

WHERE ARE THEY?

Enforced Disappearances in Bangladesh

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- In the past decade, Bangladesh has witnessed a growing number of incidents of enforced disappearance, that is 'the arrest, detention, abduction or any other form of deprivation of liberty by agents of the State or by persons or groups of persons acting with the authorization, support or acquiescence of the state.' At least 522 people have become victims of enforced disappearance between 2009 and 2018, according to various human rights organizations. This project gathered detailed information including the names and professions of the victims, places of disappearance, and alleged involvement of law enforcement agencies of an additional 71 cases between 2019 and 2021.
- Of the 71 cases of enforced disappearances, 16 victims are still missing (22.53%), five have been found dead (7.04%). Twenty-two (30.98%) have been either arrested, detained, or jailed. Data about the professions of 51 individuals gathered under this project show that politicians and businessmen are the largest number of victims – 11 each (15.49%). Eight students (11.26%) constitute the third largest group of victims. Five individuals involved with Islamic education, preaching and clerical jobs have also been subjected to enforced disappearances (7.04%).
- Information about alleged involvement of law enforcement have been gathered in 52 cases. It shows that Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) is alleged to have been involved in 21 cases (40.38%), followed by Detective Branch of the Police (16 cases, 30.76%).
- The government's policy of denial and inaction have served as acquiescence and provided a sense of impunity to the perpetrators. It has also declined to cooperate with the UN body which has been seeking information about the victims since 2011.
- Considering the gravity of the situation and increased incidents, this study recommends (1) Bangladesh immediately signs the 1992 Convention on the Protection of all Persons from enforced disappearance to demonstrate its commitment to uphold the fundamental rights of the citizens; (2) appoints an independent commission to investigate each alleged incident of enforced disappearance of the past decade and bring perpetrators to book; (3) the government cooperates with the UN Working Group regarding victims of enforced disappearance; (4) the government stops harassment of the families of the victims and ensures their safety and provides legal and material support to the families of the victims in their pursuance of justice, and (5) revamps the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) empowering it to conduct investigations of enforced disappearance and make its findings public.

INTRODUCTION

In early January 2022, police showed up both the business office and home of Ismail Hossain Baten – asking about Ismail in connection with a general diary filed on June 20, 2019 by his younger brother Mohammad Khairul Alam. Police were well aware that Ismail had not been seen for more than two years. In the general diary (GD) filed in 2019, Khairul Alam stated that his brother is missing, that they are afraid that he has been abducted and alleged that the abductors were plain-clothed members of law enforcing agencies. For years the family pleaded with police to investigate and find Ismail. But there were no actions, at best the police maintained a dubious silence and at worst, denied that such an incident ever happened suggesting that it was concocted. He will return, the police insisted. The family had difficulty filing a General Diary at the local police station because the police were quite dismissive of the family's allegation and declined to register a GD. According to the family, Ismail Hossain Baten went missing on June 19, 2019, while he was returning home for lunch from his job at 'Dada Sawmill' in Shah Ali Mazar, Mazar road, Gabtoli, Dhaka at approximately 2:30 pm. Within a half-hour, his phone went silent, ostensibly switched off. He had since vanished. Nasrin Jahan Smriti, Ismail Hossain's wife, alleged that an officer of the elite paramilitary unit of the police. Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) was involved in the disappearance of Baten due to a family dispute involving the father of the said RAB official. This allegation was not investigated by law enforcement agencies. Each year as the day of his disappearance came the family had hope that something would happen, that he would return. But their hopes had not become reality, instead children of Ismail Hossain grew up without their father, his wife still waits for her husband to return. Each year on August 30, on the international day of the victims of enforced disappearances, the family joins others in demonstrations demanding that their loved ones be traced. Often many of the family members, in despair, wanted the bodies of their loved ones. Nothing had happened for Baten's family, until the day police showed up. Police went to the home and business office of Ismail not bearing any news about him but rather to pressure his wife and raise questions about whether Ismail actually disappeared.

Baten's family was not the only one which faced this kind of experience; at least six families reported to the press that they have been visited by police who have questioned them. In some instances, families whose members had been allegedly abducted nine years ago were suddenly subject to these police enquiries. Zahid Khan Shakil, brother of Mahboob Hossain Sujon, is a case in point. According to a report of the New York based human rights group, Human Rights Watch, Sujon was abducted on December 8, 2013 by some men introducing themselves as members of a law enforcement agency. Until January 10, 2022 police were reluctant to pursue any leads. Shakil told the media, "In all these years, the police showed zero interest in finding my brother. We knocked on the door of every law enforcement agency and asked them repeatedly to find my brother. Now all of a sudden, they wanted to talk

about him" (Mahmud 2022). Sujon's father, Abdul Jalil Khan, told Voice of America that the police asked him to sign a statement which says Sujon 'was taken away by some unknown person or group.' He refused to sign it. While Mr. Khan managed to turn down this request, many other families succumbed to the pressure and signed. Shilpi Akhtar is one of them. Her brother, Farid Ahmed Raju, has been missing since January 2014 and allegedly picked up by the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB). Shilpi Akhtar told VOA that "My husband, mother and I were forced to sign three separate statements. We do not know what the statements said. When I asked why we had to sign the statements, police said they were in our interest or would help us" (Rahman 2022).

Local and international human rights groups condemned the move of the police. Police didn't deny that they visited the family but insisted in a press statement that they were trying to gather more information to pursue investigation (Mahmud 2022).

The sudden spurt of actions of the police, particularly contacting the families whose loved ones have been missing for years and allegedly abducted by the law enforcing agencies, came on the heels of sanctions imposed by the United States Treasury Department on December 10, 2021 on the RAB and seven of its current and former officials for serious human rights violations, including extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances (US Treasury 2021). In the same month, the United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances reported that it knew of "86 documented cases [of enforced disappearance in Bangladesh] in which the victims' fate and whereabouts remain unknown." It reiterated that the Bangladesh government act immediately to provide information about these people (Netra News 2021).

The allegations of enforced disappearances by state actors of Bangladesh, that is law enforcement agencies, have been documented by different national and international human rights groups for more than a decade. The US sanction and renewed call from the United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances added urgency to explore the nature and scope of these alleged incidents. The government of Bangladesh has continued to deny this phenomenon for years. It is against the allegations of families of their loved ones being abducted by law enforcement agencies, human rights groups' documentation of such incidents, and the government's continuous denials, that the Centre for Governance Studies (CGS) launched a project in September 2021 to investigate the nature and pattern of these disappearances that occurred between January 2019 and December 2021. The project gathered data from several sources. This report highlights the findings of the project.

ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCE: DEFINITION AND SIGNIFICANCE

Although individuals being abducted and detained by states without legal recourse has a long history, the concept of enforced disappearance or involuntary disappearance has emerged in international law, human rights, and civil rights in the 1970s. During the decade, military rulers in Latin America adopted tactics of making people 'disappeared' to silence dissenting views and prevent possible protests against the authoritarian practices. Victims of these state-led systematic incidents were initially described as "missing." But the question of the state's deliberate and systematic role in this matter gained importance in the wake of widespread occurrence by the military regime of Augusto Pinochet in Chile. In 1975, the United Nations Human Rights Commission's statement and resolution described those who were the victims of such practices as "persons unaccounted for" or "those who cannot be accounted for". In 1980, with the establishment of the 'Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearance' by the United Nations, the term 'Enforced Disappearance' gained currency. In 1992, the adoption of the Declaration of the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance by the United Nations General Assembly brought to the fore the responsibility of states and the international organizations in this regard. In 2006, the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (ICPPED) was adopted by the UN. This convention came into force in 2010.

This report adopted the term enforced disappearance from Article 2 of the ICPPED. According to the Convention:

"enforced disappearance" is considered to be the arrest, detention, abduction or any other form of deprivation of liberty by agents of the state or by persons or groups of persons acting with the authorization, support or acquiescence of the state, followed by a refusal to acknowledge the deprivation of liberty or by concealment of the fate or whereabouts of the disappeared person, which place such a person outside the protection of the law.

Three points of this definition are worth noting. Enforced disappearance has three elements: they are (1) depriving the person of freedom against his will; (2) the involvement of public officials, at least with their knowledge; (3) to deny or conceal the freedom of the person who has disappeared. These three points clearly make a distinction with 'missing' persons, those who are absconding, or those who are 'voluntarily fugitive'.

Considering the severity of this phenomenon, particularly its impacts on families, societies and the nature of governance, and occurrence as a violation of fundamental rights of citizens, it has been described in the preamble of the Convention as a 'crime against humanity.' Despite a different definition of the concept adopted in the Rome Statutes, it also has described enforced disappearance as a crime against humanity.

THE BACKGROUND

The disappearance of citizens, particularly with the direct knowledge and involvement of state agencies, which qualifies these disappearances as 'enforced disappearances', is not entirely a new phenomenon in Bangladesh. Between 1972 and 1975, during the Awami League regime, there were cases of disappearances and deaths of activists of the opposition parties, especially the Jatiya Samatantrik Dal (JSD). During the reign of the army, especially during the rule of General Ziaur Rahman (1975-1981), many became allegedly untraceable after various failed coups. Many people have gone missing since the start of the army operation in the Chattogram Hill Tracts in 1977 and the intensification of the activities of the insurgent group called the Shanti Bahini. In some instances, dead bodies of those who 'disappeared' were found, but no one has taken responsibility for their killing. Many have remained missing to date. The abduction and disappearance of Kalpana Chakma took place in 1996. It has remained a mystery. Despite these incidents, occasionally in large scale in particular periods, enforced disappearance didn't become systematic, regular, and widespread until 2010. The number has increased over time, the scope of incidents has expanded and citizens of various walks of life have become victims.

Data gathered by two human rights organizations between 2009 and 2018 reveal the trend of the incidents of enforced disappearances. According to Odhikar a total of 522 persons became victims of enforced disappearances; among them 137 remained missing, 67 were found dead after being reported to be missing, and 318 returned (Figure 1).

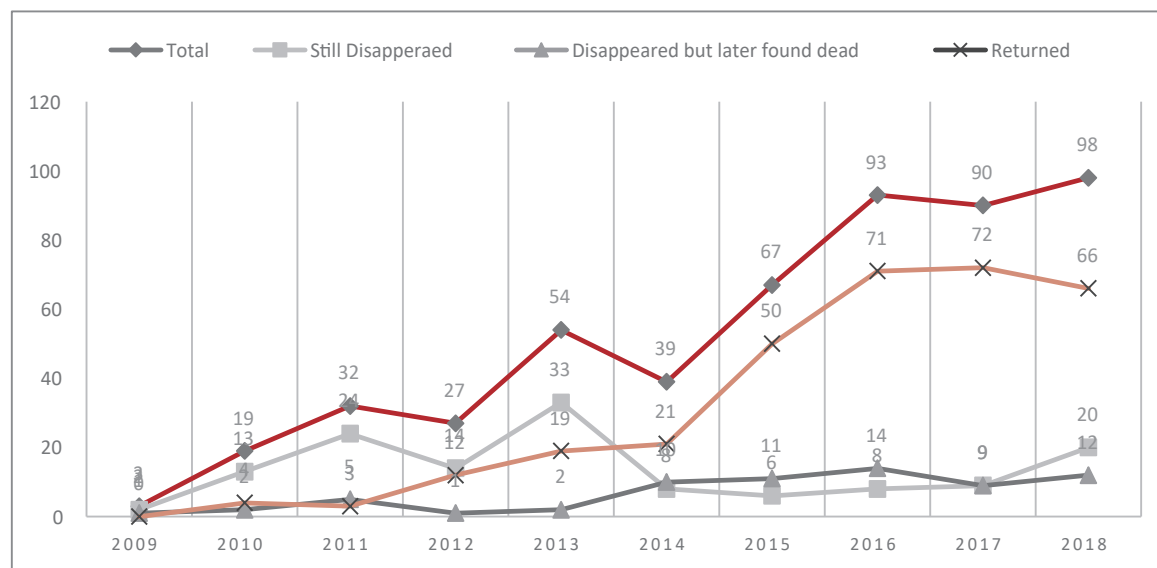


Figure 1: Incidents of Enforced Disappearances, 2009-2018

Source: Odhikar

Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK)'s documentation provides data from 2013 and shows the pattern of fluctuations of the incidents (Figure 2). There have been 387 cases of enforced disappearances, of which 235 persons remained missing, while 49 individuals were found dead after being reported missing.

