

**Refugee Review Tribunal
AUSTRALIA**

RRT RESEARCH RESPONSE

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Questions

1. Please provide a brief update since the election of the Awami League to government in Bangladesh and what reports exist regarding the treatment of, or attacks upon, members of the BNP?

RESPONSE

1. Please provide a brief update since the election of the Awami League to government in Bangladesh and what reports exist regarding the treatment of, or attacks upon, members of the BNP?

A previous research response dated 19 January 2009 includes comprehensive information on the 29 December 2008 parliamentary elections in Bangladesh and post-election clashes and attacks involving Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) members or supporters (RRT Research & Information 2009, *Research Response BGD34262*, 19 January, Questions 3-5 – Attachment 1).

The following additional reports relate primarily to the period since mid-January 2009 and are arranged in date order.

An article dated 16 January 2009 in *The Daily Star* reported that, following the swearing into office of BNP parliamentarians on 15 January 2009, the BNP Chairperson and leader of the opposition in parliament, Khaleda Zia, had said that “her party deputies will attend parliament from its inaugural sitting and play a constructive role there”. The article also mentions that “Khaleda alleged that 17 of her party leaders and workers have been killed so far in the AL’s post-poll violence” (‘BNP pledges to work with govt for nation’s progress’ 2009, *The Daily Star*, 16 January <http://www.thedailystar.net/story.php?nid=71529> – Accessed 16 January 2009 – Attachment 2).

A *Reuters* article dated 19 January 2009 reported that the Prime Minister had ordered a crackdown on student violence, including against supporters of her party, the Awami League who had “fought battles among themselves and with rivals at Dhaka University and several others”:

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has ordered police and other authorities to crack down on student violence, some of it involving her own supporters [sic], which has resulted in scores of injuries and disrupted classes.

Hasina, who took office less than two weeks ago after a landslide victory in parliamentary elections, said law enforcement agencies should “deal sternly with trouble-seeking students without caring for their political identities”, a senior home ministry official said on Monday.

Investors and aid donors hope Hasina brings a measure of political stability to Bangladesh, which has a history of party supporters clashing in the streets and engaging in other tactics that sometimes turn violent.

Hasina gave the order for action on the campuses after police said students backing her Awami League had fought battles among themselves and with rivals at Dhaka University and several others across the country of more than 140 million, forcing classes and examinations to halt (Ahmed, A. 2009, ‘Bangladesh PM asks police to tackle campus violence’, *Reuters*, 19 January – Attachment 3).

A *BBC News* article dated 23 January 2009 reported that, although candidates in the local elections must stand as independents, “those affiliated with the Awami League won 306 of the 463 seats” in the upazila elections held on 22 January 2009. It was also reported that the BNP had alleged the elections had been “grossly rigged”:

The Awami League of Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has won a local poll boost following its victory in general elections last month.

Candidates stood as independents in the elections held on Thursday but those affiliated with the Awami League won 306 of the 463 seats.

Correspondents say that the results further consolidate Sheikh Hasina’s grip on power.

The result also provides her with a rural power base, analysts say.

The local polls were held amid charges of violence and rigging. However correspondents say that the level of violence was lower than in previous polls and reports of confrontations between rival sets of supporters were scattered.

The authorities suspended voting in seven out of 481 sub-districts.

...

The BNP also said that Thursday’s elections were “grossly rigged” – they allege that Awami League activists stuffed ballot boxes, forced BNP agents out of polling stations and intimidated voters.

But the Awami League has denied the charges (‘Hasina wins Bangladesh local vote’ 2009, *BBC News*, 23 January http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/7847732.stm – Accessed 25 March 2009 – Attachment 4).

An article in *The Daily Star*, also on 23 January 2009, reported that the Election Commissioner had said that “violence, seizure of polling stations and ballot-stuffing were done by Awami League men” in the upazila polls:

Low turnout, ministers and ruling party lawmakers meddling in balloting, and irregularities in places marked the long-awaited upazila elections yesterday, meaning a letdown for the Election Commission (EC).

Despite a relatively peaceful atmosphere, people did not come out in droves to vote like they did in the recently held national election.

Concerned, the EC has decided to open an enquiry to find out the reasons.

Referring to poor turnout, Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda said, “It will leave harmful effects on the efforts to ensure free and fair elections in the country.”

He was talking to reporters at his office yesterday afternoon.

