



Bangladesh – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 31 May 2011

Information on the treatment of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) members.

A *United News of Bangladesh* report on violence following the December 2008 elections states:

“Three people were killed and 34 injured in post-election violence in different parts of the country amid mixed feelings of pleasure and pain over Monday's dramatic election results. In Pabna, some Awami League activists attacked the house of local BNP supporter, Saheb Ali, 40, in Sadar Upazila around 9.30 am and stabbed him to death, police and locals said. The attackers also set fire to his house and later ransacked some adjoining houses, resulting in injuries to up to 15 people. Five of them were later admitted to the General Hospital.” (United News of Bangladesh (30 December 2008) *3 killed, 34 injured in post-election violence, Lead (Full Story)*)

See also *United News of Bangladesh* report which states:

“A BNP activist was killed and five others were injured in separate attacks by the Awami League supporters in Lohagara upazila today (Friday). Police and witnesses said the AL supporters attacked the BNP activists at Baka village at about 7am, leaving four injured. Of the injured, Idris Molla, 45, died on way to Khulna Medical College Hospital. Other injured were admitted to the upazila health complex. Meanwhile, the AL activist launched another attack on the BNP workers at about 8am, leaving two BNP leaders injured.” (United News of Bangladesh (23 January 2009) *BNP activist killed, 5 injured in post-UZ poll violence in Narail*)

A *Global Insight* report states:

“Continued unrest between supporters of the ruling Awami League (AL) and opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) claimed two lives this week with a further 20 people injured. Fighting broke out in Munshiganj (40km south of the capital, Dhaka) with supporters of the two parties throwing home-made bombs at each other. Local reports suggest that local control of a village council was at the heart of the dispute. In response to the death of one of their supporters, the BNP called on the government to stop persecuting the opposition, and gathered hundreds of their supporters together for the first major political march through the city.” (Global Insight (5 February 2009) *Post-Poll Violence Continues in Bangladesh, Highlighting Growing Party Tensions*)

A *United News of Bangladesh* report states:

“At least 25 people were injured in a clash between the supporters of Awami League and BNP Daribila village in Shreepur upazila on Saturday night.

Witnesses said supporters of local AL leader Golam Rasul Master and BNP leaders Nazir Mid have locked horns in their longstanding attempt to establish supremacy over the area. Both the groups used lethal weapons during the clash, leaving 25 injured. Of them, seven were admitted to Magura Sadar Hospital in critical condition while one to Dhaka Medical College Hospital. The feuding groups also damaged 10 dwelling houses. Police have been deployed in the area to fend off further violence.” (United News of Bangladesh (13 December 2009) *AL-BNP clash leaves 25 injured in Magura*)

A *Right Vision News* report states:

“At least 19 people were injured as Awami League and BNP activists clashed during Independence Day programmes in Cox’s Bazar and Noakhali yesterday. According to our correspondent, a Cox’s Bazar correspondent reports: At least nine people were injured in a clash between AL and BNP in Teknaf upazila over playing of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman’s speech. The clash erupted when Teknaf upazila BNP leader Zafar Alam turned off Bangabandhu’s speech which was being played through a loudspeaker at Leda Government Primary School. As Awami League men heard the news they gathered at the school and chased BNP men out of the school premises.” (Right Vision News (28 March 2010) *Bangladesh: AL, BNP men clash over celebration*)

See also *Right Vision News* report which states:

“At least 26 people, including former BNP lawmaker Nazimuddin Alam and a journalist, were injured in a violent clash between the activists of the ruling Awami League and main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party in Lalmohan on Thursday afternoon.” (Right Vision News (17 April 2010) *Bangladesh: 26 injured in Bhola polls violence*)

An *Amnesty International* report states:

“The Bangladesh Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) carried out a violent attack on those gathered peacefully inside the house of Mirza Abbas, a leading Bangladesh National Party (BNP) politician and former mayor of Dhaka, according to testimony given to Amnesty International. Victims of the raid described sustained and unprovoked beatings of activists and Mirza Abbas’ family members, denial of medical treatment after arrests, and the eliciting of signatures on blank forms as a condition of release, which Amnesty International suspects are for the purpose of falsifying confessions. Amnesty International has photographed injuries to male and female victims of the beatings. More than twenty people were injured during the raid, including Mirza Abbas’ wife Afroza Abbas and his 85 year old mother. BNP supporters had gathered at Mirza Abbas’s house after he been arrested and accused of involvement in violence during a general strike called by the party.” (Amnesty International (1 July 2010) *Bangladeshi security forces used excessive force during raid*)

A report from *The Telegraph* of India states:

“The latest political feud between the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and the Awami League over the house, the ownership of which has been challenged in Bangladesh’s top court, today spilled over to the streets of the

country with clashes being reported from all major cities. Hundreds of anti-riot police wielding tear-gas bombs were seen standing on roads as activists - protesting the alleged forcible eviction of the leader of the Opposition and BNP party chief Zia from her house yesterday - resorted to violence during the dawn-to-dusk strike that the party had announced yesterday." (The Telegraph (India) (15 November 2010) *Zia eviction sparks clashes in Bangladesh*)

A report published by *Odhikar* on the human rights situation in Bangladesh during 2010, in a section titled "State of Democracy" (sub-section titled "By-election in Bhola")

"In another reported violent incident on April 26, 2010, a disabled girl was molested and beaten up by a group of criminals in Keyamulla village of Chadpur Union under Tajumoddin Upazila. The criminals also attacked the girl's mother and left her seriously wounded when she tried to protect her daughter. According to the mother, a group of criminals identified themselves as Awami League supporters and beat them up because they voted for the BNP candidate.⁵ Six BNP activists were allegedly beaten by unidentified assailants as well." (Odhikar (1 January 2011) *Human Rights Report 2010: Odhikar Report on Bangladesh*, p.8)

This section of the report also states:

"It was reported that the wife and daughter of an opposition BNP activist, Shafi Majhi, from Kochuakhali village of South Charumed union under Lalmohon Upazila, were raped by Awami League activists on April 24, 2010. According to Shafi Majhi, Awami League activists Siraj, Saiful, Shohag, Abdul and Jewel entered his house at midnight and tied him up. Saiful and Jewel raped his daughter, a student of class nine. His wife was also raped by Shohag and Abdul when she tried to save her daughter. Later they threatened Shafi Majhi not to disclose this matter." (ibid, p.8)

In a section titled "Political Parties" (sub-section titled "Inter- and Intra-party violence") this report states:

"On October 8, 2010, there was a scheduled rally of the BNP in Bonpara, Natore. Former General Secretary of the Awami League-backed Chhatra League and former Information and Research Secretary of the District Awami League Professor Zakir Hussein led a group of miscreants, including Awami League backed Chhatra League General Secretary of Boraigraam Upazila Shafiqul Islam, Jubo League leaders Rakib, Jamil and Babu, on an attack on the political procession. Sanaullah Noor Babu (40), Boraigraam Upazila Chairman and the President of the Boraigraam Municipality BNP, was beaten to death in public. During the attack, another 35 people were injured." (ibid, p.16)

A *Guardian (UK)* report on the November 2010 general strike in Bangladesh states:

"Schools and businesses were shut across Bangladesh today as the country's main opposition party enforced a dawn-to-dusk general strike. Thousands of riot police were deployed in cities across the country. The Bangladesh Nationalist party (BNP) said the strike was called to protest

against misrule by the government, harassment of its supporters, and a court decision to pursue the eviction of its leader, the former prime minister Khaleda Zia, from a military-owned house where she has lived for nearly 30 years. According to the BNP secretary general, Khandaker Delwar Hossain, the police have arrested 3,000 party activists from across the country in the past four days." (Guardian (UK) (30 November 2010) *Bangladesh shut down by opposition general strike*)

An *Amnesty International* report on this strike states:

"According to the BNP over 1,000 party members and activists had been arrested in the run-up to Tuesday's general strike. At least 30 people were reported to have been injured during one attack on Tuesday in the district of Narsingdi, 50 km north-east of Dhaka, when the RAB and police attacked around 1,000 protesters. Among those injured was the former Narsingdi MP, Kahirul Kabir Khokon. He told Amnesty International that the march was peaceful and did not break any laws. He said that police and RAB beat him repeatedly on his back causing him severe pain. He and another 19 people were injured and taken to hospital. In Dhaka, police and RAB carried out raids on BNP marches in different parts of the city. They attacked people who were gathering in front of the BNP headquarters in Naya Paltan." (Amnesty International (Amnesty International (30 November 2010) *Bangladesh police crack down on peaceful protesters*)

An *Amnesty International* report on the alleged ill-treatment of a BNP MP states:

"Amnesty International is calling on the Bangladeshi government to immediately investigate allegations that a MP for the opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party has been tortured while in police custody. Bangladeshi security forces have tortured Salauddin Quader Chowdhury during interrogations, Amnesty International has learned. This has included applying electrodes to his genitals, beating him, slitting his stomach with razors and twisting his toenails and fingernails with pliers. There are fears that he may face further torture or other ill-treatment." (Amnesty International (22 December 2010) *MP tortured by security forces in Bangladesh*)

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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