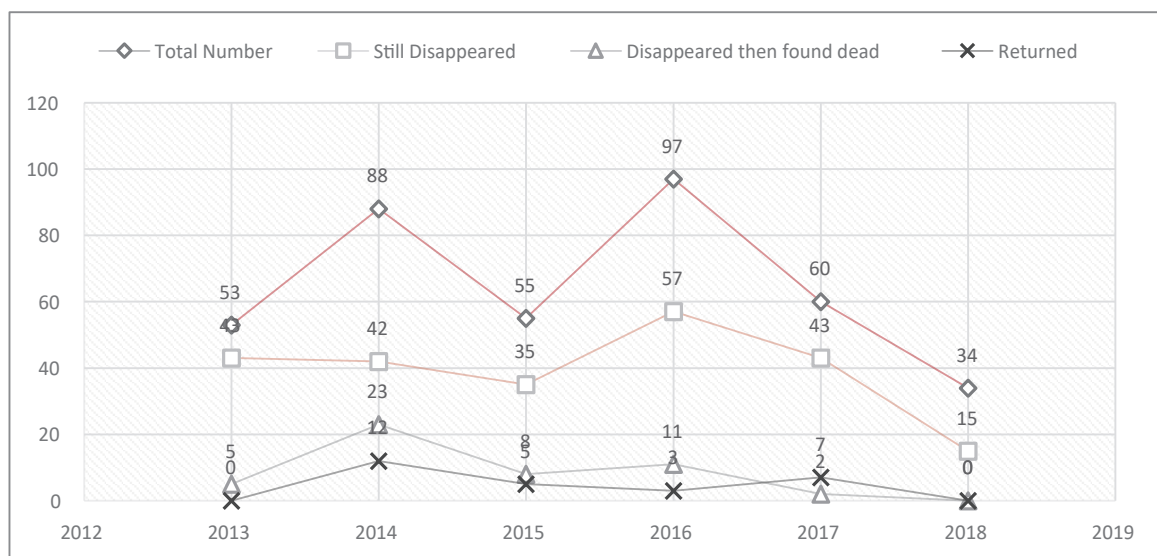


Figure 2: Incidents of Enforced Disappearances, 2013-2018

Source: Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK)

Most of the descriptions of alleged enforced disappearances gathered from family members, friends and bystanders have been similar. They have alleged that these individuals have been picked up by plainclothed individuals identifying themselves as members of law enforcement agencies, especially RAB. In some instances, they wore jackets bearing the name. In each instance, when the family members contacted the local police stations, office of the Detective Branch or the local station of the RAB, they were told, 'he is not here'. Not only did the law enforcement agencies deny their involvement but often the families faced harassment for making such allegations. In most cases, local police stations declined to register even a general diary of a missing person until it had been reported in the press. In many instances, families were afraid to inform the media because they thought this would only jeopardize any possibility of having their loved ones back.

The extent of the incidents of enforced disappearances is reflected in two occurrences. On December 4, 2013, six youths were picked up by plainclothed people on a microbus from the street of Dhaka, Witnesses alleged that the abductors were apparently members of law enforcement agencies. Dead bodies of the five of them were found a few days later. One is

still missing. On April 27, 2014, in Narayanganj, seven people were abducted from two different cars. These include Nazrul Islam, a panel Mayor of the Narayanganj City Corporation, his lawyer, his four associates and chauffeurs of two cars who were abducted in broad daylight. Four days later their dead bodies were found in the river. Years later a local court sentenced 27 members of RAB, including three officials for their involvement, which was upheld by the High Court (Dhaka Tribune 2020). During this period, the number of incidents increased so precipitously that in 2017 the head of the country's National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) acknowledged that people are living in fear of being a victim at any time (Uddin 2017).

Documentations of incidents between 2013 and 2018 by the ASK also showed that 53 people, who were reported to be missing or picked up by law enforcing agencies were shown arrested. But most of them were shown arrested days after they were reportedly picked up by the police or RAB.

DATA ABOUT ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES, 2019-2021

It is against the above-mentioned background, in September 2021, the Centre for Governance Studies (CGS) launched a project to investigate the nature and pattern of enforced disappearances that occurred between January 2019 and December 2021. The data were gathered from: (a) seven newspapers: Prothom Alo, Jugantor, Samakal, Manabzamin, The Daily Star, New Age, and Dhaka Tribune; (b) published reports of human rights organizations such as Odhikar, Ain O Shalish Kendra (ASK), Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and Asian Human Rights Commission.

The project has gathered detailed data about 71 cases of enforced disappearances including those who have returned after being missing for a period of more than two days (Appendix 1). Drawing on available data we have listed the agencies allegedly involved in the incidents. We have created a database with the names and places of the victims of alleged enforced disappearances. Additionally, we have explored seven incidents in depth (Appendix 2).

Of the 71 cases of enforced disappearances, 16 victims are still missing (22.53%) while five have been found dead (7.04%). According to press reports and other sources, 22 have been either arrested, detained, or jailed (30.98%). This is quite significant because the government always denies that they have any idea about those who are allegedly disappeared. Most of the families and friends of those who had disappeared alleged that law enforcement agencies were involved. The status of five victims could not be determined (Table 1).

Table 1: Status of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances, 2019-2021

Status	No
Arrested	9
Dead	5
Detained	2
Jailed	11
Missing	16
Returned	23
Undetermined	5
Total	71

Of our sample 23 persons (32.39%) have returned. However, those who survived the ordeal and returned have always chosen to remain silent irrespective of their socio-economic status and the length of disappearance. For example, Maruf Zaman, a former ambassador, returned home on March 16, 2019 after 15 months of being missing (The Daily Star 2019). Since then, he has not spoken a word in public like other victims who remained missing for only a few days. The silence of those fortunate enough to have been allowed to return to their loved ones, is both revealing and worrying. Often these persons were dropped in the middle of the night in a busy road. On March 10, 2015, Salahuddin Ahmed, a former MP and a high-ranking leader of the opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), was picked up from his home in the middle of the night by a group of people identifying themselves as members of the Detective Branch of the Police. The police denied they arrested him. Two months later, on May 11, he was found by locals in Shilong, India in the middle of a road, seemingly disoriented. He was handed over to the local police and charged with trespassing without travel documents. How he crossed the international border remains a mystery and he is still in India facing legal battles. These individuals are either unable or unwilling to provide any details of their captors or the place of their captivity. The almost identical descriptions of their abductions provided by them tend to imply that they were kidnapped for ransom (The Daily Star 2017), but no ransom was ever demanded from their families. Police investigators said in one instance of enforced disappearance that they didn't find involvement of any criminal gangs in the abduction (New Age 2017).

We have been able to gather data about the professions of 51 individuals (Table 2). Eleven are politicians (15.49% of total victims) and equal numbers are businessmen. Eight students (11.26%) constitute the third largest group of victims. Five individuals involved with Islamic education, preaching and clerical jobs have also been subjected to enforced disappearances (7.04%). We could identify individuals belonging to fifteen professions including politicians

among those who have been victims in the three-year period of our study. This shows what the range of victims has been.

