A brief summary of human rights violations during a year which saw one of the largest ever man made human rights disaster, mass violence against ethnic minorities and injuries due to political violence.

Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK) is a national legal aid and human rights organisation, established in 1986.

ASK seeks to promote and protect human rights through 17 Units which promote human rights awareness; offer legal aid for mediation, litigation and public interest litigation, offers counseling for victims of human rights violations; investigate and document human rights violations; conduct research into the human rights situation; and disseminate information through the media and its own publications.

ASK Advocates for law and policy reform at National and International Level to maintain and uphold human rights standards.

ASK have NGO Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)
RIGHTS VIOLATIONS 2013

Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK) has reviewed human rights situation of Bangladesh in 2013 by compiling reports from the national media and its own fact finding investigations into specific human rights violations.

This review identifies several positive measures which have been taken in 2013:

(a) **Enactment of legislation in 2013 by the Parliament,**

(b) **Court Judgments and Judicial directions,**

(c) **Indices of economic development and MDG targets met by Bangladesh.**

It also gives a brief overview of the political situation which impacted upon human rights in Bangladesh and record incidents of violation of rights

(d) to **Life and Liberty,** and of

(e) **Workers,**

(f) **Religious and Ethnic Minority Communities,**

(g) **Women** and (h) **Children.**

**(a) Enactment of Legislation by the Parliament**


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• The government of Bangladesh, by a gazette notification, officially recognized the Hijra (transgender) Community as a separate gender or third gender and this measure is aimed at ending discrimination in all spheres, enabling the community to identify their gender in all government documents.

• The establishment of the Cyber Crime Tribunal in 2013 was critiqued by human rights groups and media as it would violate freedom of speech, expression and some legislation enacted in 2013 likely to have a negative impact on human rights were: Anti-Terrorism (Amendment) Act 2013, Information and Communication Technology (Amendment) Act 2013 etc.

**Anti-Terrorism (Amendment) Act**

Passed on 11 June 2013 empowers the law enforcement agencies to record conversations, videos, photographs, conversations posted by people and organisations on social media like Face book, Twitter, Skype, Blogs, E-mails and allow those before the Court of Law as evidence in trial.

>This Act contradicts with guarantee to the privacy of correspondence and other means of communication as well as citizen’s democratic, human and fundamental rights, mentioned in the constitution.

**ICT (Amendment) Act 2013** was criticised by the main opposition as well as civil society saying it would curtail freedom of opinion and expression and leave room for abuse of power by the law enforcing agencies. UN Special Rapporteurs in a Letter of Allegation (AL) sent to the Government of Bangladesh expressed that ‘serious concern is expressed that the amended Information and Communication Technology Act could unduly restrict the right to freedom of opinion and expression online, thereby curtailing the legitimate activities of political pressure groups and civil society organisations.

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Grave concern is also expressed that this legislative development could silence dissenting voices against the Government.\textsuperscript{6}\textsuperscript{7} The parliament has also passed an amendment of the Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2004 incorporating a controversial provision curtailing the commission’s authority to file cases against the public servants\textsuperscript{8}.

(b) Court Judgments and Directions

- The International Crimes Tribunal issued verdict against nine persons accused of war crimes in 1971, including life imprisonment for Abdul Quader Mollah, Assistant General Secretary of Jamaat-e-Islami. Following massive protests triggered by the victory sign showed by Quader Mollah after hearing the verdict, the prosecution filed an appeal in the High Court which sentenced him to death\textsuperscript{9} and the verdict was executed on 12 December 2013.\textsuperscript{10}

- The High Court concluded the trials of BDR personnel for killing 74 people, including 57 army officers, and committing other criminal offences during a bloody rebellion in the border force’s Peelkhana headquarters on 25-26 February 2009.

\textbf{The Court sentenced 152 persons to death and handed life-term imprisonment to 161 accused and jailed 256 others for different terms (from three years to ten years, with fine).}\textsuperscript{11}

- In the case filed for murder of Biswajit Das\textsuperscript{12}, the Court sentenced eight members reportedly of the Awami League student front to death and thirteen persons to lifetime imprisonment on 18 December 2013\textsuperscript{13}.

\textsuperscript{7} http://www.voicebd.org/node/419
\textsuperscript{12} The killers used machetes to hack Biswajit, a young tailor to death in front of police, out of mere suspicion that he was a BNP cadre supporting his party’s strike call
• The Ministry of Home Affairs withdrew two cases (possession of arms and obstructing law enforcement forces) against an innocent boy Limon, who was shot in his leg by RAB\(^{14}\).

(c) **Indices of economic development and MDG targets met by Bangladesh**

Bangladesh has made significant advancement on promotion of economic and social rights in 2013.

• The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) in its report on the global hunger index found that Bangladesh has advanced to the 58th position from the 68th (was in 2012)\(^{15}\) in the World Hunger Index and was ahead of other countries in South Asia.

