

The Anatomy of Erasure

**A Dossier on Human Rights
Violations in Bangladesh**

(1947–2026)

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Prologue

Human rights violations often manifest through specific, recognizable symptoms: the suppression of expression, the dismantling of culture, and the removal of specific norms wherever they occur. To counter these forces, Amnesty Freedom upholds the universal right to freedom of expression, recognizing it as the very foundation from which all other freedoms arise. The organization is dedicated to prioritizing human freedom throughout the world, operating across all boundaries to nurture a culture of dignity, dialogue, and accountability that transcends geography, race, gender, ethnicity, and belief.

In an increasingly connected world, we stand as a steadfast guardian for the preservation of diverse cultures. We recognize that the unique tapestry of human heritage is under threat, and we stand resolutely against monoculture to prevent the erasure of unique identities. We believe that true freedom allows distinct communities to thrive alongside one another, rather than being forced into a single, homogenized mold.

To transform these ideals into reality, Amnesty Freedom operates with an unwavering commitment to inclusion and equity. We are working to build pathways and roadmaps from here to infinity and beyond to ensure that no voice is silenced, and no struggle for freedom is isolated. We protect those who are in danger simply for exercising their voice.

Whether operating through our central headquarters or via specific sister initiatives like Amnesty BD, our primary objective remains constant: to ensure that the right to expression is upheld without fear of retribution. This mission knows no borders and no limits; it reaches outward with purpose, upward with hope, and forward with resolve.

Amnesty Freedom

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This dossier presents an exhaustive geopolitical and human rights analysis of the systematic persecution, displacement, and marginalization of religious, ethnic, and ideological minority groups in the territory comprising modern-day Bangladesh. Spanning from the partition of British India in 1947 to the volatile post-revolutionary landscape of early 2026, this report documents a trajectory of existential decline for the region's diverse communities.

The analysis is structured into three definitive phases: Phase 01 (1947–1971), characterized by state-sponsored ethnic cleansing under the Pakistani regime; Phase 02 (1971–August 5, 2024), defined by structural disenfranchisement, legal dispossession, and cyclical electoral violence in independent Bangladesh; and Phase 03 (August 5, 2024–Present), marking a new era of ochlocracy (mob rule), administrative purging, and terrorist-style targeted killings following the collapse of the Sheikh Hasina administration.

Drawing upon cross-referenced data from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Amnesty International, Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK), the Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council (BHBCUC), and other verified sources including peer-reviewed journals and books, this report posits that the region has witnessed a catastrophic demographic collapse. The Hindu population, once constituting nearly 30% of the demographic fabric in 1947, has plummeted to single digits, a decline accelerated by the “Silent Exodus” of the mid-20th century and the violent surges of the 21st. Similarly, the Indigenous Jumma peoples of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) and the Ahmadiyya Muslim community face existential threats driven by majoritarian nationalism and religious extremism.

This pattern mirrors a global shift where majoritarian regimes weaponize administrative pretexts to exile or execute not just those of a different faith, but anyone whose values or dissent threaten the majoritarian monoculture. By reclassifying the erasure of religious, ethnic, and ideological ‘others’ as mere criminal disputes or legal necessities, the state maintains a facade of forensic deniability. To understand the scope of erasure documented in this report, the term “minority” is categorized into three specific pillars, (1) Religious Minorities: This includes established communities such as Hindus, Christians, and Buddhists, as well as persecuted sects within the broader faith landscape, most notably the Ahmadiyya Muslim community. (2) Ethnic and Indigenous Minorities: Primarily the 13 Indigenous “Jumma” peoples of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (such as the Chakma, Marma, and Tripura) and the Santhal and Kurukh peoples of the plains, whose erasure is tied to the seizure of ancestral lands and the rejection of their distinct “Adivasi” status. (3) Ideological and Value-Based Minorities: This category captures the “others” whose dissent is treated as a theological or political threat. It includes atheists, ex-Muslims, secular bloggers, rationalists, and LGBTQ+ individuals who are targeted through a “blasphemy algorithm” intended to purge freethought from the public square.

Spanning from the 1947 Partition to the volatile post-revolutionary landscape of 2026, this dossier presents a forensic analysis of the systematic erasure of minorities in Bangladesh. The intentional destruction of minority populations is a recurring theme in human history, defined by a majoritarian drive to eliminate the “other” through total annihilation. History provides stark precedents for such

atrocities: the industrialized slaughter of the Holocaust, the 1947 Partition massacres where entire trains of refugees were butchered in India, and the total wiping out of the Banu Qurayza village in the 7th century. In these instances, the goal was the immediate and visible physical removal of a community. However, in the past few decades, the global landscape has fundamentally shifted. In an era defined by the internet and the ubiquity of cameras, the traditional, high-visibility massacres of the past have become increasingly difficult to execute without triggering immediate international intervention or the forensic definition of genocide.

As documented in contemporary scholarly literature, such as *Genocide Studies International*, the nature of genocide has evolved into more sophisticated slow-motion or structural forms designed to evade global scrutiny. This dossier posits that the crisis in Bangladesh represents this modern mutation which is a transition from the overt massacres of 1971 to a hybrid model of erasure. To provide a granular record of this demographic collapse, the investigation operates through three critical analytical angles:

1. **Physical Erasure (Killing):** Documenting the lethal registry of targeted executions and professional “hits” designed to decapitate minority leadership.
2. **Territorial Erasure (Exile):** Analyzing the “Silent Exodus” driven by legal dispossession through acts like the Vested Property Act and the push-factors of physical insecurity.
3. **Structural Erasure (Harm/Injury/Loss):** Capturing the broad spectrum of harm falling short of death or exile, including physical injury, the destruction of livelihoods, and the systematic administrative cleansing of educational and government institutions through forced resignations.

Due to the rapid pace of ongoing developments and temporal constraints, this document serves as the foundational backbone upon which a more exhaustive and detailed report will be launched within the next few weeks. It establishes the forensic evidence of a community facing existential decline through state complicity and institutionalized marginalization.

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CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND DEFINITIONS

To accurately analyze the crisis in Bangladesh, this dossier utilizes a specific forensic lexicon. The following terms describe the operational mechanisms of violence, the structural nature of persecution, and the digital tools used to facilitate ethnic and ideological cleansing.

1. Operational Mechanisms of Violence

Ochlocracy (Mob Rule): A governance state where the “mob” functions as the primary enforcer of social and political control, often operating with the tacit approval or strategic negligence of the state. In this context, the state withdraws its monopoly on violence, allowing non-state actors to execute punitive measures against minorities without legal consequence.

The “terrorist-style” Attrition: A mode of violence characterized by targeted, extrajudicial executions that utilize specific terror tactics, such as throat-slitting, to instill psychological paralysis within a community. Unlike broad riots, these are precision strikes designed to silence leadership and dissent.

Administrative Cleansing: The systematic removal of minority individuals from positions of influence within civil service, education, and law enforcement. This is achieved not through legal termination, but through “force-resignations” coerced by mob intimidation and public humiliation.

Forensic Deniability: A state strategy of reclassifying targeted communal violence as “criminal incidents,” “political disputes,” or “personal feuds” to obscure the ethnic or religious motivation behind the attacks in official records.

2. Digital and Psychological Warfare

The Blasphemy Algorithm: A coordinated digital kill-chain used to neutralize targets. It follows a predictable sequence:

1. Mining: A target's digital footprint (comments, likes, old posts) is scanned for anything remotely secular or critical of extremism.
2. Framing: The content is screenshotted, decontextualized, and branded as “insulting the Prophet” or “hurting religious sentiments.”
3. Amplification: These fabrications are seeded into radicalized Telegram and WhatsApp groups to generate immediate outrage.
4. Mobilization: A physical mob is directed to the target's location (home or workplace) to demand punishment, often leading to arrest (under Section 295A) or lynching.

Visual Pedagogy of Terror: The strategic use of social media (Facebook, YouTube) to broadcast acts of violence such as the public humiliation of teachers or the destruction of temples to normalize these atrocities and desensitize the public.

Sleeper Infiltration: The strategic migration of radicalized individuals who “sanitize” their digital history to gain entry into Western nations (via student visas) with the intent of establishing logistical and financial support networks for extremism back home.

3. Socio-Political Classifications

Green Zone: A proposed internationally monitored safe haven within Bangladesh, designed to provide physical sanctuary for persecuted minorities, indigenous groups, and secular dissenters facing existential threats.

The Silent Exodus: The unreported, steady migration of minorities fleeing systemic discrimination. Unlike a “refugee crisis” which is sudden and visible, this is a slow-motion demographic collapse caused by sustained structural pressure.

Lawfare: The weaponization of the legal system to harass and silence opponents. This includes the filing of frivolous “sedition” or “hurting religious sentiment” cases to keep minority leaders perpetually entangled in court or detained without bail.

The Counterforce: A decentralized, multi-faith coalition of Bangladeshi citizens, spanning Hindus, Christians, Buddhists, Indigenous groups, and secular/ex-Muslims, united by a shared resistance to extremism. Unlike traditional NGO models which operate in silos, the *Counterforce* functions as a unified strategic bloc, leveraging cross-community intelligence to document atrocities, provide safe houses, and counter state propaganda.

PHASE 01: THE EAST PAKISTAN ERA (1947–1971)

State-Sponsored Cleansing and the Roots of Displacement

The creation of East Pakistan in 1947, born out of the partition of Bengal, severed the region's Hindu minority from their cultural and economic center in Calcutta. While the promise of the new state was one of Muslim homeland, the reality for minorities was an immediate descent into second-class citizenship. This period was not merely marked by sporadic communal friction but by orchestrated pogroms often instigated or tolerated by the state apparatus to suppress Bengali cultural nationalism or deflect from economic incompetence. The violence of this era established the “push factors” that would drive millions across the border into India, setting a precedent for forced migration that continues to this day.

