



Human Rights Congress for Bangladesh
Minorities
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Bangladesh:

Minorities Fear for Life and Security:
Protect Minority Professors of Chittagong University and HR Activist Rabindra Ghosh.
Ensure Human Rights and Freedom of Expression.
Stop Forced Conversion to Islam and Restore Communal Harmony.

Section 1: Background

The widespread and barbaric acts of violence against the religious minorities that started before the October 1, 2001 general election in Bangladesh and gained unprecedented momentum immediately after the victory of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)- Jamaat-E-Islami led coalition, is continuing unabated as we appeal to the conscience of the civilized world today. The carnage has affected hundreds of thousands of minority families. The violence range from **gang rape** and **abduction** of minor children to elderly women, **brutality, murders**, attack on **temples, churches** and **orphanages**, looting, land grabbing, **eviction** and **forced conversion** to Islam, etc. Minorities are being forced to pay **Jizya tax** (infidel protection tax) to live in their own ancestral homes and lastly forcing hundreds of thousands of displaced and victim families to flee to India. The law enforcement authorities are not providing protection to the minorities nor are they always co-operating in filing cases against the perpetrators of these crimes, rather helping the criminals commit their heinous acts of barbaric dimensions with impunity. No criminal has been punished since the violence started more than eleven months ago.

The violence against religious minorities has been going on everyday and affecting the very fabric of our society beyond any caste, creed and religious belief. Recently five Hindu Professors of Chittagong University have been given death threat if they do not leave the country immediately. And human rights activist advocate Rabindra Ghosh has been threatened with life if he does not stop his humanitarian activities. Minority families are being evicted, tortured to leave the country, minor children are forcefully converted to Islam, places of worship are being attacked and occupied, and so on and on. Violence must stop and minorities must be protected.

Section 2: Five Minority Teachers of Chittagong University Threatened with Death by Islamic Solidarity of Bangladesh

Five professors of the Chittagong University (CU) Chemistry Department, who are from the religious minority community, have been asked to leave the country in a style similar to that used during the partition of India in 1947- 48. They have been threatened with death, at any time and at any place, if they fail to leave the country immediately (The Daily Janakantha, September 5, 2002; www.janakantha.com). The threat has been issued in a letter typed on white papers via mail by the Chittagong branch of an

organization called "**Islamic Solidarity of Bangladesh**" and delivered to their chemistry department address. This has made the minority and the progressive teachers very scared, and the vice-chancellor of the university very worried. The threatened teachers are: Professors Dr. Sarojkanti Singha Hazari and Benu Kumar Dey and Associate Professors Kamalendra Narayan Das, Dr. Debashish Palit and Dr. Tapashi Ghosh Roy. The five teachers have been deliberately and deceitfully branded as enemies of the Muslims, and asked to leave the country immediately. In the event of **non-compliance**, they have been **threatened with death** at their workplace, Chittagong residence or village home.

The letters also mention that **the sender of the letters** who is a **leader of the Chittagong branch of the "Islamic Solidarity of Bangladesh"** is following the teachers. There is no escape from death, searching for the sender would be answered by bullets, according to the letters. It has been learnt that a copy of the letters has also been sent to the vice-chancellor, who has been advised not to inquire much into the matter.

The minority teachers of the university and the progressive members of faculty including the vice chancellor are deeply worried and scared of their life and security. We urge the Government of Bangladesh to provide immediate protection to these teachers, ban "**Islamic Solidarity of Bangladesh**" and bring all involved in this formidable threat to justice.