Table 2: Professions of the Victims

Professions	Number
Businessmen	11
Convicted felons	1
Driver	2
Drug Dealer	1
Film Maker	1
Former Army Personnel	1
Imam	1
Islamic Preacher	2
IT Specialist	1
Journalist	3
Jute Mill Worker	2
Khatib	1
Lawyer	1
Madrassa Teacher	1
Politician	11
Private Employee	3
Student	8
Unknown	20
Total	71

During the period under study, the largest number of cases have been reported in March of 2021 when ten cases were reported in the press (Table 3). This was followed by eight cases in June 2021.

Table 3: Monthly Disaggregation of Incidents of Enforced Disappearances, 2019-2021

2019	Number	2020	Number	2021	Number
January	6	January	1	January	0
February	2	February	2	February	1
March	3	March	1	March	10
April	6	April	1	April	0
May	7	May	0	May	0
June	4	June	3	June	8
July	1	July	5	July	1
August	0	August	1	August	2
September	1	September	0	September	0
October	0	October	2	October	0
November	1	November	0	November	0
December	0	December	0	December	2
	31		16		24
Total					71

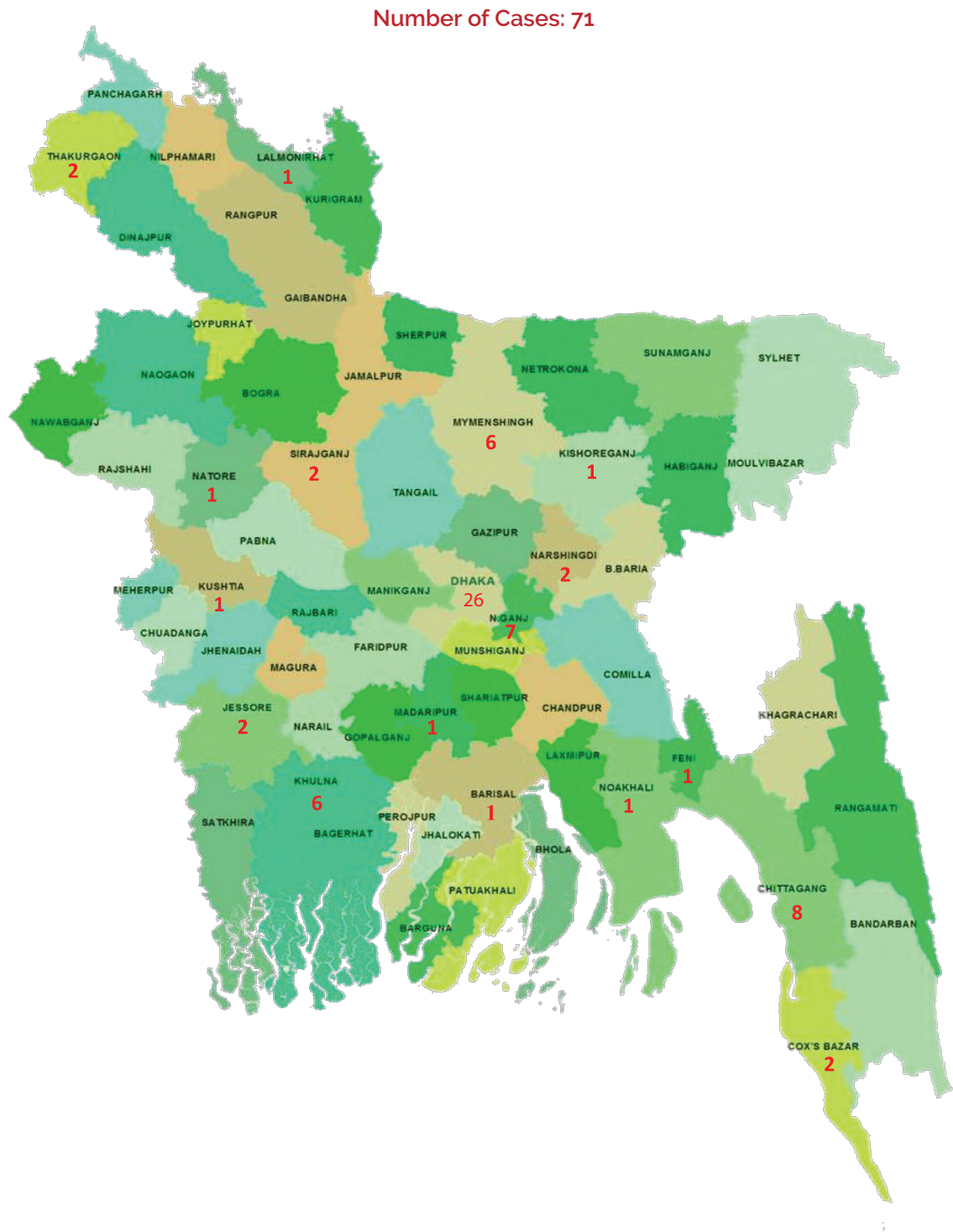
Table 4: The Geography of Enforced Disappearances, 2019-2021

Serial No	District Name	Number of Cases
1	Barishal	1
2	Chattogram	8
3	Cox's Bazar	2
4	Dhaka	26
5	Feni	1
6	Jashore	2
7	Khulna	6
8	Khustia	1
9	Kishoreganj	1
10	Lalmonirhat	1
11	Madaripur	1

Serial No	District Name	Number of Cases
12	Mymensingh	6
13	Narayanganj	7
14	Narsingdi	2
15	Natore	1
16	Noakhali	1
17	Sirajganj	2
18	Thakurgaon	2
	Total	71

Geographically, these incidents have occurred in 18 districts. Dhaka topped the list of places where the incidents of enforced disappearances had taken place (Table 4). Of the 71 cases, 26 have taken place in Dhaka district, followed by Chattogram with eight cases (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Geography of Enforced Disappearances in Bangladesh, 2019-2021



Of the 71 cases, we could gather information about the alleged involvement of the law enforcement agencies in 52 cases. The available data regarding the allegations show that Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) is alleged to have been involved in 21 cases (Table 5). That means RAB is alleged to have been involved as perpetrator in 40.38% of cases where the alleged perpetrators have been identified. Detective Branch of Police is alleged to have been involved in 16 cases, that is 30.76% of cases where we could gather an identification of an alleged perpetrator. These allegations are from family members and friends. On some occasions witnesses have also corroborated these claims.