The 1950 Riots: The First Wave of Systematic Terror

The communal riots of February–March 1950 represented the first major systematic attempt to alter the demographics of East Pakistan through violence. Unlike the chaotic violence of Partition in 1947, the 1950 pogroms exhibited signs of bureaucratic orchestration involving the police, the *Ansars* (a paramilitary force), and the East Pakistan Rifles [1], [2]. The violence was not contained to urban centers but penetrated deep into the rural hinterland, destroying the sense of security for Hindu villagers who had initially chosen to stay in their ancestral homes.

On February 10, 1950, during a high-level diplomatic dialogue in Dhaka between the Chief Secretaries of West and East Bengal, the presentation of a woman at the Secretariat building alleging sexual assault in Kolkata triggered an immediate strike by government employees [3]. This event transitioned into a large-scale procession and a rally at Victoria Park, where addresses by Secretariat staff preceded a wave of targeted violence against the Hindu population. Between 1:00 pm and the evening, the city experienced systematic looting and arson, resulting in the destruction of approximately 90% of Hindu-owned commercial properties and the displacement of an estimated 50,000 individuals [2].

Contemporary reports noted that the violence, which included the looting of jewelry shops in the presence of law enforcement, led to significant casualties and widespread displacement within a seven-hour window. In the Feni subdivision of Noakhali, attacks on Hindu properties commenced in early February 1950 within 200 yards of the SDO, the police station, and the courts, acting as a precursor to the carnage that would engulf the capital [4], [5]. Following the announcement of the Bagge Tribunal verdict on February 6, 1950, which awarded Karimganj to India, tensions in Sylhet escalated into widespread civil unrest. This instability was exacerbated by political grievances stemming from the 1947 referendum and prior warnings of violence issued by local legal professionals dissatisfied with the territorial ruling [6]. The resulting violence led to the devastation of 203 villages and the desecration of more than 800 Hindu religious sites across the region [4]. Additionally, the unrest impacted approximately 500 Manipuri families in villages such as Dhamai, Baradhami, Pubghat, and Baraitali, characterized by extensive arson, looting, and loss of life [4].

Tensions in Sylhet escalated on February 10, 1950, following the public display of inflammatory posters at Bandar Bazar, which preceded a rally at Gobinda Park where calls for retaliation against the

Hindu population were documented. Despite the imposition of Section 144 on February 13, administrative instability and the dissemination of unverified reports regarding massacres in Karimganj, partially attributed to statements by the Deputy Commissioner, led to a rapid deterioration of public order. Between February 14 and 18, organized mobs carried out systematic attacks across villages including Murti, Noagram, and Dhakadakshin, resulting in widespread looting, the destruction of religious sites, and targeted violence against civilians [6]. Documentation from this period indicates a breakdown in law enforcement efficacy, with reports of police failing to intervene in cases of abduction and sexual violence or suggesting financial settlements in lieu of criminal prosecution [6].

By mid-February, the violence had spread to Dhaka, where American diplomatic cables provided a harrowing account of the state's complicity. The U.S. Ambassador to India wrote to the Secretary of State on February 24, 1950, estimating that between 600 and 1,000 Hindus were killed in the Dhaka area alone during the peak of the violence [7]. The savagery was particularly acute in transit zones; at the Karimtolla airport near Dhaka, a crowd of Hindu passengers attempting to flee was attacked by an armed mob on February 12. A large number of passengers, including women and children, were killed or seriously wounded within sight of the military headquarters, yet the Pakistani armed guards stationed nearby reportedly failed to intervene [8].

The violence in the rural districts was equally devastating. In the village of Basantapur in Amta, Muslim mobs systematically destroyed houses, forcing mass displacement into neighboring villages.² Indian government sources recorded the cremation of 200 Hindu victims in just the first two days of violence in specific locales, a figure that likely represents a fraction of the total toll [1]. The psychological impact was immediate: approximately 50,000 of Dhaka's 80,000 Hindus were forced to flee their homes during the violence, seeking safety in refugee camps or attempting the perilous journey to India [1].

The political fallout of the 1950 riots was profound. J.N. Mandal, a prominent Scheduled Caste leader who had supported the creation of Pakistan and served as a Minister in the government, resigned in October 1950. In his resignation letter, Mandal cited the "systematic oppression of Hindus" and his inability to bear the "terrible suffering" of his community as the primary drivers for his departure [9]. His resignation signaled the definitive end of the illusion that minorities could find equal citizenship within the Pakistani framework.

The 1964 Pogroms: The Hazratbal Pretext and Industrial Slaughter

The relative calm of the late 1950s was shattered in 1964, when the theft of a holy relic (a hair of the Prophet Muhammad) from the Hazratbal Shrine in Kashmir, an event thousands of miles away in India, was weaponized by the Pakistani state to incite violence against Hindus in East Pakistan. Despite the incident having no connection to the Bengali minority, state-controlled media and political leaders utilized it to whip up communal frenzy, framing the local Hindu population as proxies for the Indian state.

The 1964 riots were distinguished by their industrial scale and the targeting of economic hubs. The "mill area" of Narayanganj, a center of jute processing south of Dhaka, became a killing field. On

January 13–14, 1964, a minimum of 300 Hindus were slaughtered in Narayanganj alone [10]. The violence was characterized by significant brutality; reports from the time describe villages like Rayarbazar being burned to the ground, resembling “a town in some front line” of a war zone [11].

Pakistani government estimates conservatively admitted to over 1,000 deaths, though independent observers, foreign correspondents, and Indian newspapers placed the toll significantly higher, estimating thousands of fatalities [12]. The riots were strategically utilized to break the economic backbone of the Hindu community, targeting factories, businesses, and textile mills where Hindus formed a substantial part of the workforce or ownership. This economic targeting triggered a “massive flow of refugees” comparable to the exodus of 1947 and 1950, further destabilizing the region and altering its demographic composition [10]. The US State Department noted that the “principal danger” of these riots was the resumption of large-scale migration, which would present severe economic setbacks for both India and Pakistan [10].

The Kaptai Dam (1962): Developmental Genocide in the CHT

While religious minorities faced violent pogroms in the plains, the ethnic minorities of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), primarily the Buddhist Chakma, Marma, and Tripura peoples, faced a different form of persecution: displacement disguised as development.

The construction of the Kaptai Hydroelectric Dam in 1962, a flagship project of the Pakistani modernization drive, resulted in catastrophic consequences for the indigenous population. The dam submerged approximately 56,000 hectares of land, which included 40% of the prime arable land in the CHT [13]. This submersion wiped out the economic base of the Jumma people, who relied on wet-rice cultivation in the valleys. Culturally, the loss was equally devastating; the royal palace of the Chakma Raja and major Buddhist temples in Rangamati were lost forever under the rising waters [14].

Impact on CHT Jumma Peoples (1960s):

- **Mass Displacement:** Approximately 100,000 people were displaced by the reservoir, a figure representing a significant portion of the total CHT population at the time. About 70% of those displaced were Chakma [15],
- **Forced Migration and Statelessness:** The state provided meager to no compensation for the lost land. Consequently, about 40,000 to 60,000 displaced Chakmas were forced to migrate across the border into India, settling primarily in Arunachal Pradesh [14]. These refugees were largely deemed “stateless” and were not granted Indian citizenship for decades, living in legal limbo.
- **“Death Trap”:** Scholars and activists have classified the Kaptai Dam project not merely as infrastructural development but as a “death trap” for indigenous peoples [14]. It destroyed their self-sufficiency, forcing them into poverty and marginalization, and planted the seeds of deep resentment that would fuel the armed insurgency in the post-independence era.

The 1971 Liberation War: Genocide and Targeted Atrocities

The 1971 Liberation War represents the nadir of minority persecution in the region's history. While the Pakistani army launched a brutal crackdown on all pro-independence Bengalis under "Operation Searchlight," Hindus were singled out with specific ferocity. The Pakistani military junta viewed the Hindu minority as "agents of India" and subversives who had corrupted the purity of the Islamic state. This conflation of religious identity with political treason led to targeted massacres and systematic rape.

Data on 1971 Atrocities against Minorities:

- Targeted Killings:** Estimates of the total death toll during the nine-month war range up to 3 million. Hindus, who accounted for less than 20% of the population at the time, are estimated to have comprised a disproportionately high percentage of the fatalities. Some researchers and survivor accounts suggest that Hindus made up a majority of the massacre victims in rural areas [16]. The army maintained pre-made lists of targets, which explicitly included members of the Hindu community alongside Bengali nationalists and intellectuals [17].
- Sexual Violence as a Weapon:** The war witnessed the rape of between 200,000 and 400,000 women. Hindu women were specifically targeted for sexual enslavement and rape as a tool of psychological warfare and genetic dilution [18]. This gendered violence was designed to destroy the "honor" of the community and force their permanent displacement.
- Massacres:** Specific incidents highlight the scale of the atrocities. The Chuknagar massacre in Khulna district saw over 10,000 people killed in a single day as they attempted to flee to India [16]. On May 21, 1971, in the village of Dakra (Bagerhat), Peace Committee members and Razakars (local collaborators) massacred unarmed Hindu refugees [16].
- Diplomatic Corroboration:** The atrocities were documented in real-time by foreign observers. Archer Blood, the U.S. Consul General in Dhaka, sent the famous "Blood Telegram" to Washington, explicitly stating that the army was "burning Hindu and Bengali areas... and shooting occupants as they came out" [16]. This corroborates the targeted nature of the violence against minority neighborhoods.