Election Commissioner Brig Gen (retd) M Sakhawat Hussain sounded quite riled up.

He said violence, seizure of polling stations and ballot-stuffing were done by Awami League men.

Sakhawat, who had earlier visited some polling centres, observed that lawmakers interfered to secure win for their favoured candidates as they want to keep upazila parishads under their sway (Liton, S. and Islam, S, 2009, ‘Upazila polls influenced’, *The Daily Star*, 23 January – Attachment 5).

A *Press Trust of India* article dated 24 January 2009 reported that violence following the local government polls had resulted in deaths, and that the Election Commission had “slammed Awami League for misusing offices giving rise to sporadic violence, leaving as many as 200 people injured and forcing the authorities to call off elections to six local government seats”. According to the report:

At least three people were killed and over 150 injured in violence after local government polls in Bangladesh this week, with irked top leaders of ruling Awami League reportedly considering action against partymen after allegations of rigging and intimidation by them.

Police and newspaper reports today said at least three persons were killed in central Brahmanbaria, western Jessore and southwestern Faridpur districts while over 150 were injured in the countrywide post-election violence.

The Election Commission filed a case against a ruling party lawmaker and ordered legal action against a minister and several others for allegedly disrupting the polls.

...

Hasina’s adviser H T Imam today told reporters that Awami League would launch an investigation into the allegations and take punitive measures if the charges were proved.

Controversy gripped the upazila polls with reports of rigging and violence. The EC slammed Awami League for misusing offices giving rise to sporadic violence, leaving as many as 200 people injured and forcing the authorities to call off elections to six local government seats

out of 480 and postponing polls in a number of polling stations (Rahman, A. 2009, 'Three killed, 150 injured in post-poll violence in Bangladesh', *The Press Trust of India*, 24 January – Attachment 6).

An article dated 28 January 2009 from *BBC News* reported that the BNP appeared to be following a “pattern of behaviour in Bangladesh” in walking out of parliament and “preferring to voice its protest against the government in the streets rather than in the chamber”. According to the report:

On Sunday, the first day of this first session, the MPs of the BNP walked out in protest over President Iajuddin Ahmed.

They said that the largely ceremonial figure had acted unconstitutionally in supporting the army-backed caretaker government which ruled Bangladesh for two years up until the elections.

They walked out of the second day as well when parliament resumed on Wednesday.

The MPs have refused to accept the Speaker’s decision to allocate them only four seats on the front bench.

...

One of its leaders complained that the government wanted to create an uncongenial atmosphere in parliament, to discourage the opposition from attending.

That has certainly been the pattern of behaviour in Bangladesh in the past.

The party in opposition has always staged walkouts and boycotts – preferring to voice its protest against the government in the streets rather than in the chamber (Dummett, M. 2009, 'Bangladesh opposition walks out', *BBC News*, 28 January – Attachment 7).

An article published by *The Economist* on 31 January 2009 reports on the BNP having walked out of parliament for a “bizarre” reason, and reports on the “dodgy” polling in the upazila elections. The article also notes that observers blamed both of the major parties for the violence following the upazila elections:

PARLIAMENT in Dhaka was this week restored to its intended use; parliamentarians, sadly, returned to their old abuses. A makeshift prison for much of the two years, ending in December 2008, that Bangladesh was ruled by an army-backed interim government, the parliament complex housed the leaders of the two big political parties: Sheikh Hasina of the Awami League (AL) and Khaleda Zia of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP).

On January 25th, however, a month after the league won a general election by a landslide, parliament reconvened for the first time. True to old form, the opposition BNP walked out in protest. The reason was bizarre: it claimed that the president, Iajuddin Ahmed – whom the BNP had picked in late 2006 as the head of a caretaker government to oversee (and rig) an election due in January 2007 – had violated the constitution by failing to hold the vote on time. Three days later, it walked out again, miffed at seating arrangements.

On January 22nd the league had won another landslide victory; this time in elections in the country’s 481 upazilas (subdistricts). Candidates it backed won more than two-thirds of the seats. But unlike the general election, these polls were dodgy. Stuffing of ballot boxes, “capturing” of polling booths and voter intimidation were rife. Three people were killed, 150

injured. Observers blamed both parties ('Back to Normal' 2009, *The Economist*, 31 January – Attachment 8).