Table 5: Law Enforcement Agencies allegedly involved in Enforced Disappearances, 2019-2021

Name of the agency	Number
CID	1
DB Police	16
DMP	1
Law Enforcement Agency	1
Law Enforcement Authorities	6
Police	6
RAB	21
Unknown	19
Total	71

GOVERNMENT REACTIONS, AND CONSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENTS

Since the increased incidents of enforced disappearances in 2011, human rights groups have been alleging that law enforcement agencies are involved, and they demanded independent investigation into these incidents. The government not only rejected any suggestions of the involvement of law enforcement agencies, but also has shown no interest in investigating these disappearances. Instead, messages from government officials tend to undermine the gravity of the situation. In 2017, Home Minister claimed that some people disappear willingly to embarrass law enforcers (The Financial Express 2017). The police chief insisted that disappearances have been taking place since the British colonial period (Hussain 2017), and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina conflated missing persons with enforced disappearances saying that enforced disappearances take place in Britain and in the United States (bdnews24 2017). In 2019, in a meeting of the UN Committee Against Torture, Law Minister Anisul Huq

flatly denied any incidents of enforced disappearance saying, “We do not agree to the proposition that enforced disappearances occur in Bangladesh frequently” (Human Rights Watch 2019). However, it is evident that the government is aware of the incidents of such enforced disappearance. In an interview with the German international broadcaster Deutsche Welle on February 10, 2021 Gowher Rizvi, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina’s foreign affairs advisor, acknowledged saying ‘I will not deny that there have been instances of some disappearances.’ (DW 2021). Yet, denials have been continued even after US sanctions were imposed in December 2021. On February 5, 2022, Foreign Minister M A Momen said, ‘allegation of disappearance is raised to realize interests by putting pressure on the government’ (The Business Standard 2022).

Denials are politically convenient for the incumbent, but incidents of enforced disappearances betray the spirit and letter of the Bangladesh Constitution. Articles 27, 31, 32 and 33 (1) provide protection of life, liberty to the citizens and promise due process to every individual:

27. All citizens are equal before law and are entitled to equal protection of law.
31. Enjoy the protection of the law, and to be treated in accordance with law, and only in accordance with law, is the inalienable right of every citizen, wherever he may be, and of every other person for the time being within Bangladesh, and in particular no action detrimental to the life, liberty, body, reputation or property of any person shall be taken except in accordance with law.
32. No person shall be deprived of life or personal liberty save in accordance with law.
- 33 (1) No person who is arrested shall be detained in custody without being informed, as soon as may be of the grounds for such arrest, nor shall he be denied the right to consult and be defended by a legal practitioner of his choice.

Enforced disappearance is also a violation of Articles 9 and 16 of the Declaration on the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance of 1992 (UN 1992). Bangladesh is not a signatory to the 1992 UN Convention and there is no law in Bangladesh specifically addressing the enforced disappearances. These serve as excuses for the government’s inaction and allow them to brush aside any allegations of their involvement or complicity.

THE VOICES OF THE VICTIMS

In the past decade, both local and international human rights organizations have expressed concerns about the growing number of incidents and the government’s unwillingness to address this menace. They have asked for independent investigations. UN Working Group on

Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances have sent letters to the government of Bangladesh on May 4, 2011; March 9, 2016; February 22, 2017, and May 22, 2019 and requested permission in 2013 to visit Bangladesh. These have fallen on deaf ears. These have not stopped the families of the victims from continuing their pursuit for justice for their loved ones. They have founded an organization called the 'Mayer Dak' (The Mothers' Call). This is akin to the Argentina's Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, which was founded by mothers whose children "disappeared" between 1976 and 1983 under the Pinochet regime. Mayer Dak, founded on March 12, 2016, has remained relentless and organized demonstrations and protests in the past years. In recent years, it is reported to have faced intimidation (New Age 2021).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Reports of human rights organizations in the past decade, documentations of the UN Working Group and the present study have shown that enforced disappearance has become a worrying phenomenon in Bangladesh. The government's denial has accentuated the situation and continues to provide impunity to perpetrators. If the state agencies are not involved contrary to the claims of the relatives of the victims and the human rights groups, the Bangladesh government must allow an independent inquiry into this alarming phenomenon. It is against this background that this report makes the following recommendations:

1. Bangladesh immediately signs the 1992 Convention on the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance to demonstrate its commitment to uphold the fundamental rights of citizens.
2. The government of Bangladesh appoint an independent commission with members from the government, representatives of national and international human rights organizations, members of civil society and journalists to investigate each alleged incident of enforced disappearance of the past decade and bring perpetrators to book.
3. The independent commission is allowed to work with the UN agencies to find out who is responsible for the disappearances and provide answers to the questions of families as to where their loved ones are located.
4. The government respond to the queries of the UN Working Group which has provided a list of alleged victims of enforced disappearance and allow the members of the Working Group to visit Bangladesh.
5. The government stop harassment of the families of the victims and ensure safety and provide legal and material support to the families of the victims in their pursuance of justice.

6. Repeal or amend laws regarding law enforcement agencies [for example 'Good Faith' clause in section 13 of the of the Armed Police Battalion (Amendment) Act 2003] which provide the impression of impunity to the members of the law enforcing agencies.
7. Revamp the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) with inclusion of representatives from human rights organizations, journalists and the legal community empowering it to conduct investigations of incidents of enforced disappearance, make its findings public, and ensure full cooperation of the government in the process of any and such investigation.

APPENDIX ONE

List of Victims of Enforced Disappearances, 2019-2021

No.	Name	Date	District	Occupation	Current Status	Allegedly Disappeared by	Source
1	Saidur Rahman	19-Dec-21	Dhaka	Businessman	Arrested	DB Police	10 Jan 2022, Janakantha
2	Abul Hasim	7-Dec-21	Kishoreganj	Politician	Missing	Unknown	11 Jan 2022, Jugantor
3	Mahfuzur Rahman	5-Aug-21	Dhaka	Unknown	Returned	Unknown	06 Sep 2021, Prothom Alo
4	Rizwan Hassan Rakin	4-Aug-21	Dhaka	Student	Missing	Unknown	06 Sep 2021, Prothom Alo
5	Mufti Mahmudul Hasan Gunbi	6-Jul-21	Noakhali	Islamic Preacher	Arrested	RAB	10 Oct 2021, Odhikar Report
6	Mohammad Noman	2-Jun-21	Narayanganj	Businessman	Missing	DB Police	27 June 2021, Prothom Alo
7	Mohammad Nasim	2-Jun-21	Narayanganj	Student	Missing	DB Police	27 June 2021, Prothom Alo
8	Shahidul Islam	2-Jun-21	Narayanganj	Imam	Missing	DB Police	27 June 2021, Prothom Alo
9	Abu Toha Adnan	10-Jun-21	Dhaka	Islamic Preacher	Returned	Unknown	13 June 2021, BBC News
10	Unidentified	10-Jun-21	Dhaka	Unknown	Returned	Unknown	13 June 2021, BBC News
11	Unidentified	10-Jun-21	Dhaka	Unknown	Returned	Unknown	13 June 2021, BBC News
12	Unidentified	10-Jun-21	Dhaka	Driver	Returned	Unknown	13 June 2021, BBC News
13	Hasan Muhammad Arif	14-Jun-21	Dhaka	Student	Missing	Unknown	28 June 2021, New Age
14	Mir Moazzem Hossain Saifi	14-Mar-21	Mymensingh	Khatib	Returned	RAB	17 Mar 2021, Bangla Tribune

