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Press Release

Report on the Human Rights Situation in Bangladesh (March 2026)

On 12 February 2026, the National Parliamentary Election and a referendum were held in Bangladesh, where the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) achieved a landslide victory in the election, and the “Yes” vote won in the referendum. On 17 February, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) government led by Mr. Tarique Rahman took oath and assumed office, marking the BNP’s return to state power after two decades. Although the new government has taken some positive initiatives, instability in the market of essential commodities during the month of Ramadan, the deaths of more than three hundred and fifty people during Eid travel across the country, the deaths of over fifty children due to a measles outbreak, and the deaths of at least six expatriate Bangladeshis in the Middle East during the Iran–United States–Israel war, along with instability regarding fuel oil in Bangladesh, have created discomfort and panic among the public, posing major challenges for the new government. Furthermore, among the 133 ordinances issued by the interim government, the decision not to pass several important ordinances in parliament has raised public concerns regarding the new government’s commitment to upholding justice and human rights. The cancellation of the Referendum Ordinance, the Supreme Court Judges Appointment Ordinance, and the Independent Secretariat Ordinance, as well as the recommendation to suspend the National Human Rights Commission and Anti-Enforced Disappearance Ordinances in the name of review, is disappointing.

Although March 2026 passed with the historical significance of Bangladesh’s Independence Day, the overall human rights situation in the country remained concerning. The continuation of political instability, violence, and retaliatory activities surrounding the recently concluded national parliamentary election persisted throughout the month. As a result, clashes, attacks, vandalism, and arson incidents occurred in various places, leaving many people injured and affected. At the same time, growing incidents of journalist repression, violence against women, child abuse, persecution of minorities, misuse of the Cyber Security Ordinance-2025, mob violence, deaths in prison custody, and violence centering on dominance have raised concerns regarding citizens’ security and the rule of law. During March, massive Eid-ul-Fitr travel across the country led to multiple road and waterway accidents, causing the deaths of more than three hundred and fifty people and injuring many others, clearly exposing serious limitations in the country’s public safety system. During the current month, the deaths of more than fifty children in 56 districts due to measles infections have highlighted weaknesses in the public health system and shortcomings in vaccination programs. In addition, rising commodity prices are creating severe pressure on the lives of ordinary people. In particular, the increase in the cost of essential food items, fuel, and transportation is placing additional burdens on low- and middle-income people, significantly reducing their purchasing power. In March, incidents related to collecting fuel at filling stations caused the deaths of 3 people and left several others injured, creating deep concern. Weak market monitoring and supply shortages are further complicating the situation.

Based on reports published in 16 national media outlets in Bangladesh and information collected by the Human Rights Support Society (HRSS), the following findings have emerged in the human rights monitoring report for March 2026.

Political Violence

In March, at least 18 people were killed and at least 912 injured in 113 incidents of “political violence.” Most incidents of violence centered on dominance, political rivalry, post-election violence, clashes among supporters of candidates, attacks, vandalism and arson at homes, vehicles, business establishments, and political party offices, and looting. Although political violence comparatively decreased in March, the number of deaths increased compared to February. In February, 10 people were killed in 346 incidents of “political violence.”



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Among the 113 incidents of violence in March, 45 incidents of internal conflict within the BNP resulted in at least 501 injured and 9 deaths. In 16 clashes between BNP and Jamaat, 109 people were injured and 5 killed; in 22 clashes between BNP and Awami League, 156 were injured and 2 killed. In 2 clashes between BNP and NCP, 11 people were injured, while 39 people were injured in 21 clashes between BNP and other parties. In addition, in 7 incidents among different parties, 96 people were injured and 2 killed. Among the 18 deceased, 13 were BNP members, 2 Jamaat members, 2 members of Chittagong Hill Tracts-based political parties, and one was an ordinary citizen. Among those killed in political violence were one woman, one adolescent, and one ordinary citizen.

Additionally, there were at least 13 incidents of attacks by miscreants on leaders and activists of political parties. At least 8 people were injured in these attacks, while a total of 6 people were killed, including 1 Awami League member and 5 BNP members. During this month, at least 15 people were shot in incidents of political violence. Moreover, in at least 28 incidents across the country centering on dominance, occupation, political violence, and extortion, at least 130 houses, business establishments, and party offices were attacked, looted, vandalized, or set on fire.