A report dated 1 February 2009 by the Bangladeshi human rights organisation, Odhikar, provides an overview of events in January 2009. Amongst other observations, the report states that “the security forces should be more active in countering incidents of violence, particularly in the case of the reaction-counter-reaction type of violence observed between supporters of the two major political blocs”. With reference to violence following the parliamentary elections in December 2008, the report states:

According to Odhikar’s documentation, 17 persons were reportedly killed and over 500 persons were injured in post-election violence in different places across the country this year, which is a continuation of the violence that commenced after the 9th Parliamentary Elections on 29 December 2008. In most cases, activists and supporters of the Awami League (AL) led Grand Alliance, and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) led Four-Party Alliance were found to be involved in such clashes. In many districts, AL activists attacked the houses and shops of the BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami supporters and vandalised their property. This section of the report reflects the incidents of post-election violence that took place during the reporting period.

Type of violence

a. Killed-Injured: 17 persons (9 from BNP and 8 from AL) were reportedly killed and over 500 persons were injured due to retaliatory attacks by the supporters of the Four Party Alliance and Grand Alliance and, in particular, Awami League and BNP. From the BNP side, the deceased were Samsul Haque (Polling agent), Sohel, Nur Kalam, Nazrul Islam, Obaidul Islam, Fosir Uddin, Yunus Miah, Khokon Majhi and Bashir Uddin; and from the AL the deceased were Parabashi Begum (mother of an AL candidate), Abdur Razzak, Parvez Hawlader, Sabuj, Bilkis Begum Laily (wife of an AL leader), Shohor Ali, Mir Mobarok Hossain and Shahin.

b. Role of the Police force: The security forces or police were very rarely recorded as being perpetrators or victims of the violence during this reporting period. While on the one hand this suggests that the security forces were not acting as agents fostering election-related violence, on the other hand this also suggests that they may not be playing an effective role in trying to counter the violence (on the assumption that more security forces would have been recorded as victims if this was the case). This seems to suggest that the security forces should be more active in countering incidents of violence, particularly in the case of the reaction-counter-reaction type of violence observed between supporters of the two major political blocs.

While Inspector General of Police Nur Mohammad claimed that there were only 13 incidents of violence in the whole country, hundreds of incidents of post-election violence were reported in the media throughout the country.

With respect to violence related to the upazila elections in January, the Odhikar report notes as follows:

a. Pre-election: As a continuation of the post-election violence after the national Parliamentary Elections, the Upazila Parishad election campaigning faced incidents of violence. Before the upazila elections of 22 January 2009, a total of 4 persons were reportedly killed and more than 800 persons were reported wounded.

On 15 January 2009 Abu Jafor Mohammad Khalil, a chairman candidate from Jatio Shomajtantrik Dol (JSD) was killed by some miscreants in Kahalu, Bogra.

In Ukhiya at Cox's Bazar, Mohammad (30) was killed on 21 January 2009 when police opened fire on a clash between the supporters of AL candidate Mahmudul Haq Chowdhury and AL candidate Hamidul Haq Chowdhury.

In Rajshahi, Matiur Rahman Babu, a Jubadal leader was killed by unknown miscreants on 17 January 2009.

Moreover, in Rangamati, Santosh Kumar Chakma, an Awami League-backed chairman candidate, was abducted on 20 January 2009 by a group of unidentified miscreants.

During and After: Because of the clashes and anomalies by political activists as well as government officials, in many places the polling processes were stopped. In the violence, 14 persons (10 from BNP and 4 from AL) were reportedly killed and about two thousand persons were injured due to retaliatory attacks by the supporters of the Four Party Alliance and Grand Alliance and, in particular, supporters of Awami League and BNP ('Monthly Human Rights Monitoring Report on Bangladesh – Dates covered: 01-31 January 2009' 2009, Odhikar website, 1 February <http://www.odhikar.org/documents/January09.pdf> – Accessed 25 March 2009 – Attachment 9).

A *Reuters* article dated 4 February 2009 indicates that:

Political rivals in Bangladesh hurled home-made bombs during clashes near the capital Dhaka on Wednesday, killing at least two people and wounding 20, police said.

Five weeks after going to the polls to end two years of rule by an army-backed interim government, there have been a number of politically charged incidents across the country.

On Tuesday, Home Minister Shahera Khatun ordered police to take immediate steps to stop the "gradual deterioration" of law and order.