No.	Name	Date	District	Occupation	Current Status	Allegedly Disappeared by	Source
15	Faisal	14-Mar-21	Mymensingh	Driver	Returned	RAB	17 Mar 2021, Bangla Tribune
16	Emon	14-Mar-21	Mymensingh	Unknown	Returned	RAB	17 Mar 2021, Bangla Tribune
17	Mahadi Hassan	14-Mar-21	Mymensingh	Unknown	Returned	RAB	17 Mar 2021, Bangla Tribune
18	Imtiaz Hossain Sabbir	11-Mar-21	Chattogram	Unknown	Jailed	DB Police	22 Mar 2021, TBS
19	Farhad bin Newaz	11-Mar-21	Chattogram	Unknown	Jailed	DB Police	22 Mar 2021, TBS
20	Borhan	11-Mar-21	Chattogram	Unknown	Jailed	DB Police	22 Mar 2021, TBS
21	Masud Hossain	11-Mar-21	Chattogram	Unknown	Jailed	DB Police	22 Mar 2021, TBS
22	Yeasin Haque	9-Mar-21	Chattogram	Journalist	Jailed	CID	22 Mar 2021, TBS
23	Sohag Mia	2-Mar-21	Narsingdi	Unknown	Dead	Unknown	09 Mar 2021, New Age
24	Mashiur Rahman	6-Feb-21	Madaripur	Politician	Returned	Police	07 Feb 2021, Prothom Alo
25	Golam Sorwar	29-Oct-20	Chattogram	Journalist	Returned	Unknown	02 Nov 2020, ASK Report
26	Tarek Rahman	21-Oct-20	Dhaka	Politician	Missing	Unknown	22 Oct 2020, New Age
27	Dipok Bhoumik	24-Aug-20	Dhaka	Businessman	Returned	RAB	02 Jan 2021, Prothom Alo
28	Rashed Khan Menon	24-Jul-20	Cox's Bazar	Unknown	Returned	DB Police	29 Jul 2020, Jugantor
29	Redwan Farhad	25-Jul-20	Cox's Bazar	Student	Returned	DB Police	29 Jul 2020, Jugantor
30	Abdullah Ibne Yunus	22-Jul-20	Dhaka	Student	Missing	Unknown	21 Sep 2020, Prothom Alo

No.	Name	Date	District	Occupation	Current Status	Allegedly Disappeared by	Source
31	Waliar Rahman	5-Jul-20	Khulna	Jute Mill Worker	Detained	DB Police	06 Jul 2020, The Daily Star and 07 July 2020, New Age
32	Nur Islam	5-Jul-20	Khulna	Jute Mill Worker	Detained	DB Police	06 Jul 2020, The Daily Star and 07 July 2020, New Age
33	Ibrahim Hossain	13-Jun-20	Jashore	Politician	Jailed	RAB	20 Jun 2020, Jugantor
34	Ripon	13-Jun-20	Jashore	Unknown	Jailed	RAB	20 Jun 2020, Jugantor
35	Mehedi Morshed Palash	6-Jun-20	Narayanganj	Businessman	Unidentified	Law Agency Enforcement	6th July, 2020 Odhikar Report
36	Abdul Majed	18-Apr-20	Kushtia	Politician	Unidentified	DB Police	19 Apr 2020, Jugantor
37	Shafiqul Islam Kajal	10-Mar-20	Dhaka	Journalist	Returned	Unknown	18 Mar 2020, Amnesty International
38	Borhan Uddin	15-Feb-20	Sirajganj	Convicted	Unidentified	DB Police	1 May, 2020 Odhikar Report
39	Ahasan Habib Hamza	7-Feb-20	Mymensingh	Student	Missing	Police	11 Feb 2020, Prothom Alo
40	Sheikh Iftekharul Islam	9-Jan-20	Dhaka	Student	Unidentified	Dhaka Metropolitan Police	11 February 2020, Prothom Alo
41	Hafizur Rahman Hafiz	20-Nov-19	Lalmonirhat	Lawyer	Missing	Unknown	20 Nov 2019, Dhaka Tribune
42	Rubel Mia	12-Sep-19	Mymensingh	Drug Peddler	Dead	Police	15 Sep 2019, The Daily Star
43	Mahathir Mohammad Bin Farid	1-Jul-19	Barishal	Student	Returned	Law Enforcement Authorities	26 Aug 2019, Asian Human Rights Commission
44	Ismail Hossain	19-Jun-19	Dhaka	Businessman	Missing	RAB	26 Aug 2019, Asian Human Rights Commission

No.	Name	Date	District	Occupation	Current Status	Allegedly Disappeared by	Source
45	Hasan Mamun	15-Jun-19	Dhaka	Politician	Arrested	RAB	26 Aug 2019, Asian Human Rights Commission
46	Syed Iftekhar Alam Sourav	9-Jun-19	Chattogram	Film-Maker	Returned	RAB	19 Jun 2019, New Age
47	Yakub	7-Jun-19	Narsingdi	Unknown	Returned	Police	26 Aug 2019, Asian Human Rights Commission
48	Sanoar Hossain Sanu	10-May-19	Sirajganj	Politician	Arrested	Unknown	26 Aug 2019, Asian Human Rights Commission
49	Gazi Milon	5-May-19	Feni	Politician	Missing	RAB	06 Aug 2019, Human Rights Watch Report
50	SM Hafizur Rahman Sagar	2-May-19	Khulna	Businessman	Missing	RAB	26 Aug 2019, Asian Human Rights Commission
51	Habibur Rahman	2-May-19	Khulna	Businessman	Arrested	RAB	26 Aug 2019, Asian Human Rights Commission
52	Rafur Rahman	2-May-19	Khulna	Businessman	Arrested	RAB	26 Aug 2019, Asian Human Rights Commission
53	Abdul Mannan	2-May-19	Khulna	Businessman	Arrested	RAB	26 Aug 2019, Asian Human Rights Commission
54	Ataur Rahman Shahin	2-May-19	Dhaka	IT Specialist	Returned	Unknown	5 August 2019, Bangla Tribune
55	Gias Uddin	April,19	Dhaka	Unknown	Returned	Law Enforcement Authorities	22 Nov 2019, Al Jazeera
56	Muhammad Ali	April,19	Dhaka	Unknown	Missing	Law Enforcement Authorities	22 Nov 2019, Al Jazeera
57	Mohammad Zahedur Rahman	10-Apr-19	Narayanganj	Madrasa Teacher	Jailed	DB Police	25 May 2019, Human Rights Watch Report