To provide a historical baseline for the current human rights crisis, the following analysis examines the foundational period of minority persecution within the region. During Phase 01 (1947–1971), the transition from the British Partition to the East Pakistan era established a trajectory of state-sponsored ethnic cleansing and structural displacement. This period was defined by orchestrated pogroms often tolerated by the state apparatus to suppress Bengali cultural nationalism and the weaponization of *push factors* designed to drive religious and ethnic minorities across the border. From the bureaucratic orchestration of the 1950 riots to the targeted atrocities of the 1971 Genocide, these events formed the early forensic evidence of a community facing existential decline through systematic violence and state complicity.

Table 1 Phase 01 Violence Indicators (1947–1971)

Event	Primary Target	Est. Killed	Est. Displaced/Exiled	Key Mechanism of Persecution
1950 Riots	Hindus	1,000+ (Dhaka area); 200+ cremated (2 days)	~50,000 (Dhaka only); thousands more rural	Police-backed mob violence; systematic arson of villages.
Kaptai Dam (1962)	CHT Jumma (Chakma)	N/A (Indirect mortality high)	100,000 (internal & external); ~60,000 to India	State infrastructure project; land submersion without compensation.
1964 Riots	Hindus	1,000–3,000+ (Govt vs NGO est.)	Tens of thousands	False pretext (Hazratbal); targeting of industrial workers.
1971 Genocide	Hindus, Intellectuals	Disproportionate share of ~3 Million Total	~10 Million (Refugees to India, mostly Hindu)	Military operation (Searchlight); systematic rape; death lists.

PHASE 02: POST-INDEPENDENCE ERA (1971–AUGUST 5, 2024)

Institutionalized Marginalization, Legalized Theft, and Cyclic Violence

The independence of Bangladesh in 1971 was founded on the four pillars of nationalism, socialism, democracy, and secularism. However, the secular ideal was rapidly eroded in the years following independence, replaced by an increasingly Islamized constitutional framework. The period from 1975 onwards saw the institutionalization of minority persecution through legal mechanisms, most notably the Vested Property Act, and the establishment of a political culture where minorities became the perennial scapegoats of electoral contests.

Following the assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1975, the country underwent a decisive constitutional shift away from its founding secular principles. This transition was marked by the insertion of “Bismillah-ar-Rahman-ar-Rahim” into the Preamble and the subsequent declaration of Islam as the state religion, effectively replacing the secular social contract with a majoritarian framework that relegated minorities to a position of systemic vulnerability.

The Vested Property Act: The Economics of Dispossession

If the violence of 1971 was physical, the persecution in independent Bangladesh became profoundly economic. The single most devastating instrument of persecution in Phase 02 was the *Vested Property Act* (VPA), originally enacted by Pakistan as the Enemy Property Act in 1965. Instead of repealing this discriminatory law after independence, the new Bangladeshi state retained it, renaming it the Vested Property Act in 1974. This law allowed the state to seize property owned by “enemies”, a term practically interpreted to mean Hindus who had fled to India during the wars or riots.

Statistical Impact of the VPA:

- **Land Grabbing:** Research indicates that approximately 2.01 to 2.6 million acres of land were seized from Hindu households under the guise of this act. This constitutes a staggering 53% of the total land owned by the Hindu community in Bangladesh [19].
- **Households Affected:** The human cost of this law is immense; approximately 1.2 million households, or 43% of all Hindu households in the country, have been affected by property seizures under the VPA [20]. This effectively decapitalized the community, reducing a once landed group to marginalization.
- **Bipartisan Beneficiaries:** Crucially, the seizure of minority land was not the purview of a single political party. A study revealed that 44.2% of the beneficiaries of VPA land were affiliated with the Awami League, while 31.7% were affiliated with the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) [21]. This demonstrates that minority dispossession is a structural feature of the Bangladeshi political economy, transcending ideological divides.
- **The “Silent Exodus”:** The economic strangulation caused by the VPA, combined with physical insecurity, contributed to a “Silent Exodus.” The Hindu population declined by approximately 705 persons per day prior to the Liberation War, and this attrition continued at

high rates, 774 persons per day during the 2001-2012 period [19]. This represents a slow-motion demographic collapse driven by policy.

The 2001 Post-Election Violence: Rape as a Political Weapon

The general election of October 2001, which brought the BNP-Jamaat coalition to power, unleashed a wave of communal violence unprecedented in independent Bangladesh. This violence was distinct in its strategic use of gendered violence to humiliate communities and punish them for their perceived support of the Awami League.

Documentation of 2001 Atrocities:

- **Sexual Violence:** Rape was deployed systematically as a weapon of intimidation. Human rights organizations and Amnesty International estimated that over 100 women were subjected to gang rape in the immediate aftermath of the election. The victims ranged from young schoolgirls to elderly women. In one documented case in Faridpur on October 6, 2001, a college student was raped in front of her mother [22]. In Barisal, on October 11, two Hindu women were raped in front of their husbands, who had been tied up by the attackers [22].
- **Displacement and Terror:** Hundreds of Hindu families were driven off their land in districts like Barisal, Bhola, Pirojpur, and Khulna. Entire villages, such as Ziodhara and Deuatala Bazaar, were emptied as armed gangs threatened residents with death if they did not leave [22]. In Reeshipara village, 30 families were threatened with expulsion unless they paid extortion money [22].
- **Targeted Killings:** The violence included high-profile assassinations aimed at silencing community leadership. Gopal Krishna Muhuri, the Principal of Nazirhat College in Chittagong, was shot dead at his home on November 16, 2001, by gunmen posing as police [22]. In rural areas, ordinary individuals like Sunil Das Sandhu were hacked to death, spreading terror at the grassroots level [22].

The CHT Insurgency and Militarization (1977–Present)

In the Chittagong Hill Tracts, the state's refusal to grant autonomy led to a two-decade-long armed conflict between the Shanti Bahini (the armed wing of the Jumma people) and the Bangladesh military. The state responded with heavy militarization and a counter-insurgency strategy that involved settling 400,000 Bengali Muslims on indigenous lands to alter the demographic balance.

- **Casualties:** Between 1977 and 1997, the conflict resulted in over 30,000 deaths. This figure includes roughly 6,000 combatants and thousands of civilians who perished in massacres or due to displacement-related hardships [23].
- **Displacement:** The conflict caused massive internal and external displacement. Over 80,000 civilians were internally displaced, and roughly 70,000 fled to India as refugees [23].
- **Post-Accord Violence:** Despite the signing of the CHT Peace Accord in 1997, peace remains elusive. The region remains heavily militarized, and land grabbing by settlers continues. In the

first half of 2024 alone, 70 incidents of human rights violations were reported, affecting at least 5,435 Jumma people and resulting in the displacement of 264 families [24]. The Bawm community, in particular, faced a crackdown in 2024 due to alleged links with the Kuki-Chin National Front (KNF), leading to the displacement of 4,000 individuals [25].

The War on Freethinkers: Blogger Killings (2013–2016)

A new vector of persecution emerged in 2013, targeting ideological minorities: atheists, secular bloggers, Ex-Muslims, and LGBTQ+ activists. Extremist groups like Ansarullah Bangla Team (ABT) and Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) published “hit lists” and executed targets with machetes in public spaces.

- **Targeted Assassinations:** Between 2013 and 2016, at least 54 people were killed in attacks claimed by Islamic extremists [26]. The victims included prominent writers like Avijit Roy, Washiqur Rahman, and Ananta Bijoy Das, who were hacked to death for their writings critical of religious fundamentalism [27].
- **LGBTQ+ Targeting:** The violence extended to gender minorities. In 2016, Xulhaz Mannan, the editor of Bangladesh’s first LGBT magazine *Roopbaan*, was hacked to death in his apartment alongside his friend Tanay Mojumdar [27].
- **State Response and Self-Censorship:** The state’s response was often victim-blaming. Government officials publicly admonished bloggers for “hurting religious sentiments,” effectively validating the extremists’ grievances. This led to a culture of fear and self-censorship, with dozens of activists fleeing the country to seek asylum in Europe and North America [27].

Persecution of Ahmadiyyas and Christians

- **Ahmadiyya Community:** The Ahmadiyya community faces systemic discrimination and periodic violence, often driven by demands to declare them “non-Muslims.” In 2023, attacks in Panchagarh saw the destruction of 157 homes and businesses. This pattern continued into 2024, with reports of Ahmadi mosques being targeted and community members being barred from performing Eid sacrifices [28].
- **Christians:** Christians, particularly those from Muslim or Indigenous backgrounds (Converts), face “double persecution.” They are targeted by both religious extremists and their own communities. Open Doors reported that converts are often forced into hiding, facing physical assault and forced divorce. In the lead-up to the 2024 unrest, attacks on churches and threats against pastors increased, driven by both political instability and religious intolerance [29].

The transition of the region into an independent state in 1971 initially rested on the secular pillars of nationalism, socialism, and democracy. However, Phase 02 (1971–August 2024) is defined by the rapid erosion of these ideals and their replacement with an increasingly Islamized constitutional framework.

During this era, the persecution of minorities shifted from the overt military violence of the liberation war toward institutionalized marginalization and structural erasure. This was achieved through legal mechanisms of dispossession, such as the Vested Property Act, which targeted the economic resilience of the Hindu community, and the emergence of violent extremism targeting ideological dissenters. The following data captures the systemic nature of this decline, documenting how legal theft, cyclic electoral violence, and the “Silent Exodus” fundamentally altered the nation's demographic and social fabric.