• Furthermore, Bangladesh has improved its ranking in literacy rates, enrolment in primary education, reduction of poverty and maternal mortality indices according to the UNDP Human Development Report 2013.\(^{16}\)

• Out of the eight Millenium Development Goals (MDGS), the country has achieved major targets of some goals including targets of poverty gap ratio, attaining gender parity at primary and secondary levels of education, under-five mortality rate reduction, detection and cure rate of TB under DOTS etc.\(^{17}\)

(d) **Right to Life and Liberty, Political Confrontation and Violence**

Violence by political parties and counter violence by law enforcement agencies is not unusual in Bangladesh. This year, however, it was so extreme that it disrupted social, economic, financial activities, broke communication links, led to deprivation for citizens and claimed many innocent lives. The most seriously affected religious community were Hindu community, especially women and children.

\(^{14}\) Limon was shot in leg by RAB personnel on 23 March 2011; while he was grazing his cows by a river bank in Sathuria village, Rajpur Upazilla, Jhalakathi district. RAB filed two cases for against him, one for possession of arms and the second, for obstructing them in their duties.


The violence coincided with (a) the death sentences passed in March 2013 by the International Criminal Tribunal on Abdul Quader Mollah\(^{18}\) and Delwar Hossain Sayeedi\(^{19}\), two leaders of the Jamaat-e-Islami for crimes committed against humanity in 1971 and (b) differences over modalities for holding the national election.

In 2013, about 848 clashes took place between different political parties, with law enforcement agencies, as well as between factions within political parties\(^{20}\). Newspaper reports accounted for a total of 507 persons killed and around 22,407 wounded during political conflicts in 2013\(^{21}\). Fifteen police constables and two BGB (Border Guard Bangladesh) members were amongst the fatalities.

Consecutive strikes and blockades called by the 18 Party-Alliance were imposed by massive violence or threats of violence. Jamaat-e-Islami and Shibir (the student wing of Jamaat-e-Islami) cadres were reported to have detonated crude petrol, gun powder bombs and committed arson on public transports which disrupted economic activities and closed down educational institutions. The blockaders tried to destroy communications by setting fire to trains and dismantling railway fish plates.

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\(^{18}\) On February 5, 2013, the International Crimes Tribunal-2 (ICT-2) sentenced Quader Mollah to life imprisonment. On September 17, 2013, the Supreme Court overruled the judgment and enhanced his sentence to the death penalty. Subsequently, on December 8, 2013, ICT-2 had issued a warrant of execution for Quader Mollah after receiving the Supreme Court verdict on December 5, 2013. [http://www.eurasiareview.com/16122013-bangladesh-executing-butcher-mirpur-analysis/](http://www.eurasiareview.com/16122013-bangladesh-executing-butcher-mirpur-analysis/)


Since the announcement of the election schedule on 25 November 2013, more than a hundred persons were killed all over the country during the continuous rail, road and water way blockade called by the 18 Party Alliance. Amongst these, 75 persons were killed between 26 November and 15 December 2013 and 30 persons were killed between 10 and 13 December 2013 following the execution of Jamaat-e-Islami leader Abdul Quader Mollah.22

INCIDENTS OF VIOLENCE BY JAMAAT-E-ISLAMI

From 28 February to 21 March 2013, 82 persons were reported in the media to have been killed in the violence perpetrated by Jamaat Shibir activists. During this time, 35 Government offices and 10 vehicles were vandalized and burnt in 25 upazillas of Chittagong, Rangpur, Rajshahi, Khuna and Sylhet Divisions.23

On 28 February 2013, following the verdict of Jamat-e-Islami, Delwar Hossain Sayeedee’s case, Jamat and Shibir activists were reported to have attacked in different areas in an orchestrated manner, resulting in24.

- the death of 37 persons in the capital and 15 other districts;
- An attack on the police investigation centre at Bamandanga, Sundarganj upazila of Gaibandha. Papers and furniture were damaged and set on fire26 and three policemen were beaten to death.27
- Four policemen beaten to death in Chapainawabgonj and an engineer thrown from the roof;
- Countrywide violent clashes between Jamat- Shibir cadres and law enforcement agencies in which 12 persons were killed including 14 Jamat Shibir, two BNP and two Awami League cadres.
- an arson attack on the Kansat power substation at Shibganj upazila, Chapainawabgonj, on 28 February 2013, damaging all machineries and infrastructure of the stations. The residences of the employees also came under the attack.28

22 Daily Prothom Alo, 16 December 2013
Countrywide violent clashes between Jamaat-Shibir cadres and law enforcement agencies led to the death of 12 persons, 14 Jamaat Shibir activists, two BNP activists and two Awami League activists.

Jamaat-Shibir activists carried an arson attack on the Kansat power substation at Shibganj upazila, Chapainawabganj. Almost all machineries and infrastructure of the stations were totally damaged in the attack on 28 February 2013. The residences of the employees also came under the attack. On February 28, some two thousand activists of Jamaat-e-Islami and its student wing Islami Chhatra Shibir looted and torched the power sub-station and Palli Bidyut office at Kansat”.