No.	Name	Date	District	Occupation	Current Status	Allegedly Disappeared by	Source
58	Mohammad Iqbal Hossain Sarkar	10-Apr-19	Narayanganj	Businessman	Jailed	DB Police	25 May 2019, Human Rights Watch Report
59	Michael Chakma	9-Apr-19	Narayanganj	Politician	Missing	Unknown	02 May 2019, New Age
60	Abul Haider	April,19	Dhaka	Politician	Missing	RAB	14 Sep 2021, Polygraph Report
61	Robiul Awal	25-Mar-19	Dhaka	Politician	Returned	Law Enforcement Authorities	26 Aug 2019, Asian Human Rights Commission
62	Akash	2-Mar-19	Thakurgaon	Unknown	Arrested	Police	26 Aug 2019, Asian Human Rights Commission
63	Hamidur Rahman	2-Mar-19	Thakurgaon	Unknown	Unidentified	Police	26 Aug 2019, Asian Human Rights Commission
64	Jamil Hossain Milon	1-Feb-19	Natore	Businessman	Returned	Unknown	26 Aug 2019, Asian Human Rights Commission
65	Mukul Hossain	3-Feb-19	Dhaka	Former Army Soldier	Arrested	RAB	26 Aug 2019, Asian Human Rights Commission
66	Rakib Mollah	25-Jan-19	Dhaka	Unknown	Dead	Law Enforcement Authorities	26 Aug 2019, Asian Human Rights Commission
67	Unidentified	26-Jan-19	Dhaka	Unknown	Returned	Law Enforcement Authorities	27 Aug 2019, Asian Human Rights Commission
68	Zahirul Haque Khandoker	13-Jan-19	Dhaka	Private Employee	Dead	RAB	22 Nov 2019, Al Jazeera
69	Khorshed Alam Patwari	13-Jan-19	Dhaka	Private Employee	Jailed	RAB	22 Nov 2019, Al Jazeera
70	Sayeed Akidul Ali	13-Jan-19	Dhaka	Private Employee	Jailed	RAB	22 Nov 2019, Al Jazeera

No.	Name	Date	District	Occupation	Current Status	Allegedly Disappeared by	Source
71	Ishtiaq Ahmad	1-Jan-19	Chattogram	Unknown	Dead	Unknown	26 Aug 2019, Asian Human Rights Commission

APPENDIX TWO

Case Studies of Enforced Disappearances, 2019-2021

Michael Chakma

Background: Michael Chakma, a leader of the United People's Democratic Front (UPDF), a political party based in the Chattogram Hill Tracts region, disappeared on April 9, 2019 as he was traveling from Kanchpur in Narayanganj to Dhaka, and his whereabouts remain unknown to date. Dhanakkha Chakma, another leader of the UPDF Rangamati filed a missing complaint with Sonargaon Police Station on April 16. He mentioned that Michael started living in Dhanakkha's rented house on March 27. The house was empty when Michael left for Dhaka at 4:00 pm on April 9; he had promised to be back by 10:00 pm, but he never returned.

Statement of the law enforcement agency: Sunoyon, General Secretary of Pahari Chhatra Parishad, the student wing of the UPDF, went to Sonargaon Police Station on April 16 to file a general diary (GD), but the police didn't register a case and treated it as an allegation only. Following an investigation, police informed the victim's family that Michael's phone was last used on May 15 at Momota Shopping Complex in Dhaka's Kafrul area. On April 19, 2019, when Dhonoggo Chakma went to register a GD, he was informed by Sonargaon Police that they had already filed one with the reference number 772. However, following a May 13 High Court writ, the court ordered the Home Affairs Secretary to submit a report on Michael's disappearance by May 21. The Inspector General of Police (IGP) informed the court that they were unable to locate anyone named Michael Chakma in any of Bangladesh's prisons. The High Court ordered the police to file a missing person GD on November 4.

Current Status: Missing.

Statement of National and International organizations: The Pahari Chhatra Parishad (PCP) held a press conference at Dhaka's Press Club in January, 2020. They were not pleased with the police's efforts to find Michael Chakma. Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have also issued statements on the disappearance of Michael Chakma and have urged the Bangladesh government to conduct investigation and find out where he is.

Tarek Rahman

Background: Tarek Rahman, a leader of the Juba Odhikar Parishad, a youth organization, is alleged to have been kidnapped by plainclothed men in a microbus near the capital's Roy Shaheb Bazar intersection on October 20, 2020. Tarek Rahman, co-convener of Juba Odhikar Parishad, paid a visit to a law firm in the late afternoon. Muhammad Rashed Khan, the convener of Bangladesh Chatra Odhika Parishad, the organization's student wing, claims that

he was snatched by men in plainclothes when he went downstairs to photocopy some documents. He added that the vehicle in which he was taken away was a silver-colored microbus with the license plate 'Dhaka-1121537'.

Statement of the law enforcement agency: Mahbub Alam, joint commissioner of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police's Detective Branch, told The Daily Star that they are unaware of anyone named Tarek Rahman being detained. The convener of Bangladesh Chatra Odhikar Parishad, Muhammad Rashed Khan, stated that they went to the Kotwali police station to file a general diary (GD) regarding the incident, but the police refused to record the diary. Muhit Serniabad, additional deputy commissioner for Kotwali zone, said that the police were investigating the matter and that the police had not refused to register the general diary.

Current Status: Missing.

Hafizur Rahman Hafiz

Background: Hafizur Rahman Hafiz (52), a lawyer, went missing on November 19, 2019 while returning home from the Lalmonirhat Judge Court. Advocate Hafiz was a resident of the Saptana area of the sadar upazila and a former social welfare secretary of the Lalmonirhat Lawyers' Association. His wife, Shirinaz Parveen reported that Hafizur had gone to court as usual at 10:00 am but had not returned home by 11:00 pm, as he usually did. Afterwards they tried to contact him, but his phone was off. "When the phone didn't work, we went to our relative's house to look for him." "I just want my husband back," she demanded.

Statement of the law enforcement agency: Sadman Sakib Snigdho, Hafizur Rahman's son, filed a general diary (GD) with the Lalmonirhat Sadar Police Station on Nov 20 in regard to the incident. Mahfuz Alam, OC of the Lalmonirhat Sadar Police Station, stated: "The family members of Advocate Hafizur have filed a general diary (GD) in connection with his disappearance. Inspector Mozammel Haque has been assigned to this case as the investigating officer."