Electoral Violence

As a continuation of political instability, violence, and retaliatory activities surrounding the recently concluded national parliamentary election, at least 109 people were injured and 3 killed in 9 incidents of violence across the country. Among these, 106 people were injured and 2 killed in 6 incidents of internal conflict within the BNP. In addition, 1 person was injured and 1 killed in a BNP-Jamaat clash, while 2 people were injured in 2 clashes among other parties.

Three people were killed in electoral violence during March. In Nasirnagar Upazila of Brahmanbaria, two people were killed in a clash between two BNP factions over electoral disputes. In Kalapara of Patuakhali, allegations were raised against Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal General Secretary of Nilganj Union, Zahirul Islam, and his associates for beating and killing a small businessman named Md. Idris (45).

Obstruction of Meetings and Assemblies

During this month, several incidents of interference by law enforcement agencies in the exercise of freedom of expression and the right to peaceful assembly were observed. According to available information, law enforcement agencies directly or indirectly obstructed at least 8 meetings and gatherings, forcing organizers to suspend, disperse, or cancel scheduled programs. Such interference created clashes and chaotic situations, leaving at least 81 people injured, including political activists, students, workers, and ordinary passersby.

Repression and Harassment of Journalists

It is concerning that at least 59 journalists faced repression and harassment in 34 attack incidents this month. Among them, at least 33 journalists were injured, 3 were humiliated, and 12 received threats. In addition, one journalist was detained. Furthermore, one case was filed under the Cyber Security Ordinance-2025 against 8 journalists.

Freedom of Expression

During this month, 8 journalists were accused in 2 separate cases under various sections of the Cyber Security Ordinance-2025. On 28 March, one person was detained for posting objectionable content about Prime Minister Tarique Rahman. On 3 March in Kalapara, Patuakhali, Md. Idris (45) was beaten to death for posting criticism on Facebook against BNP leader Zahirul Islam. Additionally, 2 people were detained and sued on allegations of hurting and insulting religious sentiments.

Mob Violence and Lynching

This month, at least 13 people were killed and 38 injured in 25 incidents of mob violence and lynching. On 4 March, while fleeing after allegedly stealing electric wires from the Satgharia Community Clinic, two youths named Md. Sagar (32) and Sanarul (34) from Louhajang Upazila of Munshiganj were tied to a tree and beaten to death from night until morning over allegations of theft.

Religious and Minority Persecution



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It is concerning that at least 5 people were injured in 10 attacks on minority communities this month, while 3 temples, 1 idol, and 3 houses were attacked and vandalized. In addition, there was one incident related to land grabbing. On 8 March, during Shani Puja, a cocktail explosion in the South Thakurpara (Baganbari) area of Cumilla city, including at the Kali Gachtala Shiva Temple, injured four people, including priest Keshab Chakraborty.

Border Killings and Torture

In March, 4 people were injured in 4 attacks by the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) along the India-Bangladesh border, including 3 who sustained bullet injuries. In addition, one person was detained. On the other hand, 1 person was injured and 27 detained in 5 violent incidents along the Bangladesh-Myanmar border. On 6 March, Abdul Jabbar (53) was seriously injured in a landmine explosion planted along the Bangladesh-Myanmar border in Naikhongchhari Upazila of Bandarban. He lost one leg in the explosion.

Deaths in Custody

This month, at least 12 accused persons died in prisons across the country. All 12 were inmates. Among them, 2 were affiliated with the Awami League and its affiliated organizations, while 10 were ordinary prisoners. On 15 March, Shahnoor Alam (60), vice-president of Hat Sherpur Union Awami League in Sariakandi Upazila of Bogura, died while undergoing treatment at the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases and Hospital in the capital during imprisonment. Earlier, on 3 January, local people had handed him over to police custody after mobbing him in Bogura.

Extrajudicial Killing (During Operation/Custody/Torture)

According to reports published in various media outlets, information collected from victims' families, and HRSS documentation, one person died due to torture during a police operation in March. On 5 March, allegations arose that Abdul Hamid Dhola (66), father of an accused person, died after being kicked by police during an operation in Mahadevpur, Naogaon. The victim's grandson Ripon stated, "Grandfather and grandson were sleeping in the same room. At midnight, five police officers came and tried to forcibly take his grandfather away. At that time, police kicked his grandfather, causing him to fall to the ground. He died there."