On 3 March 2013, following mike announcements from several mosques calling on the public to see “Saydee’s face in the moon”, the Jamat Shibir activists went on a rampage in Bogra city as well as in the nearest sub-districts of Bogra. They used gunpowder and vandalized, plundered and burned police outpost, police station, rail station, upazilla parishad, public and private property.

Satkhira district was subjected to extreme brutality by Jamaat-e-Islami and Shibir cadres following the execution of Jamaat-e-Islami leader Abdul Quader Mollah. They vandalised and set fire to houses, business establishments of Hindu community and Awami League leaders. At least 13 persons, including nine leaders and cadres of the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homes Destroyed or Set on Fire</td>
<td>278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Businesses Destroyed or Set on Fire</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temples, Monasteries or Statues destroyed</td>
<td>495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Injuries</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

31 Daily Samakal, http://www.esamakal.net/?archives=usc&arch_date=17-12-2013
VIOLENCE DURING HEFAZAT-E-ISLAM “SEIGE” PROGRAMME

On 5 May 2013, large contingents of Hefazat-e-Islam members congregated at six entry points outside Dhaka city. Later on receiving permission for a rally in the City, they marched into Motijheel and took up positions at the Shapla Chattar in the midst of commercial establishments.

- From noon to midnight friction between law enforcement agencies and Hefazat-e-Islam’s “siege” programme at Motijheel, led to 22 deaths including that of a police constable.

- On the way to join the assembly, Hefazat-e-Islam activists were involved in violence with the law enforcement personnel and Awami League activists at Fulbaria, Motijheel and Purana Paltan area. At Purana Paltan, the CPB office, House Building Tower, Janata Bank, ATM booths, different business organizations at Motijheel were vandalized and set on fire. Copies of the Quran were burnt as were roadside shops and hawkers’ carts. By midnight the Police applied sound grenade and paper spray to disperse them.

- A large number of madrassah students and children were allegedly used as human shields in the Hefazat-e-Islam’s assembly.

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35 ibid
36 Daily Prothom Alo, 8 May 2013
The next morning (6 May 2013), 27 persons were killed in a collision between law enforcers and Hefazat activists at different places in Narayanganj, Hathazari, Chittagong and Bagerhat. Two police constables, two BGB members, one Army officer, some ordinary citizens and Hefazat activists were amongst the dead. The Hefazat activists had blocked roads with wooden logs and set fire to police stations and institutions.

- **On 6 May 2013**, while returning to Chittagong from Dhaka, Hefazat activists were assaulted by a group of 22-25 persons at around 10 pm (night) at Comilla Railway Station. The attackers entered into the train and threw out some Hefazat activists from the train and beat them randomly and two of them were admitted into Comilla Medical College. One of the Hefazat activists, Motiur Rahman, died.

VIOLENCE BY LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES AND RULING PARTY CADRES

Threats to human rights were aggravated by the use of unlawful methods of law enforcement agencies such as extra judicial killings, disappearances, custodial deaths and torture, as well as controls over freedom of expression, mobility and association.

- **On 12 December 2013**, five persons were killed in a fight between RAB and 18 Party Alliance cadres at Laxmipur. It was alleged that the dead body of district Juba Dal leader Iqbal Mahmud Jewel was missing. Eye witnesses to this incident reported that a RAB helicopter landed at the police line around 3 pm and left at 3.08 pm that day.
- **On 15 December 2013**, Joint Forces (Army, RAB, BGB, police) deployed to curb the violence in Satkhira, were reported to have shot five persons.
- The BNP Party office was kept blocked for several days in December 2013. Leaders and activists of the BNP led 18 party alliance were arrested at different places across the country in separate drives by the joint forces from **28 to 29 December 2013**.

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39 Daily Prothom Alo, 8 May 2013
40 [Daily Star](http://archive.thedailystar.net/beta2/news/covered-van-helper-killed-in-blockaders-attack/)
41 [Daily Star](http://www.thedailystar.net/print_post/raids-in-satkhira-jamaat-dens-kill-5-2737)
42 [Daily Samakal](http://www.esamakal.net/?archiev=yes&arch_date=17-12-2013)
42 [http://www.bangladeshchronicle.net/index.php/2013/12/over-300-held-across-country/](http://www.bangladeshchronicle.net/index.php/2013/12/over-300-held-across-country/)
On **29 December 2013**, lawyers demonstrating in support of the 18 Party Alliance “March for Democracy” program were attacked by ruling party cadres in the presence of police inside the Supreme Court premises. Several lawyers, including a female lawyer, were assaulted allegedly by Awami League student cadres in the presence of police. Ruling party activists teamed up under *Muktijoddha Prajanma* League attacked a procession of Dhaka University teachers, in support of the opposition, leaving at least eight of them injured. One of them was sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

**EXTRA JUDICIAL KILLINGS, TORTURE AND CUSTODIAL DEATHS**

![Figure 1: Alleged Deaths by Law Enforcement Agencies in 2013](image)

The term 'extrajudicial killing' means execution of people without due process. This is a grave human rights violation. It’s both a violation of Bangladesh's constitution and of the UN’s Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). But these types of killings still occur frequently in Bangladesh. There has been a continuation of this practice in 2013. More efforts should be made to address and investigate these murders.