Hafizur's cell phone was discovered switched off since Tuesday at 5 pm. "We are conducting a thorough investigation into his disappearance", informed the OC.

Current Status: Missing.

Noman, Nasim and Islam

Background: On 2 June, 2021, Mohammad Noman, a businessman, Mohammad Nasim, a madrasa student and Shahidul Islam, an imam of a mosque, went missing after being picked up by a group of plainclothed people introducing themselves as members of the police force. Sarwar Hossain, father of the victim Noman, said that Noman has a clothing shop at Banti

Bazar in Araihasar. On June 2, Noman left their house to go to the shop in the morning. Sarwar said that his son reached the bazar at about 11:00 am. At that time, seven to eight people introducing themselves as DB police picked him up in a microbus. Nasim and Shahidul were also picked up at that time from the same place. Sarwar said that the assailants were wearing facemasks so that they could not be identified. On June 27, 2021, the family members of the victims held a press conference to make the complaints and demand the release of their closest ones.

Statement of the law enforced agencies: After the incidents took place the family members of the victims approached Araihasar Police Station and office of the district police super, but the police denied any such arrest. Later, they went to the DB office and other offices of the law enforcers, but none admitted nabbing the trio. Father of Noman said in a press conference that they send a letter to the Inspector General of Police (IGP), Dhaka Range DIG, Narayanganj Deputy Commissioner, Narayanganj Superintendent of Police, Araihasar Police Station and RAB-11 for the search of the three.

Current Status: Missing.

Rizwan Hassan Rakin

Background: Rizwan Hassan Rakin, a student at Egypt's Al-Azhar University, and Mahfuzur Rahman, the brother of his wife, arrived at Dhaka's Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport on August 4, 2021 from Egypt. Selim Sarwar, Rizwan's grandfather, went to the airport to pick him up. Soon after Mahfuz stepped off the plane, he called Selim Sarwar to inform him of their arrival. Mahfuz stated that both he and Rizwan were blindfolded and placed in a car after crossing the immigration desk. They were separated and taken to an unknown location for interrogation. Mahfuz was also questioned about Rizwan's political affiliations and whether Rizwan had ever been convicted of a crime. Mahfuz was unaware of Rizwan's whereabouts during the interrogation. Mahfuz was later dropped off at Jatrabari by some men at approximately 11:30 pm. Rakin's father, Abu Jafar, filed a general diary at the Airport Police Station. He said that he was in Saudi Arabia with his wife and daughter at the time of the incident. They were also preparing to come to the country to celebrate their son's wedding. His grandfather went to the Airport Police Station to make a general diary immediately after the incident. The police did not accept the case but he left a note, nonetheless. The police allowed filing the GD on September 3. But so far nothing has been reported.

Statement of the law enforcement agency: Azizul Haque, Airport Police sub-inspector and GD investigation officer, told Prothom Alo that he was unaware of the family's allegation of initially not accepting a GD. He has been conducting his investigation of GD in the same manner since he was assigned the task. They are trying to find Rizwan, he added.

Current Status: Missing.

SM Hafizur Rahman Sagar

Background: SM Hafizur Rahman Sagar (43), a businessman of Khulna, was allegedly abducted by RAB-6. On Thursday, May 2, 2019 the RAB arrested SM Hafizur Rahman Sagar and three others from Nazrul Islam's house in East Baniyarkhamar, Khulna. The following day, RAB released a statement regarding the detention of three individuals from the house. However, RAB denied that SM Hafizur Rahman Sagar was arrested. Hosneara Tania and her sister-in-law Ropshi Nishi informed human rights defenders that on May 2, SM Hafizur Rahman Sagar was staying at the house of Nazrul Islam in front of East Baniyarkhamar's large mosque in Khulna for business negotiations with the other three business partners. At approximately 2:30 am, a team of RAB-6 raided the house. The RAB then arrested SM Hafizur Rahman Sagar and his business associates Habibur Rahman (24), Md. Rafiur Rahman Rajib (30), and Md. Abdul Mannan (50). On May 4, they contacted RAB-6's Khulna office, where Lt. Colonel Syed Mohammad Noorus Salehin Yusuf and Special Company Commander Md. Shamim Shikdar admitted the arrests of three others but not of SM Hafizur Rahman.

Statement of Law Enforcement Agency: Hosneara Tania, his wife, filed a GD at Khalishpur Police Station on Friday, May 3. Later, after hearing about RAB's operation, his family contacted RAB, who denied his arrest. Hosnara Tania visited Khulna Sadar Police Station on May 4, 2019 to file a GD. However, Humayun Kabir, the police station's officer-in-charge, refused to accept it. According to a family member of Hafizur Rahman, RAB-6 threatened the victim's family that they should not bring the matter to public attention. The family claims that the RAB officials have told them that Sagar is absconding, and an operation would be conducted to arrest Sagar.

Current Status: Missing.

Abdullah Ibne Yunus

Background: Abdullah Ibne Yunus, a student of Mohammadpur Central College, has been missing since July 22, 2020 when he was picked up from his home in Mohammadpur in Dhaka by a group of people claiming to be 'administration officials' for 'interrogation regarding two youths.' Yunus, was picked up by 'men' dressed in plainclothes and armed with small firearms, according to Abdur Rahman, Yunus's brother. Abdur Rahman stated that three people came to their house on July 22 night and showed Yunus photographs of two youths, enquiring whether he recognized them. 'When my brother mentioned that he knew one of them, the three individuals invited him to accompany them. We requested to see the photographs but were refused,' he explained. Abdullah used to live in the Dhaka Real Estate neighborhood of Katasur in the capital's Mohammadpur area with his elder brother, Abdur Rahman. Their parents are residents of Narsingdi. Abdullah's family believes he is in the custody of law enforcement or a government intelligence agency. According to the family, they have not received any ransom demand from any gang or any kidnapper.

Statement of Law Enforcement Agency: The victim's brother stated that they went to the Mohammadpur Police Station the following day to file a missing complaint, but the police refused to record it. They were advised to report to the Detective Branch on Minto Road or to the Rapid Action Battalion's nearby office. They visited the DB and RAB offices but received no positive response. On July 24, the police recorded a GD, he added. Sub-inspector Pradeep Kumar of the Mohammadpur Police Station is investigating the GD. He stated that they had been unable to locate Abdullah. He had sent the GD regarding the missing boy to the Dhaka Metropolitan Police's Detective Branch (DB).

Current Status: Missing.

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