Section 3: Advocate Rabindra Ghosh, President HRCBM-Dhaka Threatened with Death

"On August 21, 2002, at about 9:30 a.m. (Bangladesh time) one unknown person with angry mood threatened me and want me to stop my humanitarian job in Bangladesh over my residence telephone. The wordings of the threat were in Bengali "Are you Hindu or Malaun (Malaun is a derogatory hate word for Hindus used by fanatic Moslems in Bangladesh), if you continue to work against our aims and objectives, you will be finished". Instantly I informed the matter to Lalbagh Police station at Dhaka. The police noted my anguish and has given me a general diary number 1108 dated 21.8.2008. The police also came to my residence at about 1 P.M. while I was in Supreme Court Bar Association. Constant threat upon me by some unidentified group is going on" - reported Advocate Rabindra Ghosh, President Human Rights Congress for Bangladesh Minorities-Dhaka Chapter, Bangladesh.

It may be noted that Advocate Ghosh has been threatened by unknown quarters with death from time to time since he started his humanitarian works highlighting the plight of religious minorities in Bangladesh after the General Election of October 2001. He was attacked during a meeting of the Supreme Court Bar Association at the Supreme Court Bar Association Hall on July 1, 2002, and his video camera was snatched away. A case was filed with the Ramna Police Station, Dhaka but no action has yet been taken.

Amnesty International has expressed concern for Mr. Ghosh's safety and issued a statement on July 23, 2002 urging the government to protect him from further threats and attacks. The UK based organization appealed to the Prime Minister to ensure a full, impartial and authoritative investigation into July 1 attack on Rabindra Ghosh and bring attackers to justice regardless of their party affiliation or political position.

Ensure safety of Mr. Ghosh and help recover the video camera and the valuables snatched away from him; bring the perpetrators to justice.

Section 4: Abduction and Torture of Chhobi Rani Mondol

The story of inhuman torture of Chhobi Rani Mondol, daughter of Shishubar Mondol, Village of Orabonia, Rampal Upazila in the district of Bagherhat, depicts a very grim and barbaric face of the perpetrators and their mentors of crimes against humanity in Bangladesh.



হাসপাতালে চিকিৎসাধীন রানী —খুলনা অফিস

Picture: (Courtesy of Daily Prothom-Alo): Seriously injured and sexually assaulted Ms. Chabi Rani is languishing on the floor of Khulna Medical College Hospital.

“She was **abducted by BNP leader Kazi Abul Bashar** and his armed cadres from a local bus stand, and subsequently taken to the BNP office. There, Bashar and his cadres Tayeb Noor, Kamal and Jamal Shikari stripped her naked, molested her and cut off her hair. She was beaten with hammer and clubs on the face, chest and forehead. Bashar and his thugs then took nude photographs of her before throwing her out on the road, sources said. On being informed, police rushed to the spot to find her unconscious and profusely bleeding. Rani was admitted to the KMCH (Khulna Medical College Hospital) at about 10:30pm on August 21 in a precarious condition. ... Hospital sources said Rani's **attackers have also threatened to harm the doctors and nurses** who are looking after the battered woman at the hospital. A case was recorded with Rampal Police Station in this connection on Saturday evening, naming 15 BNP leaders and activists as accused. So far, police have arrested three accused named in the FIR. They are Tayeb Noor, 35, Md Wahab, 25, and Humayun Kabir Himu, 35. The prime accused Kazi Bashar is reportedly staying at the Bagherhat residence of a top local BNP leader. ... Battered and bruised, Chhobi Rani Mondol, 25, languishes in the Khulna Medical College Hospital (KMCH), fighting for her life since the night of August 21 when she was mercilessly beaten allegedly by BNP cadres inside Rampal BNP office”-The Daily Star, August 25, 2002 (www.dailystarnews.com/200208/25/index.htm; The Prathomalo, August 24, 2002).

The culprits did not stop just torturing and abusing her. **BNP cadres are threatening to kill her family members if they don't leave the country for good.** "We are extremely scared and fear for our lives. ... Most of the accused are still at large and are threatening to abduct me, my injured daughter," Kalidashi Mondol, mother of Chhobi Rani, said yesterday.