The latest clash erupted between activists of the ruling Awami League and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) in Munshiganj, 40 km (25 miles) south of the capital Dhaka.

"Both the groups hurled home-made bombs during the clash and the victims died of splinter injuries," Police Inspector K.M. Abdullah told Reuters.

He said one of the victims was a BNP activist and the other was a member of the public.

Hundreds of BNP supporters later marched through Dhaka streets in protest against the violence, the first major anti-government protest since the election.

BNP officials urged the government to stop persecuting the opposition and demanded special security protection for their leader, former prime minister Begum Khaleda Zia (Ahmed, N. 2009, 'Bangladesh post-poll clash kills 2, sparks protest', *Reuters*, 4 February – Attachment 10).

An *Agence France Presse* article also dated 4 February 2009 reported an incident in which two BNP activists died following an attack by Awami League activists:

Two opposition activists were killed by ruling party members in Bangladesh on Wednesday in the latest of a series of political murders since elections five weeks ago, police said.

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), which lost the polls, said at least 17 of its activists have died at the hands of Awami League Party members since voting on December 29.

“Scores of Awami League members attacked the BNP activists early Wednesday. The attack left two BNP activists dead and six injured. One died in a Molotov cocktail attack and the other was beaten to death,” a police spokesman said (‘Two more political murders in Bangladesh: police’ 2009, *Agence France Presse*, 4 February – Attachment 11).

An *Agence France Presse* article dated 12 February 2009 provides the following report regarding ongoing violence and other expressions of intolerance between the BNP and the Awami League:

A string of political murders, violent street protests and a parliamentary boycott all suggest that Bangladesh is quickly falling back into its old troubling ways after recent elections, analysts say.

The polls, won by the Awami League of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajed, were hailed by international monitoring groups as a huge success that crowned two years of relative stability under an army-backed government.

Voting was meant to usher in a new era of democratic rule but, just six weeks later, political violence is spreading across the country, with police saying more than two dozen people have been murdered.

Awami League officials who were out of power for seven long years are allegedly behind many of the deaths as they settle scores with activists of the defeated Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP).

Ataur Rahman, a political analyst at Dhaka University, says he can detect many symptoms of Bangladesh’s “ugly old-style politics.”

“Our politics of revenge have come back again with a renewed vigour. Parties are settling scores, and students and political activists are feeling free to do whatever they can. We are again at our prejudiced best,” he said.

“It shows that our politicians haven’t learnt anything in the past two years or from history.”

The BNP, which had won 2001 polls, has boycotted parliament – a favourite wrecking tactic used often throughout Bangladesh’s history of dysfunctional politics.

The trigger for the walkout was an apparently petty dispute about seating arrangements, but the BNP quickly brought proceedings to a standstill and shows no sign of backing down.

In another sign of trouble since the new Awami League government took over, thousands of student activists – a major political force in Bangladesh – have clashed with police almost every day, leaving hundreds of people injured.

Many universities and colleges have been shut due to the street violence, which has also brought traffic chaos back to the country’s main cities.

...

The interim government began a major campaign to clean up politics, including a UN-funded photographic electoral roll which knocked 13 million fake names off the register.

But it failed in its efforts to end the dominance of Sheikh Hasina and BNP chief Khaleda Zia, who have maintained a debilitating rivalry for decades.

In all three elections since democracy was restored in the country in 1991, the losers never accepted the results and began a series of protests and strikes immediately after the polls.

“Expectations were high that both Awami League and BNP would this time start to behave differently,” Aminuzzman said.

“But the ruling party is not making any concessions and its activists are on a violent rampage. The BNP has also shown intolerance. It seems the old revenge politics is back in its all fury.” (Alam, S. 2009, ‘Old ghosts return to haunt Bangladesh politics: analysts’, *Agence France Presse*, 12 February – Attachment 12).

An article in *The Daily Star* on 13 February 2009 reported that the BNP was to hold a convention on the violence that had occurred since the December 2008 parliamentary elections. According to the article, the BNP Secretary General had “recently claimed at least 31 leaders, workers and supporters of his party were killed by ruling party’s cadres after the elections”:

The main opposition BNP has taken an initiative to organise a national convention on post-election violence in a bid to create public opinion against “torture and repression on their supporters” across the country after the December 29 elections.

...