Reports of deaths in “crossfire”, “encounter”, “gun fight” indicated that the ruling party had not kept its election promise to put a stop to extra judicial killings by law enforcement agencies which violated the right to life. Incidents of torture and death in police custody also continued in 2013. Seventy two persons were victims of extra judicial death by law enforcement agencies in 2013. 

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43 [http://www.thedailystar.net/print_post/bnp-leader-hafiz-held-4613](http://www.thedailystar.net/print_post/bnp-leader-hafiz-held-4613)


46 [http://www.thedailystar.net/print_post/bnp-leader-hafiz-held-4613](http://www.thedailystar.net/print_post/bnp-leader-hafiz-held-4613)


Among them 24 were killed in “cross fire” by RAB, 17 by police, 1 by BGB, 1 person was reported to have died after torture by RAB and Police, and 26 persons were tortured in police custody. Some incidents of extra judicial deaths are given below:

- **On 2 July 2013**, On 2 July 2013, a petty businessman Yasin Bapari was wounded by the Detective Branch police in a gun fight at Dhaka’s Gulistan Golap Shah Mazar area. He died on 6 July in the Dhaka Medical College, while under treatment.
- **On 31 July 2013** (around 10 pm at night), on the way to Gulshan police Station from Uttara, Jubo League leader Jahed Siddiqui Tareq was reported killed in a gunfight with RAB.
- On the same date at early dawn, in Narail Sadar upazila, Parvez alias Rashed was killed in “cross-fire” with RAB.
- Hafizur Rahman, the elder brother of a businessman Iqbal Hossain, filed a complaint that his brother was tortured to death by members of Kushtia Rapid Action Battalion (RAB-12).

**CUSTODIAL VIOLENCE**

Tougher measures need to be taken against the perpetrators to end custodial torture, and other human rights abuses of prisoners and detainees; and also to promote reforms in prison related laws including systematic monitoring of prisons.

**DEATHS IN JAIL CUSTODY IN 2013 : BREAKDOWN OF DIVISIONS**

- **On 5 June 2013**, Akidul Islam, ASI of Savar Police station along with some police members forcefully abducted, Shamim Sarkar, a Negotiator of Real Estate business and Md. Saiful Islam in a microbus in front of a shop at Molla Filling Station, Hemayetpur. After driving to several places, Shamim was taken to Hemayetpur Tanary Police Station and tortured. Shamim’s dead body was found in Dhaka Mitford Hospital’s morgue on 6 June 2013. Two investigation committees were formed finding three

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police constables guilty of murder, assault, extortion, theft, and it concluded that Shamim was beaten to death by the policemen for money\textsuperscript{52}.

- **On 1 September 2013**, prisoner Shamshed Hawlader alias Jasem died through suspicious circumstances while under treatment in the prison cell of Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital. The family members of the deceased complained that the SI of Metropolitan Detective Branch police Helaluddin tortured him to death after arrest\textsuperscript{53}.

- **On 17 November 2013**, a man named Jafar was killed in Jail of Kushtia, Daulatpur police Station. His family members claimed that the police killed him because he could not meet their demand for bribe\textsuperscript{54}.

**ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES**

Enforced disappearances or abduction by law enforcement personnel dressed in civilian clothes has been reported in the media. Persons are picked up and remain missing for some days, subsequently some of their corpses are found but the perpetrators are not identified. The Government neither issues press notes nor conducts any proper investigation, nor has any legal action been taken to hold the perpetrators accountable. According to the national dailies, in 2013, about 53 persons disappeared. Five dead bodies were recovered, three were handed over to police, two were detained, and the rest of them remained missing\textsuperscript{55}.

- **On 27 November 2013**, when the President of BNP Laksham Upazilla and former Parliamentarian Saiful Hiru, BNP leaders Humayun Kabir Parvez and Jashim Uddin were traveling by ambulance from Laksham to Comilla at around 10:30 pm, they were stopped by some men in black uniforms and were transferred to another vehicle. Later RAB handed over Jashim Uddin to the police and he was reported to be in jail custody. But the whereabouts of MP Saiful Islam Hiru and BNP leader Humayun Kabir Parvez were not known\textsuperscript{56}.


\textsuperscript{55} ASK documentation based on newspaper reports

• On **11 May 2013**, some eye-witnesses and family members of a cable proprietor Md. Faqrul Islam claimed that he was taken away by 8/10 RAB members in a car marked RAB-3 from the area of Nur Mosque in Shegun Bagicha, Dhaka at around 6 pm. Faqrul’s family sent appeals to the Ministry of Home Affairs, RAB-3/1, Ramna Police station as well as to the DB office, but no trace was found.

