

Bangladesh: Human rights groups urge government to implement recommendations on torture and other abuses after damning UN review

Global, 14 August 2019: – Following serious concerns expressed by the UN Committee against Torture (CAT) about torture in Bangladesh, seven human rights organizations call on the Bangladeshi government to recognize the magnitude of the problem and address and implement the nearly 90 recommendations made by the UN body.

On 9 August 2019, the CAT, published its [Concluding Observations](#) following the first-ever review of Bangladesh's implementation of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, a treaty to which Bangladesh became a state party in 1998. The CAT is a body of independent experts tasked with monitoring the compliance by state parties to the Convention against Torture. The 16-page document expresses serious concerns about the "widespread and routine commission of torture and ill-treatment by law enforcement officials", carried out with almost complete impunity.

According to information provided by the government, there have been only 17 cases filed under the Torture and Custodial Death (Prevention) Act since its enactment in 2013. To date, in none of these cases has an investigation been completed. The CAT noted that victims and their families who seek to file complaints about allegations of torture face harassment, threats, and retaliation.

The CAT also raised serious concerns about the numerous and credible allegations of the Rapid Action Battalion's (RAB's) involvement in the commission of torture, arbitrary arrests, unacknowledged detention, disappearances, and extrajudicial killings of individuals in its custody. The CAT recommended an independent inquiry into these allegations.

The CAT further expressed serious concern and made recommendations about other grave human rights violations, including: unacknowledged detentions; disappearances; conditions of detention; excessive use of force by members of the security forces; reprisals, harassment, and violence against human rights defenders and journalists; violence against women; and violence against indigenous, ethnic, and religious minorities and other vulnerable groups.

The undersigned organizations urge the government of Bangladesh to submit a follow-up report within a year, detailing the progress made on combating torture and addressing other serious abuse of human rights. We also take note of the statement by the Bangladesh authorities that it will protect from reprisals all civil society members who have cooperated with the Committee.

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Asian Legal Resource Centre (ALRC); Asian Federation Against Involuntary Disappearances (AFAD); Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM - ASIA); FIDH - International Federation for Human Rights; Odhikar; Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights; and World Organisation Against Torture