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PUBLIC STATEMENT

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Bangladesh: Mob violence over alleged blasphemy in Feni must be investigated, and the rule of law upheld

Amnesty Freedom is alarmed by reports that a mob beat a man in the city of Feni, Bangladesh, on November 17, 2026 over allegations that he made derogatory remarks about Islam on social media. We are also alarmed that the same crowd attacked a police vehicle as officers took the man and his wife into custody.

What we know

According to reports by Jagonews24 and RTV Online, at about 9:00 p.m. on Tuesday, November 17, a group of people gathered outside the couple's apartment building in Feni town after residents became angry about social media posts attributed to the man. RTV reports that resentment among local residents had been building for several days. Police arrived and detained both the man and his wife. As they were being placed in a police vehicle, members of the crowd reportedly beat the man and threw sticks, bricks and eggs at the vehicle, damaging its front. At least four people were reported injured, including, according to the reports, two police officers. The officer in charge of Feni Model Police Station has said the matter will be investigated and further legal action taken, though he denied that police personnel were injured. We are still working to verify these accounts independently.

Our position

An allegation is not proof of guilt. Whatever the man is alleged to have posted, no one may be beaten, threatened or killed by a crowd. The right to life and to freedom from cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment is absolute and does not depend on what a person is accused of saying or believing. Bangladesh is a state party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which guarantees these rights as well as the right to a fair trial and the presumption of innocence.

We are particularly concerned for the safety of the man's wife. Detaining a spouse because of a partner's alleged speech has no legal basis unless there is credible, individual evidence against her. Both people must be treated humanely in custody, given prompt access to a lawyer and to their families, and protected from further violence, including after any release.

Amnesty Freedom also recognizes that religious communities have a legitimate right not to be targeted with hatred and incitement. That concern is best answered through lawful, impartial and proportionate processes, never through mob action. Vigilante violence endangers the accused, bystanders, the police and the wider community, and it risks fueling further tension.

Our calls

Amnesty Freedom calls on the authorities in Bangladesh to:

1. Guarantee the safety and humane treatment of the man and his wife while they are in custody, and ensure they have immediate access to legal counsel, medical care and family.
2. Release the man's wife unless there is credible evidence of an offense recognizable under international law, and ensure that any charges against either person are brought only through a fair, transparent process that meets international standards.
3. Carry out a prompt, independent and impartial investigation into the mob assault and the attack on the police vehicle, and hold those responsible to account.
4. Take active measures to prevent reprisals and further violence in Feni, and give public, unambiguous messages that mob violence will not be tolerated.
5. Review laws and practices on religious offense and online speech to make sure they comply with international human rights standards and are not used to silence expression or to incite popular violence.

We also urge community, religious and civic leaders in Feni to call publicly for calm and for justice to take its course through the courts.

Next steps

Amnesty Freedom is monitoring the situation, will update this statement as verified information becomes available, and is sharing its concerns with relevant United Nations human rights mechanisms.

Supporting information

The incident is reported in the following articles (both published in Bengali):

1. Jagonews24, “Feni: man accused of insulting Islam detained along with wife”: https://www.jagonews24.com/country/news/1180701
2. RTV Online, “Youth beaten by mob over alleged insult to religion, handed to police”: https://rtvonline.com/country/416347

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Note to editors: *This statement is based on media reports published by Jagonews24 and RTV Online. The individuals are not named in order to reduce the risk of further harm.*