• On **26 May 2013**, in front of the Capital’s Gulistan Golap Shah Tomb, the Joint convener of Ward no 56 Dhaka Metropolitan Awami League, Ruhul Amin, was taken away by men in civilian dress who claimed to be Detective Branch personnel. He has been missing.⁵⁷

• Nurul Amin, a graduate student in the Department of Management at Jagannath University, was missing since 26 June 2013. His elder brother Al-Amin informed that he was arrested around 8 pm on that day, in front of the Gulshan police station by law enforcement personnel in civil dress. On 28 July 2013, his family members held a press conference demanding to know his whereabouts, but he has not been found.⁵⁸

**BORDER KILLINGS AND TORTURE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of Violence</th>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Dhaka</th>
<th>Khulna</th>
<th>Rajshahi</th>
<th>Rangpur</th>
<th>Sylhet</th>
<th>Chittagong</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Death (Shoot)</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death in Physical Torture</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Injured</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abduction</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Return after abduction</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
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<td>Reason for Death Unknown</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td><strong>19</strong></td>
<td><strong>91</strong></td>
<td><strong>57</strong></td>
<td><strong>143</strong></td>
<td><strong>14</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td><strong>335</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**BORDER VIOLENCE : DEATH, TORTURE AND ABDUCTIONS IN 2013**

This year the media reported 335 incidents of border killings and torture by the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) at the India-Bangladesh border.⁵⁹ These reports indicated that 26 persons died, 84 were tortured, and 175 were abducted from the border. In spite of several meetings between BGB (Border Guards Bangladesh) and

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http://www.thedailystar.net/rights-situation-was-alarming-in-2013-4883
and BSF, the modalities for monitoring the border to prevent any violations of the right to life have not stopped incidents of border violence.

- **On 9 January 2013**, a fisherman Faruq from Gudampara area, Teknaf Upzilla died in the river Naf, being shot by the NASAKA Force at Myanmar border.
- **On 11 July 2013**, a Bangladeshi woman was allegedly raped by a BSF member in front of her son (six years old), on her way back to Bangladesh from India, at Angrail border Chouki of Uttar Chabbish Porgona Zilla.
- **On 5 September 2013**, the General Security Forces Court of Indian BSF announced a verdict in the widely discussed Felani murder case of 2011. The accused BSF member Omio Ghosh was declared not guilty\(^60\) which led to serious criticism at home and abroad. The BSF authorities decided to seek the verdict of a higher court.

## VIOLENCE ON MINORITIES

In 2013, Hindu communities in many towns and villages were subjected to gang violence and many people were forced to leave their homes. Their temples, houses and shops were vandalized or set on fire, their property was looted, deities destroyed. A few cases of physical torture were also reported. Most of the violence in February and March 2013 were perpetrated by Jamat and Shibir cadres following the ICT’s sentencing of Jamat leaders for the crimes against humanity committed in 1971. After October 2013 violence was instigated during the opposition’s movement for elections under a Caretaker Government, Jamat, BNP and AL members were also alleged to have looted and occupied Hindu property in some cases.

Law enforcement agencies failed to take adequate steps to protect the religious minorities, even though there were warnings of communal violence. It has been reported by the media that 278 houses and 208 business establishments of Hindus were vandalized, burnt and 495 incidents of destruction of idols, temples took place. The Ahmadiya Muslim Jamat also was under threat.

**On 28 February 2013**, after International Crimes Tribunal’s verdict on Saydee, there were massive attacks on the Hindu communities in many towns and villages.

- At least ten business institutions and 50 stores belonging to Hindus were vandalized and looted. To control the situation the police opened fire but the scattered attackers burnt three tin shed houses of

Mahajanpara close to the bazaar and hacked a person to death. Nine cases were filed, including one on behalf of the damaged Odaitananda temple. 30 persons including the Upazilla chairman were arrested.

- On the same day in the Rajganj bazaar of Begumganj Upazilla, Noakhali, many Hindu houses were attacked, vandalized and looted. Thirteen houses and three temples were set on fire, one policeman was killed, and another got seriously injured when the police came to control the situation. The attackers again set fire to eleven houses of another Hindu community. At night they attacked the Kalirhat bazar Kali temple and set fire to it after breaking the temple walls. More than 50 families were injured.

- On 1 April 2013 (night), arson in the 120 years old Folda Central Kali Temple situated at Folda village, Bhuiyapur, Tangail district resulted in destruction of about 25 small/large deities and the temple as well. Later on, members of the minority community accused local Jubo League leaders of involvement in this attack. When Khondakar Asaduzzaman, local Member of Parliament, went to inspect the place, the accused was with him. He scolded the Hindus in front of the accused for protesting against this incident. On 27 October 2013, in the ongoing strike of the 18 Party Alliance, the strike supporters attacked Safinagar bazar, Patgram, Lalmonirhat district. The attackers identified stores belonging to Hindus and looted 16 of these and one belonging to a Muslim. The furniture was set on fire and the victims informed the local Patgram police station but no help was sent. The police came to the spot a day later.

- On 2 November 2013, Hindu villages of Pabna districts were attacked by a group of miscreants. They vandalized, torched and looted houses, business establishments and Hindu temples in Purbopara (Saha para), Ghoshpara (Kamargari Road) of Banagram village located in Ataikula police station, Sathiya upazila of Pabna district. More than a hundred houses of 34 families and five temples were damaged.