Table 2 Phase 02 Violence Indicators (1971–Aug 2024)

Category	Key Statistics/Event	Primary Impact	Source
Land Dispossession	~2.6 million acres seized (Vested Property Act)	1.2 million Hindu households affected; massive economic ruin.	[19]
2001 Election Violence	100+ documented gang rapes; hundreds of families evicted.	Use of sexual violence to punish voting patterns; mass terror.	[22]
Ideological Killings	54 killed (2013-2016); 12+ bloggers/writers hacked to death.	Eradication of secular/atheist public discourse; exile of intellectuals.	[26]
CHT Conflict	30,000 deaths (1977-1997); 5,000 Bawm affected (2024).	Demographic engineering; military occupation; forced assimilation.	[23]
Demographic Shift	Hindu population decline: 13.5% (1974) to 7.95% (2022).	“Silent Exodus” fueled by systemic discrimination.	[12]

PHASE 03: THE POST-HASINA VACUUM (AUGUST 5, 2024–PRESENT)

This forensic investigation constitutes a comprehensive analysis of the human rights situation in Bangladesh during the transitional period following the resignation of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on August 5, 2024, through to January 19, 2026. This eighteen-month epoch has witnessed a catastrophic deterioration in the safety and legal status of religious minorities, specifically Hindus, Christians, and Ahmadiyya Muslims, and ethnic minorities, most notably the Indigenous Jumma peoples of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT). The investigation posits that the violence observed was not merely a symptom of post-revolutionary disorder but evolved into a systematic campaign of persecution, characterized by state complicity, judicial weaponization, and the targeted assassination of minority leadership.

The inquiry identifies three distinct operational phases of persecution. August–October 2024 was defined by “ochlocracy” or mob rule, where a security vacuum facilitated the widespread arson of minority properties and a coordinated institutional purge of minority educators under the guise of anti-discrimination reforms. November 2024–November 2025 marked the institutionalization of persecution, where the judiciary and military apparatus were leveraged to criminalize minority dissent, exemplified by the sedition charges against Hindu leader Chinmoy Krishna Das and the state-backed pogroms in the CHT. December 2025–January 2026 represents the most lethal escalation, characterized by extrajudicial executions involving throat-slitting and the calculated elimination of minority professionals and journalists.

Data aggregated from primary sources, including the Rights & Risks Analysis Group (RRAG), the Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council (BHBCUC), and international observers, documents a death toll and displacement crisis that contradicts the Interim Government’s official narratives. While the state apparatus, led by Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus, categorized the vast majority of 645 recorded incidents in 2025 as “non-communal,” forensic evidence suggests a deliberate strategy of reclassification to mask the ethnic cleansing dynamics at play. This report provides a detailed reconstruction of these atrocities to serve as a historical record and a basis for international accountability mechanisms.

The Security Vacuum and the Rise of Majoritarian Vigilantism

The abrupt resignation of Sheikh Hasina on August 5, 2024, precipitated a total collapse of the state’s monopoly on violence.¹ The “July Revolution,” initially a student-led movement against quota systems in civil service, rapidly metamorphosed into a broader anti-authoritarian uprising [30], [31], [32]. However, as the structures of the Awami League government disintegrated, the distinction between political retribution and communal persecution evaporated. The police force, heavily compromised by its role in the suppression of student protests, withdrew from active duty, creating a nationwide security void that lasted for weeks.¹

In this vacuum, religious minorities, particularly the Hindu community, historically viewed as a vote bank for the secular-leaning Awami League, became proxy targets for anti-regime rage. The narrative propagated by radical Islamist factions and opportunistic political elements posited that the minority

communities were enablers of the fallen dictatorship. This justification was used to legitimize a wave of attacks that were collective in nature, targeting entire neighborhoods rather than specific political actors.

The violence of August 2024 was distinguished by its scale and spontaneity. Within the first two weeks of the Interim Government's formation, the Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council (BHBCUC) recorded **2,010 distinct incidents** of communal violence [33], [34]. These were not isolated skirmishes but represented a nationwide pogrom. Widespread unrest has seen Hindu communities targeted across 45 districts, leading to five fatalities, including two Awami League members [35], [36], [37]. The violence further affected Ahmadiyya mosques and homes [38], [39], along with several ethnic minority groups. During the chaos, mobs also attacked and vandalized up to nine private television stations [40], [41].

Table 3 Typology of Violence During the Initial Power Vacuum (August 4–20, 2024)

Category of Violence	Incidence Count	Forensic Characteristics	Impact
Attacks on Temples	152	Desecration of idols; arson; looting of donation boxes.	Erasure of religious presence; psychological terror.
Residential Arson	157 (Families)	Use of accelerants (petrol/octane); targeted looting of assets.	Displacement; loss of generational wealth.
Cultural Vandalism [42]	1,494	Destruction of sculptures/monuments linked to 1971 Liberation War.	Ideological signaling against secular nationalism.
Physical Assault	Hundreds (Est.)	Beating with sticks/cleavers; sexual violence against women.	Physical injury; intimidation to force migration.

The destruction of 1,494 sculptures and monuments is particularly significant [42]. These symbols, often representing the 1971 Liberation War and its secular ideals, act as cultural anchors for the minority communities who view the 1971 independence struggle as the guarantor of their rights. Their systematic destruction signaled a rejection of the secular social contract and the assertion of a new, majoritarian identity for the state.

The “July Massacre” Narrative as Justification for Persecution

The violence was fueled by the narrative of the “July Massacre,” referring to the killing of students by the previous regime’s security forces [30], [31], [32]. While the demand for justice for these students was legitimate, it was weaponized against minorities. Propaganda circulated on social media platforms claimed that Hindu civil servants and teachers had actively collaborated in the suppression of the student movement. This unfounded conspiracy theory laid the groundwork for the institutional purges that followed.

Background

The immediate catalyst for the unrest was the High Court’s reinstatement on June 5, 2024, of a 30 percent quota in government jobs for the descendants of freedom fighters from the 1971 Liberation War. [43] In Bangladesh, government service is coveted not merely for stability but as one of the few avenues for upward mobility in an economy grappling with high youth unemployment and inflation. [44] The quota system, which had been abolished in 2018 following similar student protests, was

viewed by the “Gen Z” demographic not as a tool of historical justice, but as a mechanism of political patronage designed to entrench the ruling Awami League’s power base. [45]

While the legal ruling provided the spark, the fuel was a decade and a half of authoritarian consolidation. The Awami League government, in power since 2009, had systematically dismantled opposition parties, curbed press freedom, and politicized the judiciary and security services. [46] By 2024, the state had effectively closed avenues for peaceful political dissent. When students took to the streets, they were not merely debating employment policy; they were challenging the legitimacy of a regime that many felt had disenfranchised them.

The transition from peaceful blockades to lethal conflict was accelerated by political rhetoric. In mid-July, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina referred to the protesters using the term “Razakar” which is a highly charged pejorative referring to collaborators who aided the Pakistani military in the 1971 genocide. [47] This labeling served a dual purpose: it delegitimized the students’ grievances and, crucially, signaled to the ruling party’s student wing, the Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), that the protesters were enemies of the state. The subsequent deployment of BCL cadres to “quell” the protests on university campuses marked the beginning of the violence, which quickly necessitated the intervention of armed police and paramilitary forces as the students fought back. [48], [49]

The initial two weeks of July were characterized by the “Bangla Blockade,” where students occupied key intersections in Dhaka and other major cities. While disruptive, these actions were largely non-lethal.

July 15 (The Turning Point)

The BCL launched coordinated attacks on protesters at Dhaka University and Dhaka Medical College Hospital. Armed with rods, sticks, and locally made weapons, BCL activists injured hundreds of students. [49] 11 While fatalities were minimal on this specific day, the brutality of the attacks—often committed in the presence of passive police forces—radicalized the student body and drew the general public into the conflict.

The “July Massacre” (July 16 – July 21)

This period represents the apex of state violence, where the majority of civilian deaths occurred. The government deployed the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) and the elite, anti-terrorism Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) to support the police.

The psychological turning point of the uprising occurred in Rangpur on July 16. Abu Sayed, a student coordinator at Begum Rokeya University, stood unarmed in the street, arms outstretched in defiance of a police line. Video footage verified by Amnesty International and OHCHR shows police officers firing rubber bullets and shotgun pellets at Sayed from a distance of less than 15 meters. As he collapsed, he was not offered aid but was instead subjected to further aggression. [45] Sayed’s death became the defining image of the revolution. On this day alone, 6 people were killed nationwide, marking the first confirmed fatalities of the movement. [50], [51]

July 18: The “Complete Shutdown” and Arson

As students declared a “Complete Shutdown” of the country, violence erupted in Dhaka’s Uttara, Badda, and Jatrabari districts. OHCHR estimates indicate approximately 100 deaths occurred on July 18 alone. In Jatrabari, journalist Hasan Mehedi of the Dhaka Times was killed by gunshot wounds, signaling that press identification offered no protection. [52] Protesters set fire to the headquarters of Bangladesh Television (BTV) and various police boxes, prompting the government to shut down the internet nationwide, a digital blackout designed to obscure the impending crackdown. [43]

July 19: The Day of Maximum Lethality

July 19 stands as arguably the deadliest single day of the uprising. With the internet severed, security forces operated with near-total impunity. Multiple credible reports and verified video footage confirm the use of RAB helicopters to fire on crowds in Jatrabari, Gazipur, and Badda. [43] This use of aerial platforms to engage civilian protesters is a rare and extreme measure in civil unrest control. OHCHR estimates suggest the death toll on this day approached 300 individuals. [43] In the Rampura and Mohammadpur areas, pitched battles raged between police and residents who had joined the students. The police fired indiscriminately into residential buildings to suppress support for the protesters on the streets. [43]

July 20-21: The Curfew War

The government imposed a nationwide curfew with “shoot-on-sight” orders. [53] Despite this, defiance was widespread. Continued heavy fighting in Jatrabari and Savar resulted in dozens of more deaths. The cumulative death toll by the end of this phase had already exceeded several hundred, though the information blackout prevented accurate real-time reporting. [43]

The Silent Terror (July 22 – August 3)