“She said they cut her hair, stripped her and photographed her. Chhobi Rani said she'd been targeted by the local party boss for refusing to give up her claim to a disputed property.”- BBC World Service, August 26, 2002.

“The abduction, torture, stripping, photographing and practically driving insane of Chhobi Rani of Bagherhat are like sequences of a horror movie. Unfortunately they seem to be having a jubilee run in this country.” “Rani is still recovering from the attack and is reported to be mentally unstable. Such are the prices of vulnerability. Cruelty obviously unlike charity doesn't bind the limits of human indignity.”- Editorial, The Daily Star, Monday August 26, 2002.

It is reported that the heinous crime against this helpless woman took place within 200 to 300 yards of the Rampal Police Station and the police did not come to the rescue.

Bangladesh and no civil society can tolerate these kinds barbarism. Chhobi Rani and her family must be protected. The perpetrators must be brought to justice and given exemplary punishment.

Section 5: Torture and Eviction of Kakoli Bhattacharya

Kakoli Bhattacharya, d/o a Priest Sri Biswanath Bhattacharya and Srimati Dali Bhattacharya (retired schoolteacher) of Halderpara, Brahmanbaria town, district of Brahmanbaria, has been evicted from her home. She is the only legal heir of her parents and aunts, the legal owner of their ancestral property in the

city of Bhrahmanbaria. Recently, Humanyun Kabir, the brother of local BNP (ruling party) Member of Parliament, has forcefully confiscated portion of their ancestral property.



Picture: (Courtesy Daily Janakantha) please visit http://hrcbm.org/news/quandary_news1.PDF for further details about the incident of Ms. Kakoli.

She immediately filed a case in the local court against the miscreants for forceful occupation and using fraudulent power of attorney to grab the property. The miscreants along with ruling party cadres tortured her father and threatened to kill him. He is in hiding to save his life. Kakoli filed a case in the local police station on July 27, 02. She got back to her home with the help of the police. But a group of miscreants broke into the house at 12 midnight on August 1, 2002, and beat her and throttled her mother's throat. They also prevent them from going to police. On 08/02/02, she managed to go to the hospital and visited police station by 08/03/02 but police registered the case of assault as separate case. She also visited to Superintendent of police who assured her that the additional SP will take action but there is no response from the investigating officer yet. Presently, they are unable to stay at night in the house due to ongoing assault by the miscreants. Police has neither arrested the miscreants nor provided adequate protection to the family of Kakoli.

(Ref: Daily Janakantha, Prothom-alo and other National newspapers date 08/08/02)

This is just an example of the recent eviction of minority families from their own ancestral homes and grabbing of properties. Thousands of minority families have been evicted and it is going on every day. The minorities must be protected and the perpetrators of these crimes must be punished.

Section 6: Forced Conversion of Two Minor Hindu Girls to Islam

On July 25, 2002, two 15 year old Hindu girls, namely Miss Sushama Rani Malo and Miss Putul Rani Malo were kidnapped from their very houses in Kulpaddy by some Muslims led by Imam of Madaripur Sadar Hospital Mosque and resident of the same village.

The guardians of the victims described it all to Advocate Rabindra Ghosh, President of HRCBM in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Upon being kidnapped they were forced to sign an affidavit that they were 19 years of age and that they wanted to convert to Islam at their own will. In addition, some Muslims particularly the supporters of Jamaat-E-Islami Party of the same locality compelled them to swear an affidavit by a Notary Public at Madaripur. Afterwards, the victims, Putul and Sushama made their escape back to their parents' houses that evening. On hearing the news that the two girls had gone back to their parents, Jamaat-E-Islamic supporters numbering about 250/300 surrounded the houses of the victim girls at about 11 P.M.



Mrs.Parul Rani Malo and Mrs.Doli Rani Malo, mothers of the victim girls bow down their head under the feet of Mr.Ghosh for rescue of their innocent girls from the hands of terrorists, who is consoling them.