- After the execution of Abdul Quader Molla, Hindu properties and temples in Shatkhira Sadar and in Debhata, Ashashuni, Kaliganj, Kolaroa, Tala were vandalized, looted and burned by the Jamaat Shibir cadres. From 12-15 December 2013, about 36 houses, business institutions of the Hindus were similarly affected.

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61 ASK Fact-finding report.
ROLE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES IN AREAS OF MINORITY VIOLENCE

The role of the law enforcement agencies came into question; BNP, Jamaat, as well as some local supporters of Awami League were accused of involvement with the violence committed on minorities. The failure of the Election Commission to call the military to supervise elections appeared too many to have aggravated the situation.

ATTACKS ON AHMADIYA MUSLIM JAMAT

On 6 February 2013, religious extremists attacked a three day long anniversary celebration by Bangladesh Ahmadiya Muslim Jamat at Gazipur Kaliakor Scout Training Centre. The Ahmadiyas complained that attacks of arson were carried out during the program in presence of the police. These incidents took place in 30 districts including Gaibandha, Chapainawabganj, Sirajganj, Rajshahi, Naugaon, Bogra, Jhenaidah, Kushtia, Jessore, Magura, Mymensingh, Gazipur and Munshiganj.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND EXPRESSION

The International Cyber Tribunal 2013 came under was criticised because of its curtailment of freedom of expression. Adilur Rahman Khan, Secretary of the human rights organization 'Odhikar' was arrested on 10 August 2013 under the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Act, 2006 on grounds of disseminating false information on Odhikar’s website regarding the assembly of Hefazat-e-Islam at Motijheel. He was taken on remand for five days. Many national and international human rights organizations condemned and protested the way in which he was arrested.\(^{62}\)

Article- 39 of the Constitution of Peoples’ Republic of Bangladesh guarantees the Right to Freedom of Expression. However executive action has tried to suppress dissent through bans on public assemblies, or closing of media outlets. Opposition parties were refused permission to hold meetings several times. A Bangla newspaper Amar Desh was banned on 11 April 2013\(^ {63}\) for publishing a report/comment on allegations of a Skype conversation between an ICT judge and a lawyer. On 5 May 2013, while several television channels were telecasting Hefazat-e-Islam’s assembly in Motijheel, telecasts by two private television channels 'Diganta' and 'Islamic TV' were stopped on the allegation of ‘airing provocative scenes’.\(^ {64}\)


The Right to Information Commission formed four years ago has yet to become effective in ensuring that information officials in different government agencies carry out their responsibilities and response to citizens' requests.

**HARASSMENT OF JOURNALISTS**

Many press reporters were attacked by both opposition party cadres and law enforcement agencies during their professional reporting duties. In 2013, three journalists were reported to have been murdered and 339 journalists were tortured by different groups. Among them 43 journalists were allegedly tortured by law enforcement agencies, 33 were given death threats, 26 faced cases in Court, two were harassed by Government officials, 56 by terrorists, 141 by members of different political parties, 24 by Hefazat e Islam and fourteen became victims of other forms of persecution.  

![JOURNALIST HARASSMENT IN 2013](image)

- The Ministry of Home Affairs showed no progress in investigating the murder of the journalist couple Shagor-Runi. This led to strong continuous protests by the journalist community.

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• On **28 March 2013**, about 8/10 terrorists attacked the *Prothom Alo* correspondent Masud Alam in Obhoynogor Upzilla, Jessore, broke his limbs and seriously injured him.

• On **6 April 2013**, Nadia Sharmin, an ETV reporter was assaulted by Hefazat-e-Islam members while covering their rally in Motijheel.  

• On **5 May 2013** in Purana Paltan, Dhaka, bdnews24.com reporter Farhan Ferdous was injured during clashes between Police and Hefazat-e-Islam and later died in Dhaka Medical College. On the same day the Hefazat members attacked fourteen reporters of electronic, print and online media.

• On **20 July 2013**, two reporters of Independent Television Imtiaz Momin and Mohsin Mukul were assaulted by Golam Maula Roni (Awami League Member of Parliament from Patuakhali 3) in his office and seriously injured.

• On **27 July 2013**, Awami League cadres attacked the Nandail Upzilla correspondent of Daily *Ittefaq* Mohammad Shah Alam Bhuiyan, in Nandail, Mymensingh, and broke his hands.

• On **21 November 2013**, around 8:30 pm in Debhata Upzilla of Shatkhira, Abu Raihan, staff reporter of Daily *Jonmobhumi*, was hacked to death by Jamaat-Shibir cadres.

• On **11 April 2013**, Mahmudur Rahman, editor-in-charge of *Amar Desh* newspaper, was arrested from the office on sedition charges for publishing the Skype conversation of a Judge of International War Crimes Tribunal and a legal expert. The High Court agreed to the police request for remand for thirteen days. There were allegations that he was tortured in police custody. *Amar Desh* was accused of publishing false and motivated news to provoke destabilization and instigating sabotage.

