



Bangladesh - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 24 October 2012

Information on corruption within government, police and the Judiciary.

The *Eurasia Review* in October 2012 states:

“The government said yesterday it would take legal action against parliamentarians suspected of corruption following a report alleging rampant graft, particularly among lawmakers from the ruling Awami League. A warning came from Information Minister Hasanul Haque Inu after Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) issued a report on Sunday which alleged that 97 percent of parliament members are involved in “negative activities.” (Eurasia Review (19 October 2012) *97 Percent Of Bangladesh Lawmakers Are Corrupt, Claims Report*)

In August 2012 the *Asian Human Rights Commission* notes:

“Bangladesh's law-enforcement agents have a reputation for abusing authority through coercive means. They are and have been the hired thugs of all the ruling regimes. Policing in the country is an industry of producing victims of torture and fabrication of criminal charges against civilians and political opponents since long. Corruption has replaced the chain of command within the police. The constant failure of the police to credibly investigate crimes is the single largest impediment within the criminal justice administration in the country. To keep the police subservient to the ruling elite the government has kept the salary of the police force very low. This opens the floodgates and serves as incentive for the police officers to demand and accept bribes. Impunity provided to the force against prosecution for corruption and all other crimes these officers commit is returned by the force by undertaking cleanup work for the ruling elite, most often by 'dealing' with political opponents. The disparity between the wealth of some police officers and their actual income is proof to this illegal nexus of corruption and protection between the police and politicians in Bangladesh.” (Asian Human Rights Commission (9 August 2012) *Bangladesh: People pay more to the police than to their government*)

A report issued by *Freedom House* in July 2012 commenting on events of 2011 states:

“A new Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) investigated high-level politicians and their business allies. Dozens were arrested, and several were subsequently convicted by a special court.” (Freedom House (12 July 2012) *Freedom in the World 2012 - Bangladesh*)

This report also points out that:

“...a series of apparently biased decisions in corruption cases raised concerns about political influence over the judiciary.” (ibid)

It is also stated in this document that:

“Endemic corruption and criminality, weak rule of law, limited bureaucratic transparency, and political polarization have long undermined government accountability.” (ibid)

This report also notes:

“The court system is prone to corruption and severely backlogged...” (ibid)

A document issued in June 2012 by the *International Crisis Group* notes:

“Numerous highprofile corruption cases have damaged confidence in the government. The most damning emerged in April 2012 when Railways Minister Suranjit Sengupta was retained in the cabinet after a scandal involving bribes worth Tk 70 lakh (\$90,000 – the equivalent of nearly seven years of ministerial wages).” (International Crisis Group (13 June 2012) *Bangladesh: Back to the Future*, p.8)

The *United States Department of State* reviewing events of 2011, in a report published in May 2012, notes:

“Widespread official corruption and related impunity continued.” (United States Department of State (24 May 2012) *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2011, Bangladesh*, Executive Summary)

This report also points out:

“The law provides criminal penalties for official corruption, but the government did not implement the law effectively, and officials frequently engaged in corrupt practices with impunity.” (ibid, Section 4. Official Corruption and Government Transparency)

This document also states:

“The government took some steps to address widespread police corruption. The inspector general of police continued to implement a new strategy, partially funded by international donors, for training police, addressing corruption, and creating a more responsive police force. No assessment of its impact on corruption within the police force was available. The judiciary was subject to political pressure from the government, and cases involving opposition leaders often proceeded in an irregular fashion. In several cases the appellate division overturned decisions granting bail to high-level corruption suspects who were leaders of opposition parties. Corruption remained a serious problem within the judiciary. Corruption was a factor in lengthy delays of trials, which were subject to witness tampering and intimidation of victims. Several reports by human rights groups and corruption watchdog groups indicated growing public dissatisfaction with the perceived politicization of the judiciary.” (ibid, Section 4. Official Corruption and Government Transparency)

In April 2012 *The Guardian* states that:

“Tensions in the south Asian state, home to 160 million people, have been building for months. Runaway inflation, rising inequality and recent corruption charges against some ministers have all combined to undermine the popularity of the government, in power since winning a landslide victory in 2008.” (The Guardian (22 April 2012) *Bangladesh police out in force as tension rises over missing politician*)

A report issued in 2012 by the *Bertelsmann Transformation Index* states:

“Corruption remains an endemic problem and has permeated all levels of society. Political parties pay lip service to the elimination of corruption but are not inclined to develop institutional mechanisms to address the problem. Accordingly, the country has not seen any dramatic change in corruption. It is common knowledge that officeholders tend to exploit their position for private gain. The vigorous anti-corruption drive by the caretaker government between 2007 and 2008 and the reorganization of the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) hit a snag after the elected government came to power.” (Bertelsmann Transformation Index (2012) *Bangladesh Country Report*, p.8)

This document also states:

“Despite the anti-corruption drive of the caretaker government and the promises of the ruling coalition, corruption remained high in several sectors including the judiciary and the police.” (ibid, p.23)

A publication released in November 2011 by *Freedom House* points out that:

“Corruption is pervasive throughout the judiciary, including in the High Court. Some 88 percent of people who turned to the judicial system became the victim of widespread corruption. Corruption and partisan politics are two of the main reasons why people are often denied access to justice, as they do not have access to independent counsel and fair trials” (Freedom House (10 November 2011) *Countries at the Crossroads 2011 - Bangladesh*)

References

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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

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