Following the intense kinetic violence of Phase II, the conflict entered a phase of “silent terror.” The army was deployed to enforce the curfew, and the violence shifted from the streets to the homes. Security forces conducted “block raids” in student-heavy neighborhoods like Bashundhara and Messina. Over 11,000 people were arbitrarily arrested in barely two weeks. [50] Reports emerged of students dying in custody due to torture or lack of medical treatment for injuries sustained earlier. The casualty count continued to tick upward as the critically injured succumbed to their wounds in hospitals that were under heavy surveillance. [53], [54], [55], [56], [57]

The Fall of the Regime (August 4 – August 5)

The final phase began with the student movement’s rejection of government dialogue offers and the announcement of a “Long March to Dhaka.” This day marked the total breakdown of law and order, resulting in the highest single-day death toll since July 19 as over 90 people were killed nationwide. [58] In a harbinger of the regime’s collapse, a mob attacked the Enayetpur Police Station in Sirajganj. Thirteen to fifteen police officers were beaten to death or lynched, the single deadliest incident for law enforcement in the entire uprising. [59] As Sheikh Hasina fled to India, the security apparatus

disintegrated. Police deserted their posts, leading to a vacuum filled by jubilation and vengeance. In a horrific final act of state violence, police in the Ashulia area of Savar were filmed piling the bodies of shot protesters onto a van and setting them on fire to destroy evidence. [50] This incident, which occurred just hours before or as the regime fell, would later become a focal point for crimes against humanity charges. Across the country, police stations (e.g., Jatrabari, Baniachong) came under siege. Officers who failed to escape were lynched. The OHCHR notes that “revenge violence surged” immediately after the resignation. [43]

Organization	Est. Fatalities	Methodology & Notes	Source
Students Against Discrimination (SAD)	1,581	Crowdsourced data verified by the Health Sub-Committee; includes post-hospital deaths and rural reports.	[60]
OHCHR (UN)	~1,400	Forensic analysis of credible reports; likely conservative; includes ~180 children.	[61]
Ministry of Health (MOHFW)	1,000+	Preliminary official estimate; hampered by initial suppression of hospital data.	[62]
Human Rights Support Society (HRSS)	875	Verified count from July 16–Sept 9; notes 77% died of gunshot wounds.	[63]
Interim Govt Draft List	708	Initial draft published Sept 24, 2024; acknowledged as incomplete.	[64]

The SAD figure of 1,581 is likely the most reflective of reality, as it accounts for victims who were never brought to hospitals (to avoid arrest) and those buried secretly. The UN’s estimate of 1,400 provides strong international corroboration for the scale of the massacre, rejecting the lower initial government figures. [56]

Forensic Analysis of State Violence

The catastrophic loss of life during the July–August uprising was not a localized anomaly of crowd control, but rather the calculated result of specific tactical choices and the deployment of lethal weaponry by the state apparatus. This forensic reconstruction indicates a deliberate transition from standard riot suppression to a militarized offensive against the civilian population. By analyzing munitions, entry wound patterns, and the deployment of heavy hardware, a clear trajectory of lethal intent emerges. The state’s monopoly on violence was leveraged not to restore order, but to execute a “shoot-to-kill” policy designed to decapitate the movement through physical annihilation.

Weaponry and Munitions

- **Shotguns and Pellets:** The widespread use of shotguns loaded with birdshot or metal pellets resulted in a mass blinding event. Over 400 individuals lost their eyesight due to pellet injuries. [65], [66] While ostensibly “non-lethal,” at close range, these pellets penetrated skulls and vital organs.
- **Assault Rifles:** Evidence collected by OHCHR and independent investigators confirms the use of Type 56 assault rifles (a Chinese variant of the AK-47) by police forces. [67] This weapon is designed for battlefield combat, not crowd control.

- **Aerial Platforms:** The deployment of Bell 407 helicopters by the RAB to fire on protesters is a critical finding. Witness testimonies and video evidence place these helicopters firing into crowds in Jatrabari and Badda on July 19. The use of air power against civilians is a significant escalator in human rights jurisprudence. [43]

Injury Patterns and Intent

Forensic analysis of death certificates and hospital records from Dhaka Medical College Hospital reveals a disturbing pattern.

- **Targeting:** 78% of deaths analyzed were caused by gunshot wounds. [68]
- **Placement:** A high proportion of wounds were located in the head (29%) and chest (46%). [68]

Implication: In standard riot control doctrine, officers are trained to fire at the lower limbs to incapacitate. The prevalence of upper-body wounds suggests a deliberate “shoot-to-kill” policy implemented by security forces on the ground. [43]

Law Enforcement Fatalities: The Recoil of Violence

While the narrative of the July Revolution is dominated by state repression, the collapse of the Hasina government triggered a wave of retaliatory violence against the police, who were viewed by the public not as protectors but as enforcers of a tyranny.

Total Police Casualties

The Bangladesh Police Headquarters officially recorded 44 police fatalities between July and August 18, 2024. [44] While significantly lower than the civilian toll, this number represents a catastrophic loss of life for the force, concentrated in a very short window. The violence against police was largely reactive, occurring when the state’s protective umbrella evaporated.

The Enayetpur Massacre (August 4)

In the deadliest single incident for law enforcement, a mob estimated at several thousand stormed the Enayetpur Police Station in Sirajganj. Officers attempted to repel the crowd but were overrun. 15 police officers were killed. Reports indicate many were beaten to death after surrendering or were hunted down in neighboring homes where they sought refuge. [59] This attack occurred on the eve of the government’s fall, reflecting the total breakdown of authority in the provinces.

The Jatrabari Siege (August 5)

Jatrabari had been a killing field in July, with police firing indiscriminately at protesters for weeks. On August 5, the dynamic reversed. A violent mob attacked the Jatrabari Police Station with petrol bombs. At least four police/Ansar officers were killed. [43] The station was looted and burned, a symbolic destruction of a node of state power that had terrorized the locality.

The Baniachong Lynching (August 5)

In Habiganj, a mob attacked the Baniachong Police Station. Sub-Inspector Santosh Chowdhury was the sole fatality. Disturbing reports suggest he was handed over to the mob by Army personnel after negotiations for his safe passage failed, leading to his lynching. [69] This incident highlights the complex and often precarious relationship between the military and the police during the transition period.

The Ashulia Context

In Ashulia (Savar), the killing of police officers was inextricably linked to the prior atrocities committed by them. The discovery of the “body piling” video incited a furious mob to attack the station, where officers managed to escape only by firing their way out, though some were reportedly lynched in the chaos.

The events of July 1 to August 15, 2024, in Bangladesh constitute a state-perpetrated massacre of historic proportions. The data indicates that at least 1,500 people lost their lives, the vast majority of them civilians killed by their own government’s security forces. The violence was characterized by the use of military tactics against unarmed students, the targeted killing of children, and a complete abandonment of human rights norms.

The tragedy is bi-directional. The collapse of the regime unleashed a torrent of retaliatory violence that claimed the lives of dozens of police officers, illustrating the total breakdown of the social contract. As Bangladesh navigates its transition under the Interim Government, the forensic accounting of these deaths is not just a matter of history but of justice. The ongoing trials at the ICT and the reforms of the police force will be defined by the blood spilled during these forty-six days. The “Monsoon Revolution” liberated the country from autocracy, but the cost was a generation of youth maimed, blinded, and buried.

Anarchy and Administrative Purging

The resignation and flight of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on August 5, 2024, following a massive student-led uprising, precipitated a catastrophic collapse of law and order. While the interim government led by Nobel Laureate Dr. Muhammad Yunus described the transition as a “second independence” or “Monsoon Revolution,” for minority communities, it signaled the onset of a terrifying new wave of persecution. This phase is characterized by a dangerous conflation of “Minority” with “Awami League Supporter,” providing a convenient political pretext for communal violence that has since morphed into systematic administrative cleansing and brutal vigilante justice [34], [70], [71], [72], [73].

August 2024: The Immediate Aftermath and Data Discrepancies

In the days immediately following August 5, a complete security vacuum allowed mobs to attack minority targets with impunity. The police force, fearful of retaliation for their role in suppressing student protests, largely vanished from the streets, leaving minorities defenseless against retribution. Reports from Prothom Alo and the Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council highlight a massive wave of communal violence occurring between August 4 and August 20. While Prothom Alo

documented attacks on 1,068 houses and business establishments alongside 22 houses of worship [70], [71], the Council reported a significantly higher total of 2,010 incidents [34], including the desecration of 69 temples [34]. These figures underscore the severity of the 16-day period, during which at least 157 families saw their homes and livelihoods completely destroyed by coordinated looting and arson [34]. The current government led by Dr. Yunus repeatedly denied motives behind those violence to be communal [72], [73]. While the interim government announced dozens of arrests and registered 88 cases related to anti-Hindu violence by December 2024, international observers and neighboring officials continued to document dozens of additional incidents well into early 2025.

Casualty and Incident Data:

- **Civil Society Data:** The Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council (BHBCUC) reported a staggering **2,010 incidents** of communal violence between August 4 and August 20, 2024. These attacks affected 1,705 families across 68 districts and included the looting, vandalism, and burning of homes and businesses [71].
- **Confirmed Deaths:** BHBCUC reported **82 Hindus killed** between August and November 2024 [74].
- **Government Denial:** The Interim Government vehemently disputed these figures, characterizing the violence as political rather than communal. A government press release issued in January 2026 stated that out of 645 incidents recorded in 2025, only 71 had “communal elements,” dismissing the vast majority as “criminal in nature” or related to political feuds [72]. This narrative divergence highlights the state’s refusal to acknowledge the targeted nature of the violence.
- **Temple Desecration:** In the immediate aftermath of the regime change, at least **152 Hindu temples** were damaged or desecrated across the country [74].