**WORKERS’ SAFETY**

The largest disaster of 2013 was the **death of 1,135 garment workers** and injury to over 2000 workers on 24 April in the collapse of Rana Plaza building at Savar, which housed five garment factories. In this context, the risky and unsafe working environment of the workers has been criticized nationally and internationally.

While separate strategies for monitoring of fire and safety regulations in garment factories were being negotiated by brands signing the European Accord and the ILO led National Action Plan, workers were anxiously waiting for the satisfaction of their compensation claims.

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The High Court bench of Justice Mirza Hussain Haider and Justice Muhammad Khurshid Alam Sarker later issued a rule, asking for the institution of a committee headed of the ninth Infantry Division general officer commanding and representatives from other concerned agencies to decide the amount of compensation\textsuperscript{72}

Cases of criminal negligence were filed against the owner of the building, Sohail Rana and five factory owners\textsuperscript{73}. They were arrested and their cases are pending. On 8 October seven workers died in another fire incident at Aswad Composite Industry of Pall Mall Group. The workers of Tazreen Garment Factory which had caught fire in November 2012 due to criminal negligence were awaiting compensation. The owner Delwar Hossain had not been arrested by the end of the year.

**MIGRANT WORKERS**

The Parliament adopted the Overseas Employment and Migrant Workers Act 2013 which was a positive step for migrant workers.

However the media reported that recruitment and employment agencies have used forged passports for migrant workers. Their discovery resulted in the Malaysian Security Forces detaining 387 Bangladeshi migrant workers\textsuperscript{74} in one day this year. Detention of migrant workers after expiry of penalty period cases of harassment and torture overseas were reported.

**GARMENT WORKERS**

Rejecting the workers' demand for a living wage of Tk 8000.0 basic for the entry grade the Bangladesh Minimum Wage Board declared a basic wage of Tk 5030. As a result workers continued their protests in 2013 for a living wage, payment of overtime and bonus. During their demonstration on 18 November two workers were killed in a clash with police.

**VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

Frequent cases of rape, acid throwing, domestic torture, stalking and fatwa instigated violence were reported. Women and human rights organizations assisted some of them to file cases and supported the survivors with legal and social support.

\textsuperscript{72} Dhaka Tribune, \textit{http://www.dhakatribune.com/crime/2013/sep/03/rana-plaza-disaster-261-%E2%80%98actual-%E2%80%99-army}

\textsuperscript{73} Dhaka Tribune, \textit{http://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/2013/apr/29/11-cases-filed-labour-court-against-5-apparel-factory-owners}

\textsuperscript{74} Bd news24.com, \textit{http://bdnews24.com/bangladesh/2013/09/04/malaysia-softens-on-foreign-workers}
Women and human rights activists held strong protests against the incidents of rape and gang rape. The media reported that 812 women were raped or gang raped in 2013. Amongst these, 87 women were killed after rape and fourteen allegedly committed suicide. Media reports of such incidents given below indicate that rape was a common crime in both urban and rural areas:

- **On 5 January 2013**, a girl was raped, tortured and killed at Shah Ali Jhilpar slum in the capital. The residents of the locality carried the dead body in a procession and blocked the road.

- **On 19 January 2013**, the dead body of a ten year old child was retrieved from a toilet in an apartment building named Tropical Tower in Dhaka’s Topkhana Road. The child’s family claimed that Ritu was killed after rape.

- **On 24 January 2013**, a young garment worker was raped in a bus by the driver Dipu Mia and his helper Abul Kashem at Manara, Manikgank near Dhaka–Aricha highway.

- **On 20 February 2013**, a young girl was suffocated to death and hanged from a tree after being gang raped and tortured at Kamlapur area, Savar.

- **On 7 December 2013**, during the blockade by the opposition, a mother and her daughter were gang raped in front of the father and son in their home in Monirampur, Jessore by a gang of 10 or 12 men. The rapists also took away valuable items along with a mobile phone and ornaments.

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75 ASK documentation
STALKING, SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND TORTURE

Notwithstanding court directions and government action, stalking and sexual harassment continued to be reported in workplace and educational institutions in 2013. School teacher Helal Uddin and his associates allegedly deceived young girls into sexual acts and circulated the video in Kushtia. Following protests by ASK and other women’s rights organizations, the accused were arrested. Later it was alleged that Helal Uddin was released and transferred to the Ministry of Education.

- A Hindu housewife of Chorpara Union, Doulatkhan, Bhola was subjected to physical and sexual torture for over a year and a half. Her husband and the neighbours feared to protest because the perpetrator was the son of ex-Chairman, a very powerful person.

- On 3 January 2013, a female student of BM College was beaten by Adnan Hosen because she rejected his indecent proposal. Another female student of Finance department of Dhaka University filed a case of sexual harassment at Shahbagh police station against a teacher of the same department. Her classmates wanted to submit a memorandum but it was not allowed by the Department Chairman and Dean of the Faculty.