Picture: (Courtesy HRCBM-DHAKA) Mother's of two destitute girl bowing before HRCBM volunteer for the rescue of their daughters.

The criminals severely assaulted Arun Chandra Malo (26), brother of victim Sushama and kidnapped the girls again. It is quite astonishing to note that while the victim girls were kidnapped from their houses by the miscreants the police were silent and they allowed organized processions to take place in the locality promoting violence and intolerance in the name of religion. The police and law enforcement authorities neither provided any type of protection to the girls and their grief stricken families nor did they even attempt to arrest the criminals. Instead some police officials of Madaripur police station actually helped the miscreants in tactfully obtaining a “no objection certificate” from the guardians of the victim girls stating that they would not like to lodge any complaints with the police. Advocate Rabindra Ghosh has finally been successful in filing two F.I.R.’s with the Madaripur Police Station during his visit. The following criminals were identified, all of them from the village of Kulpaddy, P.O, P.S. and District of Madaripur, who were primarily responsible for the offence and their names are in the F.I.R.

1. Mohammad Fazlu Master
2. Ali Ahmed (Imam of Madaripur Sadder Hospital Mosque)
3. Zeaul Hoque
4. Nurul Islam (Manna)
5. Beauty Begum wife of Anowar
6. Shanty Begum wife of Sheikh Eskandar Ali
7. Happy Matabbar wife of Ismail.
8. Feroz
9. Shaheen
10. Hayeat Ali
11. Manu
12. Sumi Mullah
13. Badal Matabbar and others

Mr. Ghosh has requested the Deputy Commissioner of Madaripur to hand over the minor victims to their legal guardians. But no such action has taken place ***rather they have been transferred to Dhaka central Jail***. A serious tension is prevailing in the area and the minorities fear for their life and security. A detailed investigative report on the criminal incidents can be obtained at www.info@hrcbm.org.

The forced conversion of minor girls of the minority communities must be stopped, the families protected, communal harmony restored and the criminals must be punished.

Section 7: Gopal Temple in Bhairab Demolish; A Devotee of Habigong Hindu Temple Killed

On August 11, 2002, some miscreants with the help of influential quarters of Bhairab demolished Shree Gopal Jiu Temple and occupied the properties and business of Mr. Swapan Kumar Saha- Reported "The Daily Janakantha", August 23, 2002.

On August 23, 2002, a 70-year old devotee, Amulya Rani Das, was killed inside a Hindu temple in Habiganj. ...

These are snap shots of violence against the minorities and their places of worship. Human rights and freedom of all citizens of a civilized society must be guaranteed.

Section 8: Urgent Action Demanded

The Human Right Congress for Bangladesh Minorities (HRCBM) vehemently protests and condemns the unlawful death threat given to Hindu professors of Chittagong University and advocate Rabindra Ghosh. We express our grave concern about the safety and security of the minority professionals, human right activists and community leaders and the religious minorities of Bangladesh as a whole.

We urge you to order your government authorities to provide immediate protection to the law-abiding professors of Chittagong University, and advocate Ghosh and their families. We demand that organizations like "Islamic Solidarity of Bangladesh" who propagate hatred and communal violence must be banned and their leaders must be brought to justice. We urge that the laws of the land and a free democratic society must be implemented, communal harmony must be restored and basic human rights of all citizens enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights must be guaranteed. The criminals and those who propagate violence and religious intolerance must be arrested and given exemplary punishment so that nobody dares to commit violence against the minorities again. The minorities must be protected.

APPEAL TO:

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PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY:

You may please fax or mail your appeal. Contact us at info@hrcbm.org for any question and further details.

NB: This Urgent Action Appeal has been sent the UN Secretary General, US State Department, US Ambassador to Bangladesh, Bangladesh Ambassador to the US, Amnesty International, IMF, World Bank, Paris Consortium, International Human Rights Organizations, world leaders and governments of more than 120 countries.