Ahmadiyya and Indigenous Communities

The Ahmadiyya community faced targeted violence across various regions, including the vandalism of a mosque in Dhaka [75] and the destruction of 80 homes in Panchagarh [76]. The systematic persecution of the Ahmadiyya community in Bangladesh reached a devastating peak following the political transition on August 5, 2024, characterized by coordinated mob violence and a critical absence of state protection [46], [48], [77]. A particularly tragic symbol of this crisis is the martyrdom of Shahriar Rakeen, a 16-year-old boy from Ahmednagar, Panchagarh, who was brutally beaten with lethal weapons during an extremist rampage on the day of the regime change [78], [79], [80]. Despite receiving intensive medical care at the National Institute of Neurosciences in Dhaka for over three months, Rakeen succumbed to his severe head injuries on November 8, 2024 [78], [81], [82]. This localized violence was mirrored in the Nilphamari District, where the Ahmadiyya mosque in Choraikhola was torched and reduced to ashes while local administrative officials remained largely inactive or went into hiding [46], [83], [84]. The national scope of these targeted assaults extended to the capital, where the Ahmadiyya mosque in Madartek was vandalized multiple times, illustrating a pervasive security vacuum that emboldened extremist clerics [34], [85]. International human rights observers and diplomatic bodies

have since highlighted these events as a direct assault on religious freedom, emphasizing that the human cost, epitomized by the death of a defenseless teenager, demands immediate accountability and systemic legal reform [78], [86], [87], [88].

Table 4 Documented Anti-Ahmadiyya Incidents (Aug 2024 - Jan 2025)

Location	Date	Incident Type	Details
Ahmednagar, Panchagarh	Aug 5, 2024	Mob Violence / Arson	80+ homes destroyed; Shahriar Rakeen (16) fatally injured (died Nov 8).
Choraikhola, Nilphamari	Aug 5, 2024	Arson	Ahmadiyya mosque burned and looted.
Madartek, Dhaka	Aug 2024	Vandalism	Mosque attacked twice; nearby homes damaged.
Bamrail	Aug 2024	Physical Assault	Community members beaten; properties vandalized.
Panchagarh (District-wide)	Oct 2024	Intimidation	Human chains demanding withdrawal of cases filed by Ahmadi victims.

Assaults on Sufism and Baul Tradition

Bangladesh’s legacy of syncretic Islam, rooted in Sufism (Tasawwuf), has faced a violent and systematic erasure by extremist groups who view shrine visitation and music as polytheistic or heretical [89], [90]. Official police data released in January 2025 confirmed that since August 4, 2024, at least 44 coordinated attacks were carried out against 40 Sufi shrines (mazars) and dargahs across the country [91], [92]. The violence was geographically widespread, with the Dhaka Division recording 17 incidents, followed by Chattogram (10) and Mymensingh (7), while a single shrine in Sherpur district was targeted four times, demonstrating a persistent intent to destroy Sufi heritage [91], [93]. Beyond physical destruction, the campaign has targeted the living practitioners of these traditions; in September 2025, a 70-year-old fakir, Halim Uddin Akand, was publicly humiliated and forcibly shaved by a mob in Mymensingh [94], [95]. The legal system has also been weaponized against folk culture, as seen in the November 2025 arrest of prominent Baul leader Abul Sarkar on charges of “hurting religious sentiments,” a move that sparked violent clashes in Manikganj when his supporters were attacked by radical groups [96], [97], [98]. This cultural crackdown extended to the cancellation of the Lalon Fakir festival in Narayanganj due to intimidation by Hefazat-e-Islam and culminated in late 2025 with arson attacks on cultural landmarks like Chhayanaut and Udichi, signaling an organized attempt to dismantle the country’s pluralistic heritage [99], [100], [101], [102].

Prosecution of atheists

In the post-August 5 landscape of Bangladesh, the label of “atheist” (nastik) has become a lethal tool for silencing rationalists, secularists, and any Muslim who critiques the merging of religion and state power [103], [104]. The persecution of these individuals typically follows a “blasphemy algorithm” where digital surveillance by Islamist groups leads to manufactured outrage over decontextualized social media posts, followed by mob ultimatums to local officials and subsequent state arrests to “prevent unrest” [105], [106], [107]. A prominent case is that of Nahid Hasan Knowledge, a human rights defender in Kurigram who was targeted in early 2025 after critically commenting on a Facebook post by an Islamic speaker [108], [109]. Following a protest by “Touhidi Muslim Janata” that issued an arrest ultimatum to the Upazila Nirbahi Officer, the Detective Branch (DB) police raided his home on March 15, 2025, filing charges under the Cyber Security Act (CSA) for “hurting religious sentiments” [108],

[110], [111]. Similarly, the policing of literature led to the February 13, 2025, arrest of poet Sohel Hasan Galib in Narayanganj for a poem in his book *Amar Khutba Guli* that was deemed derogatory toward Islam [112], [113], [114], [115]. Galib was placed on a two-day remand and removed from his professional post at the National Academy for Educational Management, signaling a new era of theological vetting for creative works [113], [115], [116]. Meanwhile, exiled blogger Asad Noor remains a primary target, with the interim government continuing to pursue fabricated blasphemy charges while his family in Bangladesh reportedly faces persistent harassment and arbitrary detention [117], [118], [119]. These actions demonstrate that despite the transition, the legal and social mechanisms for criminalizing secular thought remain deeply entrenched and active [88], [98], [120].

Christian Community

Christian populations were systematically driven from their villages as mobs looted churches and private properties in districts like Dharmoirhat and Narayanganj [121], [122], [123]. The violence reached educational landmarks, such as the vandalism of St. Gregory’s High School and College [124], and extended into the Chittagong Hill Tracts where seventeen Tripuri Christian homes were burnt down on Christmas Eve in 2024 [125], [126], [127]. Tensions were further exacerbated by political rhetoric regarding secession and reports of the sexual assault of a Tripuri girl [126], which sparked widespread protests against alleged police cover-ups. Beyond physical violence, the community suffered from an administrative purge where minority teachers were coerced into resigning, while prestigious Catholic institutions like Notre Dame College received threats regarding religious conversions. This environment of “visual pedagogy” and radical rhetoric forced dozens of families into hiding and pressured over 100 others to renounce their faith, leading to a severe economic crisis as breadwinners abandoned their daily wages for physical safety.

Hindu Community

Hindus experienced the most frequent attacks [70], [128], [129], [130], [131], [132], [133], [134], [135], [136], [137], which the OHCHR attributed to a combination of religious discrimination, political revenge, and land disputes [138]. Notable incidents included the killing of local leaders and teachers, the destruction of folk musician Rahul Ananda’s home and thousands of instruments, and the desecration of idols during Durga Puja [139], [140]. The violence intensified in late 2024 following the arrest of an ISKCON leader [131], [134], [141], leading to further fatalities and calls for organizational bans, while reports of abductions and assaults continued into the first half of 2025.

The Assassination of Rana Pratap Bairagi (Jan 5, 2026)

The murder of Rana Pratap Bairagi in Jashore is emblematic of the intersection of political, economic, and religious persecution. Bairagi (38) was a Hindu businessman (ice factory owner) and the acting editor of the local newspaper *Dainik BD Khabar*. He was also a local leader of the Awami League. He was lured out of his factory by three assailants on a motorcycle and shot in the head at point-blank range, a professional “hit” style execution. Reports indicate Bairagi had paid “protection money” (extortion) to Islamist gangs. His murder sends a chilling message: extortion payments no longer guarantee life. It also silenced a minority journalist who could document local atrocities. [142], [143], [144]

The Lynching of Dipu Chandra Das (December 18, 2025)

The killing of Dipu Chandra Das in Bhaluka, Mymensingh, serves as a grim example of how blasphemy allegations are weaponized to incite mob justice. On December 18, 2025, Das, a Hindu garment worker, was accused of making derogatory remarks about Islam. Despite a lack of verified evidence, he was seized by an enraged mob, lynched, and his body was subsequently set on fire. Investigations by the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) later confirmed that no credible evidence of “religious defamation” existed, suggesting the victim may have been targeted as a result of workplace tensions or personal scores. The incident highlights a critical failure in state protection and the deadly consequences of a culture where vigilante violence is justified by religious sentiment. [145], [146], [147], [148], [149], [150]

The Double Homicide of the Roys (December 7, 2025)

The brutal murder of 75-year-old Jogesh Chandra Roy, a retired principal and decorated freedom fighter, and his wife Suborna Roy, 60, in Rangpur’s Taraganj upazila, sent shockwaves through the minority community. The elderly couple was found in their home with their throats slit, a method of killing that creates a profound sense of terror and vulnerability. While initial police investigations suggested a youth named Morsalin committed the murders during a robbery to repay a small debt, the incident occurred amidst a broader wave of communal instability. The targeting of such a prominent, non-political elderly couple in the safety of their own home has significantly dismantled the sense of security for Hindu families across the region. [151], [152], [153], [154], [155]

Table 5 Registry of Targeted Killings (December 2025 – January 2026) [156], [157]

Date	Victim Name	Location	Method of Killing	Context/Motive
Dec 2, 2025	Prantosh Kormokar	Narshingdi	Shot dead	Targeted in school field.
Dec 2, 2025	Utpol Sarkar	Narshingdi	Shot dead	Targeted in school field.
Dec 7, 2025	Jogesh Chandra Roy	Rangpur	Throat Slit	Elderly veteran; killed with wife.
Dec 7, 2025	Suborna Roy	Rangpur	Throat Slit	Killed in kitchen with husband.
Dec 12, 2025	Shanto Chandra Das	N/A	Throat Slit	Auto-rickshaw stolen (Asset seizure).
Dec 18, 2025	Dipu Chandra Das	Mymensingh	Lynched/Burned	Accused of Blasphemy.
Dec 24, 2025	Amrit Mondal	N/A	Murdered	-
Dec 29, 2025	Bajendra Biswas	N/A	Murdered	-
Dec 31, 2025	Khokon Chandra Das	N/A	Stabbed/Burned	Robbery and arson attack.
Jan 5, 2026	Rana Pratap Bairagi	Jashore	Shot in Head	Journalist/AL activist; extortion refusal.
Jan 6, 2026	Mithun Sarkar	Naogaon	Drowned	Chased by mob accusing theft.
Jan 6, 2026	Sarat Mani Chakraborty	N/A	Murdered	-
Jan 10, 2026	Joy Mohapatra	N/A	Murdered	-
Jan 11, 2026	Samir Das	N/A	Murdered	Auto-rickshaw stolen.
Jan 11, 2026	Prolay Chaki	N/A	Murdered	-

Source: Rights & Risks Analysis Group (RRAG)

Buddhist and Indigenous Jumma Communities

Simultaneously, indigenous groups suffered severe displacement and property loss; a Kurukh family's homestead and orchards were destroyed in Chapainawabganj [36], while over a hundred Chakma houses in Khagrachari were torched by settlers [158]. This wave of persecution extended to the Santhal people and led the Buddhist community to cancel public Kathina festival celebrations out of fear and protest [159].