Worker Abuse

In March, 19 workers were killed and at least 176 injured in 77 incidents of worker abuse. Due to unhealthy environments and lack of protective equipment, 38 workers died at their workplaces in accidents. On the other hand, it is alarming that on 27 March, 18 Bangladeshi migrants died after floating at sea for six days in a rubber boat near the coast of Greece while attempting to travel from Libya to Europe through the Mediterranean Sea. Twenty-one surviving Bangladeshis were rescued alive by the Greek Coast Guard. In addition, at least 6 workers from various countries were killed and several others injured during the United States-Iran war. On 8 March, Pinky (15), a domestic worker, died mysteriously after falling from the third floor of a multistory building in Banani, Dhaka. Allegations suggest she was tortured and thrown from the building.

Violence Against Women and Children

In March, at least 273 women and girl children were subjected to abuse. Among them, at least 72 were victims of rape, including 41 (57%) children and adolescents under the age of 18. It is extremely alarming that 16 women and girls were victims of gang rape, while 5 victims were murdered after rape, including 3 children, and one rape victim died by suicide. Fifty-three women and girl children suffered sexual harassment, including 23 children. In addition, 3 women were killed and 4 injured in dowry-related violence. A total of 51 women were killed in domestic violence, 46 injured, and 43 women committed suicide.



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On 2 March, a child named Jannatul Nisha Ira (7) was raped and her throat slit in a secluded area of Eco Park in Sitakunda, Chattogram. She died in hospital the following day while undergoing treatment. On 14 March, a widow named Jobeda Khatun (45) was gang-raped and hacked to death in Daliyapur of Damurhuda, Chuadanga. On 30 March, a teenage girl (13) died by suicide after allegations of rape emerged in Phulpur, Mymensingh. On 22 March, in Sonargaon, Narayanganj, housewife Anika Khatun alias Farhana (24) was brutally murdered by her husband Md. Sagar over dowry demands.

On the other hand, it is concerning that 176 children were subjected to abuse, among whom 64 lost their lives and 112 suffered physical and mental abuse. Due to medical negligence, ICU shortages, and measles symptoms, at least 51 children died last month at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital.

Cases and Arrests

This month, at least 28 cases were filed against former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, leaders and activists of Awami League, BNP-Jamaat, and under various anti-terrorism laws. In these cases, 303 individuals were named and 127 listed as unidentified accused persons. During this month, at least 225 leaders and activists from different political parties were arrested in political cases, including at least 110 Awami League activists, 85 BNP activists, 20 Jamaat activists, and 8 members of the National Citizen Party (NCP). In addition, more than fifteen hundred people were arrested nationwide in joint force special operations aimed at controlling the law and order situation. Most of them were identified as leaders and activists of Awami League, Jubo League, Swechchhasebak League, the banned Chhatra League, and individuals affiliated with other political parties.

Overall, the human rights situation, justice, equal rights of people, independence of the judiciary, independent appointment of judges, and an independent judicial secretariat are extremely important. Therefore, it is necessary to pass the important ordinances issued by the interim government — including the Referendum Ordinance, Supreme Court Judges Appointment Ordinance, Independent Secretariat Ordinance, ACC Appointment Ordinance, National Human Rights Commission Ordinance, and Anti-Enforced Disappearance Ordinance — during the current session of the National Parliament.

At the same time, coordinated initiatives at all levels of the state and society are necessary to establish the rule of law, strengthen democratic processes, and protect human rights in the country. It is essential to create an inclusive environment through constructive dialogue among political parties, civil society, journalists, human rights organizations, and conscious citizens so that the law and order situation becomes stronger and people's fundamental and constitutional rights can be effectively ensured. If issues such as electoral violence, mob violence, political tension, and interference with freedom of expression are not resolved, the human rights situation may deteriorate further. Therefore, HRSS is calling upon the government to take more accountable and responsible measures to protect human rights, while also urging all citizens, media professionals, civil society, and human rights organizations to play a more vocal and active role.