



Human Rights Congress for Bangladesh
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HRCBM/Bang/2002/1002/force_conv/Madharipur

Bangladesh:
Forceful Conversion of Two Minor Hindu Girls to Islam

Stop Religious Violence and Intolerance; Protect the Minorities and Bring the Criminals to Justice

Section 1: Background

Since the October 2001 general election in Bangladesh that brought Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)- Jamat-E-Islam led coalition government of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia to power for the second time, a new wave of brutality and violence has been unleashed against the minorities, the Hindus, Budhists, Christians and tribal people. The violence against minorities has surpassed that of 1992, when Begum Zia became the Prime Minister for the first time. Hundreds of thousands of minority families have been affected. The violence range from **gang rape & abduction** of minor children to elderly women, **brutality, murders**, attack on **temples, churches & orphanage**, looting, land grabbing, **eviction** and **forced conversion** to Islam. Minorities are being forced to pay **Jizya tax** to live in their own ancestral homes. The law enforcement authorities are not providing protection to the minorities, rather helping the criminals commit their heinous acts of barbaric dimensions. The violence against religious minorities has been going on unabated.

Section 2: Forceful Conversion of Two Minor Hindu Girls to Islam-Attack on Family Members

Two minor Hindu girls, namely Miss Sushma Rani Malo (15 year old), daughter of Shri Anil Chandra Malo and Miss Putul Rani Malo (15 year old), daughter of Shri Monoranjan Malo of village Kulpaddy, Police Station and District of Madaripur, were kidnapped from their houses one kilometer from Madaripur police station. The guardians of the victims described in a very heart-rending manner to Advocate Rabindra Ghosh, President HRCBM, Dhaka, Bangladesh, that their minor daughters were students of Class VIII. The minor girls were kidnapped by some Muslims of the same village, led by the Imman of Madaripur Sadar Hospital Mosque. They were forced to sign an affidavit that they are 19 years of age and they wanted to convert to Islam at their own will on 25th of

July, 2002. In addition, they were allured and detained and compelled by some Muslims of the same locality, particularly the supporters of Jamal-E-Islami Party, to swear an affidavit by a Notary Public at Madaripur. The victims, Putul Rani Malo and Sushma Rani Malo, came back to their parents on 25th July, 2002, in the evening. On hearing the news that the two girls had gone back to their parents some Jamal-E-Islamic supporters numbering about 250/300 surrounded the houses of the victim-girls at about 11 P.M. at night. The criminals started assaulting Arun Chandra Malo(26), brother of victim Sushma Rani Malo. Arun Chandra Malo sustained severe injuries on the lower portion of the eyes, which were still visible after 8 days. He was under the treatment of local doctor. Ultimately those two victim girls were again kidnapped by the Muslim criminals on 26th July, 2002. The police and law enforcement authorities did neither provide any protection to the girls and their families nor arrested the criminals. Not only that the miscreants with the help of some police officials of Madaripur police station tactfully obtained an undertaking from the guardians of the victim girls that they do not like to lodge any complain with the police and they did not take any cases against the criminals. Advocate Rabindra Ghosh finally was successful in filing two F.I.R.'s with the Madaripur Police Station during his visit. As per statements of the guardians of the victims, 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

Advocate Mr. Gosh pointed to the Deputy Commissioner that the consent of any minor, according to law, is no consent and the date of birth of the victims proved that they were minors. So the consent obtained by the criminals by an affidavit in the Notary Public has got no force in law. Until and unless the minor becomes 18 years of age she is not capable to give consent as per the latest ruling of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh. It is quite astonishing to note that the "No objection certificate" obtained by some police officers tactfully from the simple-minded and law-abiding guardians of the victims are very much unwarranted and without jurisdiction; and for this deceitful endeavor on the part of any law-enforcing agencies are highly reprehensible and punishable under law. It is also astonishing to note that while the victim girls were kidnapped from a house by the miscreants the police was silent and they were allowed to organize processions in the

locality in the name of religion and promote violence and intolerance. Mr. Ghosh requested the Deputy Commissioner of Madaripur to hand over the minor victims to the legal guardians but no actions have yet been taken. A serious tension is prevailing in the area and the minorities fear for their life and security.

Mr. Ghosh interviewed and obtained eyewitness accounts of the events from members of the families of the victims, Sushma Rani Malo and Putul Rani Malo, and neighbors on August 2, 2002. A detailed investigative report on the criminal incidents can be obtained from www.info@hrcbm.org.

It may be restated that Advocate Rabindra Ghosh a human rights activist and President of HRCBM-Dhaka, Bangladesh, has been working hard at ground zero to bring the stories of human rights violation to the attention of the UN, other human rights organization and governments of the civilized world. He is a lawyer at the Bangladesh Supreme Court and president of HRCBM, Dhaka, Bangladesh. Recently he was also attacked on July 1, 2002, at the premises of the Supreme Court Bar Association Hall.

Section 3: Urgent Action Demanded

The Human Right Congress for Bangladesh Minorities (HRCBM) vehemently protests and condemns the kidnapping and forceful conversion of minor Hindu girls to Islam. We express our grave concern about the safety and security of the minor girls, their parents and the religious minorities of Bangladesh as a whole.

We urge you to order your government authorities to provide immediate protection to victim minor girls, their families and the minorities of the village of Kulpaddy, Madaripur. 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:

Honorable Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia

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