The Buddhist community and the indigenous Jumma peoples of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) have faced a severe escalation of communal violence and systemic displacement characterized by arson, looting, and extrajudicial killings. In late 2024, coordinated attacks by Muslim Bengali settlers in Dighinala, Khagrachari [158], and Rangamati resulted in the destruction of over a hundred homes and the desecration of the Moitree Vihara Buddhist temple, leading the community to cancel the annual Kathina festival in a historic act of protest. A critical forensic detail is the use of the loudspeakers at the Banarupa Bazar Jam-e-Masjid. Announcements were made claiming that Jumma people were coming to attack the mosque [160], [161]. This tactic, historically used to incite communal riots in South Asia, successfully mobilized a massive settler mob. Jumma students organizing a peaceful procession under the banner of the "Conflict and Discrimination Anti-Hill Students Movement" were attacked by settlers. Reports indicate that settlers followed military patrol vehicles, using them as a shield to advance on Indigenous neighborhoods. [160], [161], [162], [163], [164], [165]

Throughout 2025, the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) remained a flashpoint for ethnic conflict, characterized by brutal sexual violence and the lethal suppression of Indigenous dissent. In late September 2025, the region was engulfed in unrest following the gang rape of a 12-year-old Marma schoolgirl in the Singinala area of Khagrachari by Bengali settlers [166]. The incident sparked massive protests across the district, which culminated on September 28, 2025, in Guimara Upazila. During a blockade organized by Indigenous "Jumma" activists, security forces reportedly opened fire, resulting in the deaths of at least three Indigenous youths, identified as Akhra Marma, Thowaiching Marma, and Athuipru Marma [167]. Rights groups, including the PCJSS and Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP), documented the burning of over 50 shops and 26 houses during this period, alleging that law enforcement frequently failed to protect Indigenous communities or actively supported settler mobs [168], [169], [170], [171], [172], [173].

Simultaneously, the struggle for constitutional and cultural recognition moved to the capital. In January 2025, Indigenous students in Dhaka held widespread demonstrations against the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) for removing the term "Adivasi" (Indigenous) from Grade 9 and 10 textbooks. The term was replaced with "Upojati" (sub-tribe) or "Khudro Nrigoshti" (small ethnic group) following pressure from groups like "Students for Sovereignty," who argued that the label "Adivasi" encouraged separatist sentiments. On January 15, 2025, a peaceful student rally in front of the NCTB office was met with a violent counter-attack by nationalist groups, leaving over 20 Indigenous activists injured [174], [175].

These events are viewed by international observers as part of a continuing cycle of militarization and land grabbing. According to the PCJSS Annual Report for 2025, at least 300 acres of ancestral Jumma

land were illegally occupied by settlers and corporations during the year [160], [165]. The persistence of “de facto” military rule in the CHT, combined with the criminalization of Indigenous rights activists through fabricated “terrorism” charges, has left the 13 ethnic groups of the region, including the Chakma, Marma, and Tripura, without adequate legal protection or safety in their own homes.

In September 2024, the fragile peace in the CHT was shattered by major violence in the districts of Khagrachari and Rangamati. The violence was triggered by the death of a Bengali settler, which was blamed on indigenous people without investigation. This pretext was used by settler organizations to launch coordinated attacks on Jumma neighborhoods.

- **Casualties:** At least **4 Indigenous persons** were killed (3 in Khagrachari, 1 in Rangamati) during the violence [176].
- **Destruction:** Over **110 homes and businesses** belonging to indigenous peoples were set on fire. The violence was symbolic as well as physical; the office of the CHT Regional Council Chairman and the Parbatya Chattagram Pahari Chhatra Parishad were torched, signaling an attack on indigenous political autonomy [25].
- **State Complicity:** Eyewitness reports and video footage suggest deeply troubling state complicity. Military personnel reportedly stood by while settlers attacked indigenous properties. In Khagrachari, footage showed the military opening fire on unarmed indigenous protesters who were demonstrating against the settler attacks [25]. This reinforces the perception of the army as an occupying force allied with the settler population.

Table 6 Confirmed Casualties and Damages in CHT Violence (September 19–20, 2024)

Victim Name	Location	Cause of Death	Context
Dhananjay Chakma	Dighinala	Gunshot/Blunt Force	Killed during initial arson attacks.
Rubel Chakma	Khagrachari	Gunshot (Military)	Fired upon during protest.
Junan Chakma	Khagrachari	Gunshot (Military)	Fired upon during protest.
Anik Kumar Chakma	Rangamati	Beating/Lynching	Killed during settler mob attack.
Unknown (Multiple)	Dighinala	Injuries	Dozens critically injured.
Property Damage	Regional	Fire	100+ homes/shops; Regional Council Office; Buddhist Temple.

The synchronization of these attacks, the use of mosque loudspeakers for incitement, and the direct participation of the military in suppressing Indigenous defense efforts point to a high degree of premeditation and state complicity. The Interim Government’s failure to demilitarize the region or prosecute the perpetrators has reinforced the culture of impunity in the CHT.

“Forced Resignations” and Administrative Cleansing

A distinct and disturbing feature of Phase 03 is the “administrative cleansing” of minorities from educational and government institutions. Mobs, often led by students or local agitators, have systematically coerced minority teachers, professors, and officials to resign from their posts.

- **Educational Purge:** Verified reports confirmed that at least **49 teachers** from minority communities were forced to resign across the country in the weeks following the revolution [177].
- **Mechanism of Coercion:** Video evidence circulated on social media showed Hindu teachers being surrounded, humiliated, and physically intimidated by mobs until they signed resignation letters. This public shaming serves not only to remove individuals but to send a message of subordination to the entire community [178].
- **Bureaucracy and Racial Profiling:** The targeting extended to the highest levels of bureaucracy. The President's office reportedly issued a notification seeking details of senior Hindu officials, a move condemned by rights activists as "racial profiling" and a prelude to an institutional purge [179]. This suggests a state-sanctioned effort to remove minorities from decision-making positions.

The Rise of "Taliban-Style" Killings (Late 2025–2026)

As the interim government struggled to restore order, a more brutal form of violence emerged in late 2025 and early 2026. The Rights & Risks Analysis Group (RRAG) documented a disturbing trend of "Taliban-style" executions.

- **Targeted Murders:** In a mere 45-day window from December 1, 2025, to January 15, 2026, at least **15 minority Hindus** were murdered. Victims included elderly women and youth [180].
- **Brutality:** The mode of killing in several cases involved slitting the throats of the victims, a tactic associated with Islamist extremist groups. Victims like Rana Pratap Bairagi, Shanto Chandra Das, and Jogesh Chandra Roy were killed in this manner, indicating a shift from mob violence to calculated terror [180].
- **Impunity:** Despite these gruesome murders, the interim government continued to dismiss the religious angle, attributing the deaths to "disinformation campaigns by India" or general criminality [180].

The Chinmoy Das Arrest and the Legal Persecution

The arrest of Hindu priest Krishna Das Prabhu (Chinmoy Das) in November 2024 on charges of sedition became a major flashpoint. Das was accused of disrespecting the national flag during a rally, a charge widely viewed by minorities as politically motivated to crush increasing Hindu assertiveness.

- **Legal Harassment:** Das was denied bail in January 2026, leading to renewed protests. The clashes following his bail denial resulted in the death of a Muslim lawyer, which was then used to incite further violence against Hindu neighborhoods [181].
- **Narrative Warfare:** The Indian government's expression of concern over Das's arrest was weaponized by Bangladeshi officials to label Hindu activism as "Indian interference," further endangering the community by casting them as a "fifth column" [181].

Educational Purges and Cultural Engineering

In the post-August 2024 era, Bangladesh’s educational landscape has undergone a profound shift characterized by the systematic removal of secular personnel and the realignment of curricula with Islamist ideologies [46], [182]. Scores of teachers, predominantly from the Hindu minority or identified as “secular” Muslims, were forced to resign under duress from student mobs and outside agitators who accused them of being “pro-Awami League” or “atheists” [46], [84], [183]. A major flashpoint emerged regarding scientific instruction; in August 2024, legal notices were served to the Ministry of Education demanding the removal of Darwin’s theory of evolution from textbooks, claiming it contradicts Islamic values [184]. By late 2025, the interim government’s policy began to reflect these pressures, notably with the cancellation of plans to hire music and physical education teachers for primary schools after Hefazat-e-Islam and Jamaat-e-Islami denounced the move as “conspiratorial” and “anti-Islamic” [182], [185], [186]. The Religious Affairs Advisor, AFM Khalid Hossain, confirmed in October 2025 that the government was reviewing demands to replace music instruction with religious teachers, further signaling a move toward the Islamization of the primary school system [187], [188]. This cultural engineering has been punctuated by incidents of “teacher humiliation,” where educators accused of “anti-Islamic” remarks were paraded through markets wearing garlands of shoes, a practice that rights groups argue creates a pervasive climate of fear and self-censorship within the academic community [189], [190], [191]. Observers from organizations like Human Rights Watch and the UN have warned that these purges and curriculum changes threaten the pluralistic and creative spirit of Bangladesh’s future generations [98], [192], [193].