Party insiders say a documentary is being prepared on leaders and workers of the party who were killed or injured by their political opponents. Besides, posters, leaflets and booklets might be published for creating public opinion against the cruelty experienced by BNP supporters after the polls.

Asked about the initiative, Ferdous Ahmed yesterday told *The Daily Star*, “The convention will be organised with a view to presenting post-election violence against BNP activists across the country.”

He said the convention might be held late this month or early March and they are now collecting information, video footages and photographs of their leaders and supporters who were tortured.

BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain has recently claimed at least 31 leaders, workers and supporters of his party were killed by ruling party’s cadres after the elections (Suman, R. H. 2009, ‘BNP to hold convention on post-poll violence’, *The Daily Star*, 13 February – Attachment 13).

A *Reuters* article dated 18 February 2009 reported on the government’s response to ongoing political violence on university campuses, as follows:

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina ordered law enforcement agencies on Wednesday to arrest unruly students on university campuses, where violence has erupted since she took office last month.

“Arrest anyone seeking to cause indiscipline and unrest in the universities and other campuses across the country,” Hasina said at a rally of students belonging to her Awami League in Dhaka.

More than 200 students were injured over the past month in Dhaka and elsewhere as rival groups of students aligned with political parties clashed on campus.

The Awami League's student unit has been disbanded at Jahangirnagar University, near the capital Dhaka, following battles between rivals using bombs and guns, police and university officials said ('Bangladesh PM orders arrest of unruly students' 2009, *Reuters*, 18 February – Attachment 14).

An article dated 23 February 2009 in *The Daily Star* reported the BNP's decision to return to parliament and the party's concerns over a number of issues including "repression on their leaders and activists and violence unleashed by Chhatra League". According to the report:

The main opposition BNP may return to parliament today ending an absence of 17 consecutive workdays.

The decision to get back in the House came yesterday at a two-hour meeting of the lawmakers from BNP and allies. It followed assurance from Speaker Abdul Hamid of "respectable seating arrangements in the House".

BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Khaleda Zia presided over the meeting that began at around 5:00pm at Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

"We have decided to return to parliament very shortly as the speaker has assured us of respectable seating arrangements there," Opposition Chief Whip Zainul Abdin Farroque told reporters after the meeting.

...

At yesterday's meeting, the opposition MPs condemned the government for "denying the leader of the opposition the status she deserves as per the protocol" during wreath-laying at the Central Shaheed Minar on February 21.

They also expressed concern over "price hike of essentials, electricity crisis, repression on their leaders and activists and violence unleashed by Chhatra League" ('BNP returns to JS soon' 2009, *The Daily Star*, 23 February <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=77081> – Accessed 24 March 2009 – Attachment 15).

An article dated 10 March 2009 in *The Daily Star* reported the following:

Five people were injured in a clash between activists of Awami League and BNP at Ladurchar under Sonargaon Police Station in Narayanganj yesterday.

Seriously injured BNP leader Habibullah Master and his son Mamun were admitted to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital.

Police said during the four-party alliance rule, BNP leader Habibullah master harassed his rival Awami League leader Anwar Hossain by filing false cases. In that case Anwar Hossain suffered jail term and got released recently.

To take revenge, a group of criminals led by Anwar Hossain yesterday noon attacked Habibullah Master and his son Mamun. Local people rescued them and sent to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital. A case was filed with Sonargaon Police Station in this connection ('AL, BNP clash in N'ganj: 5 injured' 2009, *The Daily Star*, 10 March

<http://www.thedailystar.net/story.php?nid=79194> – Accessed 26 March 2009 – Attachment 16).

An article dated 17 March 2009 from *The Press Trust of India* reported that a “money-laundering case” had been filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission against the BNP leader’s son:

In the first such action since the Sheikh Hasina government came to power, the anti-graft body of Bangladesh today slapped a money-laundering case against main opposition leader Khaleda Zia’s younger son Arafat Rahman Koko, charging him with siphoning out USD 38.16 lakh to hide his illegal sources of income.

“The case was filed as the allegation was proved in our primary investigation,” a spokesman of the powerful Anti-Corruption Commission said.

This was the first graft case lodged by the anti-graft body since Hasina’s Awami League government was installed after the landmark December 29 general elections (Rahman, A. 2009, ‘Money-laundering case against ex-Bangla PM Zia’s son’, *The Press Trust of India*, 17 March – Attachment 17).