- In another incident Eshita Akter Rani of Barthi village, Gournodi, Barisal was brutally beaten with rods and burnt with an Iron by her father in law, mother in law, husband of sister in law named Alamgir, brothers in law named Al-Amin and Abul Hasan. As a result of the torture she died and they poured poison into her mouth on 21 July 2013 to make it appear as a suicide case.76

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76 Daily Sangbad, http://www.thedailysangbad.com/index.php?ref=MjBfMDDfMjRfMTNfMV8xM18xXzEzNzk0MQ==
• On **22 October 2013**, a female student of Rajshahi University was seriously beaten with a hammer by Rakibul Islam Limon.

• On **10 October 2013**, a young man named Razu Bepary was killed by some stalkers because he protested against stalking at Rupsa Bridge, Khulna.

**ARBITRATION AND FATWA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fatwa</th>
<th>Hilla</th>
<th>lashes</th>
<th>Social Boycott</th>
<th>Divorce</th>
<th>Physical/ Mental Torture</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Case filed</th>
<th>Suicide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Love relationship</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral Divorce</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape/Attempt to rape</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>False Allegation</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married sister in law</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree to sign in white paper</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SALISH AND FATWA INCIDENTS IN 2013 - ASK DOCUMENTATION**

Despite the High Court’s directions that extra judicial penalties imposed by *fatwa* were unconstitutional and illegal, physical penalties were pronounced by *fatwa* upon 21 women in 2013. Seven of them were physically and mentally tortured, three were forced to leave the village, and three committed suicide after torture. *Fatwas* led to six incidents of *Hilla* marriage. Only five cases were filed.
**ACID VIOLENCE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason of violence</th>
<th>13-18</th>
<th>19-24</th>
<th>25-30</th>
<th>30+</th>
<th>Not mentioned</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Cases filed</th>
<th>Death</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family dispute</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>Dowry</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enmity</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land dispute</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refuse to sexual relationship</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree to marry</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failure of affair</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failur of Rape</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason not mentioned</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>18</strong></td>
<td><strong>44</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

REPORTED CASES OF ACID VIOLENCE IN 2013

Incidents of acid burn, dowry, and domestic violence were reported frequently in the media. This year 44 women became victims of acid violence, and out of these only 16 cases were filed. Out of 703 women victims of domestic violence including dowry, only 361 filed cases.

**VIOLENCE AGAINST DOMESTIC WORKERS**

**VIOLENCE AGAINST DOMESTIC WORKERS IN 2013**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Under 6</th>
<th>7-12</th>
<th>13-18</th>
<th>19-24</th>
<th>25-30</th>
<th>30+</th>
<th>Not mentioned</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Cases filed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nature of violence</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical torture</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>23</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape/Attempt to Rape</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death (Form of violence not mentioned)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>33</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Killing after Rape</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death after physical torture</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suicide</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>78</strong></td>
<td><strong>24</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Employers were reported to have committed violations on 78 domestic workers, but only 24 cases were filed. 44 of those cases led to deaths and 6 workers committed suicide.77 Throughout the year there have been numerous cases of extreme violence.

**RIGHT TO SHELTER**

The right to shelter is a fundamental principle of state policy. Therefore, incidents of slum eviction in 2013 which occurred without notice or resettlement plans, could be said to be in violation of the Constitution.

As a result of a fire at Hazaribag Balur Math Slum on 17 October 2013, 475 houses were fully charred. The slum inhabitants claimed that the arson was committed deliberately to evict low income families who had rented it from the occupants of government land.

- **On 7 August 2013**, at Rajendrapur Shalmara area in Rangpur city, the administration evicted 15 landless families without any resettlement from a site which they had inhabited for over 40 years.

  They were evicted from the place by the police force led by an executive magistrate within ten minutes without any previous notice.

- **On 27 August 2013**, a brothel in Madaripur city was invaded by members of the Banik Samity and Islaa he Quom Parishad who assaulted the sex workers, and evicted them from their own property.78 At least 2,500 persons were sued in

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77 ASK documentation
two separate cases filed over the attack on the sex workers at a brothel in Puranbazar area of the district town on August 27. Baru Begum, one of the sex workers forced out of the brothel, filed a case with the Madaripur Sadar police on 17 September 2013, naming 35 and over 2,000 unnamed others in connection with the attack.

**RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE**

Indigenous people are not given constitutional recognition even though the ruling party had made a commitment in its election manifesto. There was no progress in implementing the Chittagong Hills Tracts Accord and the CHT Land Commission remained dysfunctional.

The Bangali inhabitants were reported to have vandalized and burned the houses of indigenous peoples, restricted their religious program, grabbed their land and evicted them. It was alleged that the Army and law enforcement agencies did not take action against them. Some incidents of rape and sexual harassment of women and children were reported in the media.

More than a hundred houses of the indigenous people were set on fire and vandalized in Taidong, Rangamati on 3 August 2013. About 162 indigenous families who became homeless had to take shelter in the forest and in no man’s land between the India-Bangladesh borders. Later the administration helped resettle them in their own village.

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79 Baru Begum, accompanied by a four-member team of Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK) and Manusher Jonno Foundation, filed a written complaint with the police station.  