with different political views had made scenario worst. Which causes enforced disappearance, killings, extrajudicial killings and attack on oppositions.

Garments workers' demand for fair wages and attack on them using lethal force by the law enforcing agencies this year added another dimension in the human rights crisis scenario. Many workers were injured and even killed by the government fostered political party agents and LEAs.

HRSS has emerged the Human Rights observation Report 2023 based on the news published in the 12 national daily newspapers of Bangladesh and the information of HRSS's investigation unit.

This year, there is a concerning (933) amount of political clashes killed at least 96 and 9258 injured. Most of which were against BNP, internal clashes in AL, rally of BNP, peaceful Assembly and other rights to assembly. LEAs arrested total 8556 people among which 8277 are from BNP- Jamaat. Moreover, at least 456 cases are filed against 14400 activists with names and 58940 anonymously in the charge sheet. 628 peaceful assemblies were forced stop by the LEAs and government fueled political agents. 3391 were injured and 6050 were arrested regarding assembly clashes. 256 incidents of violence killed 9 and injured 1439 people at election violence. Only in December, there are 186 incidents of violence, killed 5 and injured 902 totally.



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194 Attack on journalists killed, injured, harassed and oppressed about 367. 2 killed, 186 injured, 26 faced threats at work, 86 were harassed 11 arrested and 55 of them were faced cases by the government. Under Digital Security Act, 2018 and Cyber Security Act, 2023, 58 cases were filed against 188 and 60 were arrested. 27 attack on minority caused 43 injuries, destruction of 17 temples, 31 idols and 25 houses of the community. An attack on Ahmediya Community at Panchagar killed 1 and injured 60 at March which followed by vandalizing 101 houses and 30 business Institutes with arson and heavy plunder.

113 Mob lynching incidents killed 73 and injured 88 which is a concerning number. Torture on laborers killed 40 including 3 with bullets by the police and injured 350 on 198 incidents. Workplace accidents caused death of 148 more laborers. 24 House maid tortures killed 10 including children maid and 14 were injured. Moreover, BSF on border killed 30 Bangladeshi citizens, injured 31 and arrested 13 on 58 incidents. 9 bodies of the deceased were found around the border area.

34 incidents of extra judicial killings, 36 persons among which 7 were so called crossfire, 7 by torture, and 14 were killed by the bullets. Under the custody of the LEAs, 8 were killed and surprisingly 86 prisoners were died in jail. Only in December, 15 death recorded in jail among which 8 of them were BNP-Jamaat activists /leaders.

31 persons were abducted by the identity of Law Enforcing Agencies where none of them were presented before court within 72 hours and didn't inform the families. Here, 19 of them were shown arrest, 6 released but 6 had still no clue about them know where. Although there is a clear direction of the court about presenting the arrestees within 24 before the court and let the families know within 12 hours, at least 16 person fall victim of such violation. Later on 10 of them were shown arrest and 6 were released.

In 2023, a total of 2361 women and girls were tortured. 990 faced rape and 557 were under 18 (children) which is concerning 56% of the total amount. 192 (19%) of the women and children were gang raped, killed after rape 43, among which 28 were children and 9 women committed suicide after that. 702 Women and children faced sexual violence and among them 394 were children. Demanding dowry, torture killed 73 brides, physically violated 63 and 7 committed suicide. Family feud killed 299, injured 98 and 118 women committed suicide. 9 women have been victims of acid violence out of which 2 have died. On the other hand, 2176



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children were violated and tortured. Among them 426 were killed and other 1652 children were injured by physically and mentally.

A participatory election requires discussion and exchange of opinion with the opposition parties. The fundamental and constitutional rights must be ensured by controlling the activists of LEAs and Law & Order of the nation. Otherwise the whole human rights situation will be dive down. Therefore, Human Rights Support Society (HRSS) urges the government to play vital role to protect basic human rights and expecting prudent responses from all civil society, journalists, political activists and domestic and foreign Human Rights organizations.

With Thanks

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