A report dated 22 March 2009 in *The Daily Star* mentioned the arrest of a BNP leader for “making anti-state statements and threatening the police”:

The Detective Branch (DB) police in Naogaon arrested former deputy speaker and BNP leader Akhtar Hamid Siddiqui from Mohadevpur upazila yesterday evening under the Special Powers Act (SPA) for making ‘seditious statements’.

“He has primarily been arrested under the SPA for making anti-state statements and threatening the police”, Mofazzel Hossain, Superintendent of Police (SP) in Naogaon, said.

The SP told *The Daily Star* that government high ups were apprised of the situation before the arrest was made, and the police have also written to the home ministry for permission to press sedition charges against Siddiqui (‘Ex-dy speaker Siddiqui held’ 2009, *The Daily Star*, 22 March <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=80786> – Accessed 26 March 2009 – Attachment 18).

An article dated 24 March 2009 in *The Daily Star* reported a probe against a BNP candidate in up-coming by-elections:

BNP will today appeal to the Election Commission (EC) to make sure that the upcoming by-election is not influenced by the parliamentary probe into the alleged financial anomalies of former speaker Jamiruddin Sircar.

Party sources said the appeal to the EC is part of the party's effort to shield Jamiruddin's image as a BNP contestant of Bogra-6 constituency in the by-elections.

...

Once the probe committee starts investigating, it might dig out some financial anomalies of the former speaker and against this backdrop, it would be difficult for him to win the elections in Bogra-6 where he is an outsider, said several BNP leaders (‘BNP to meet EC for halt to Sircar probe’ 2009, *The Daily Star*, 24 March <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=81084> – Accessed 26 March 2009 – Attachment 19).

An article dated 24 March 2009 in *The Daily Star* reported the arrest of the BNP's Labour Affairs Secretary in what the BNP leader referred to as a "false and politically-motivated case":

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday protested the arrest of party's Labour Affairs Secretary and Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal General Secretary Zafrul Hasan in a "false and politically-motivated case".

Demanding his immediate release, she alleged that ignoring the existing labour laws pro-BNP labour leaders and workers were being "transferred and repressed" on a mass scale.

She urged the government to stop its party leaders and workers from attacking pro-BNP labour leaders and workers and filing false cases against them ('Poll Debacle: Losers blame local BNP leaders in Ctg' 2009, *The Daily Star*, 24 March <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=81135> – Accessed 26 March 2009 – Attachment 20).

Another article in *The Daily Star* on 24 March 2009 reported that the Anti-Corruption Commission had requested a BNP parliamentarian (and wife of a former BNP communications minister), to provide a "wealth statement":

The High Court (HC) yesterday stayed for a month the operation of the notice issued by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) asking Hasina Ahmed, a BNP lawmaker, to submit her wealth statement to ACC.

Upon a writ petition filed by Hasina, an HC bench of Justice Nazmun Ara Sultana and Justice Md Rezaul Haque also issued a rule upon the ACC to explain within four weeks why the notice should not be declared illegal.

The ACC, on March 17, served the notice to Hasina, wife of former BNP state minister for communications Salahuddin Ahmed, for submitting a statement on her wealth within a week to the ACC.

Hasina, lawmaker from Cox's Bazar-1 constituency, yesterday filed a writ petition with the HC challenging the legality of the notice ('Operation of ACC notice against BNP lawmaker' 2009, *The Daily Star*, 24 March 2009 <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=81109> – Accessed 26 March 2009 – Attachment 21).

A further article in *The Daily Star* on 24 March 2009 reported BNP accusations against the Awami League for "torturing and filing 'false' cases against their activists":

BNP Sylhet district and city units have accused the ruling AL leaders of torturing and filing 'false' cases against their activists in different upazilas of the district.

District BNP Convener M Ilyas Ali, city BNP acting chief Noman Mahmud, Chhatak Upazila Parishad Chairman Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury and district BNP Joint Convener Ali Ahmed raised the allegations at a press conference at Sylhet Press Club yesterday ('Sylhet BNP accuses AL of harassment' 2009, *The Daily Star*, 24 March <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=81012> – Accessed 26 March 2009 – Attachment 22).

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BACIS (DIAC Country Information database)

REFINFO (IRBDC (Canada) Country Information database)

ISYS (RRT Research & Information database, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, US Department of State Reports)

MRT-RRT Library Catalogue

List of Attachments

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