The operational mechanics of mob violence in post-revolutionary Bangladesh reveal a consistent and systemic “script” centered on the weaponization of unverified digital content to incite communal terror [46], [194]. Blasphemy accusations typically begin as a “digital spark”, often a screenshot of a Facebook comment or Messenger chat, circulated through student WhatsApp groups and algorithmic social media networks that prioritize outrage over verification [195], [196], [197], [198]. The October 2024 targeting of Hridoy Pal, a student who did not own a smartphone but was nonetheless accused of digital blasphemy, underscores that the truth of the claim is secondary to the utility of the accusation in asserting dominance [108], [199]. Mobilization occurs with unprecedented speed, as seen in the September 2024 Khulna incident where a massive mob breached a police station defended by the Army to brutally beat 18-year-old Utsab Mandal [195], [196], [199]. These events culminate in a “ritual of public punishment,” where violence is performative and intended to serve as a “visual pedagogy” for the broader minority population [34], [197]. Whether through the public blindfolding of Hridoy Pal, the lynching of Dipu Chandra Das over false workplace-related blasphemy, or the effigy burning of Professor Hafizul Islam following unproven moral accusations, the mob aims to establish a lethal price for dissent [200], [201], [202], [203]. International human rights observers warn that this “mobocracy” is structurally reinforced by state neglect and the paralysis of the rule of law [84], [98].

The Near-Lynching of Utsab Mandal in Khulna (September 2024)

On September 4, 2024, mere weeks after the fall of the Hasina government, Utsab Mandal (often cited as college-aged) was accused of making derogatory comments about the Prophet Muhammad on social

media. The specific content of the alleged post remains obscure, but the reaction was immediate and disproportionate. A mob, estimated in the thousands, gathered to demand his execution. Local police, recognizing the volatility, took Mandal into custody, theoretically for his protection. He was transported to the Sonadanga Model Police Station. In a functioning state, a police station represents the ultimate sanctuary of law. However, in the post-August 4 security vacuum, the station was besieged. Despite the reported presence of Army and Navy personnel deployed to aid the civil administration, the mob breached the station's perimeter. *Inside* the police station, Mandal was subjected to a brutal mob beating. Initial reports circulating on social media and some news outlets claimed he had been killed, sparking international outrage. He survived, but with critical injuries requiring extended hospitalization. [195], [196], [199]

The Ordeal of Hridoy Pal in Dhaka (October 2024)

In October 2024, rumors spread that Hridoy Pal, a Hindu college student in the Dhaka region, had posted blasphemous remarks on social media. The college administration summoned him for an explanation. During this inquisition, a fundamental factual discrepancy emerged: Pal informed the school personnel that he did not own a mobile phone, a claim that, if true, rendered the accusation technologically impossible. The administration did not dismiss the case. Instead, they effectively handed him over to the police, validating the mob's hysteria. The visuals of his removal from the campus are defining images of this era. Armed police officers blindfolded Pal and restrained his limbs, carrying him out like a captured insurgent. As the police attempted to extract him, the gathered mob of angry students and locals tried to snatch him from custody to lynch him. They struck at him with sticks while he was in police hands. The blindfold served a dual purpose: to disorient the victim and to dehumanize him, presenting him to the mob as a subdued object of hate rather than a citizen with rights.

The Islamic University Kushtia Purge (October 2024 –January 2026)

The post-revolutionary environment in Bangladesh has witnessed a disturbing conflation of non-normative sexual identities with blasphemy, particularly at the Islamic University (IU) in Kushtia, where groups such as Islami Chhatra Shibir and Hefazat-e-Islam have framed LGBTQ+ identities as a direct assault on the “religious sentiment” of the Muslim majority [204], [205]. A prominent target of this ideological shift was Assistant Professor Hafizul Islam of the Department of Development Studies, who in late 2024 became the subject of a sustained harassment campaign after students accused him of “supporting homosexuality” based on personal rumors [201], [202], [206]. On October 22, 2024, pro-Islamist students marched through the campus, parading and subsequently burning an effigy of Professor Islam at the university's main gate while demanding his permanent expulsion [201], [207], [208]. Rather than upholding academic freedom or the right to privacy, the university administration, under pressure from the “unrest”, initially barred him from all departmental activities on October 23, 2024, and later placed him on a mandatory one-year leave on January 26, 2025, [209].

This precedent of administrative surrender was followed by further purges in January 2025, when two women were detained at Khaleda Zia Hall and one was expelled on unproven allegations of lesbianism after a mob of residential students demanded their punishment [210], [211]. Rights organizations,

including JusticeMakers Bangladesh in France (JMBF) and Scholars at Risk, have identified these incidents as part of a broader “pedagogy of fear,” where the state and university institutions weaponize perceived sexual orientation as a tool for professional and social “cleansing” [102], [107]. By late 2025, these purges expanded to include 19 teachers and 33 students suspended or expelled for various “anti-uprising” or “ideological” reasons, signaling a total collapse of the pluralistic university space [84], [98], [212].

Bikash Dhar Deepta at SUST (May 2025)

The targeting of Bikash Dhar Deepta, a student at Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (SUST) in Sylhet, represents the encroaching tide of religious extremism into historically progressive and secular academic spaces in Bangladesh [46], [197]. In May 2025, Deepta was accused by a group of individuals, reportedly linked to Islamist factions, of denigrating the Prophet Muhammad in a Facebook post [34], [213]. Following the digital accusation, local law enforcement acted with immediate speed to arrest the student on blasphemy charges, a move rights observers categorize as a prioritization of “hurt religious sentiment” over a forensic investigation into the authenticity of the claim [43], [48], [107]. This incident highlights the “panopticon” nature of the post-2024 campus environment, where ubiquitous peer surveillance and the threat of mob mobilization have turned the state into a willing enforcer of unverified accusations [181], [197]. The arrest has contributed to a climate of self-censorship and fear among minority students at SUST, a university previously celebrated for its secular student politics and resistance to communalism [100], [209], [214]. International humanitarian bodies have cited this case as evidence of a systemic failure to protect religious minorities from “mob trials” that utilize the legal system to validate vigilante motives [83], [198].

Supta Saha Anik (February 2025)

The case of Supta Saha Anik, a Hindu university student targeted in February 2025, signifies a critical expansion in the geography of communal intimidation from public academic spaces to private domestic spheres [215], [216]. Accused of making “objectionable remarks” regarding Islam on digital platforms, Anik became the subject of a coordinated operation led by members of Hefazat-e-Islam Bangladesh, who mobilized a mob to surround his private residence [216], [217]. This tactic of direct home invasion, accompanied by public death threats, effectively dismantled the “safety perimeter” previously associated with university campuses, signaling that accusations of blasphemy now follow students to their doorsteps [84], [218]. The incident highlights the potent synergy between organized Islamist organizations and spontaneous student-led religious sentiment, creating an environment where the state often prioritizes the containment of “hurt feelings” over the protection of individual civil liberties [98], [219]. Rights observers note that such home-centric attacks are designed to maximize psychological terror, forcing families into hiding or permanent displacement [220], [221]. This evolution in mob mechanics reflects a broader breakdown in the rule of law, where vigilante groups act as de facto moral police with near-total impunity [81], [198]. Consequently, the Anik case is frequently cited by international bodies as evidence of a systemic failure by the interim government to protect religious minorities from targeted, non-state aggression [83], [222].

The Kidnapping of Pranta Talukder (January 2025)

The kidnapping of Pranta Talukder in January 2025 exemplifies the escalating threat of vigilante violence and the use of digital propaganda to target religious minorities in Bangladesh [215]. Talukder, a Hindu youth, was abducted by a group of extremists who accused him of committing blasphemy against Islam, a charge frequently leveled to justify extrajudicial retribution [147], [203]. During his captivity, he was taken to a parking lot where he was subjected to a brutal physical assault. The perpetrators recorded the beating and circulated the footage on social media platforms, creating “snuff-style” content designed to intimidate the broader minority community and showcase the dominance of majority extremists over the state’s security apparatus. This circulation of graphic violence serves as a tool of psychological terror, reinforcing a “visual pedagogy” where the vulnerability of minorities is publicly displayed to enforce social compliance. The case has been cited in international human rights reports as part of a broader “monsoon of violence” where blasphemy allegations are weaponized to dismantle the sense of safety for non-Muslim citizens [215].

Forced Resignations and the Cleansing of Educators

The post-August 2024 era in Bangladesh has been marked by a systematic “soft” purge of the educational sector, characterized by the forced resignations of minority and secular educators through mob intimidation [223]. Data indicates that in the immediate aftermath of the regime change, at least 49 teachers from religious minority communities were compelled to resign across the country, a trend primarily driven by student-led mobs often supported by outside agitators [177], [224], [225], [226]. The methodology for these removals follows a consistent and humiliating script: crowds surround the victim’s office or home, subject them to physical and verbal abuse, including forcing some to wear garlands of shoes or shaving their heads, and demand an immediate handwritten resignation [1, 5, 14]. Academic administrations have frequently accepted these coerced resignations under the guise of “restoring order” or “appeasing student sentiment,” effectively legitimizing vigilante action. A prominent example is the case of Sonali Rani Das, an Assistant Professor at the Holy Family Red Crescent Nursing College in Dhaka, who was besieged by a mob in August 2024 and forced to step down due to her perceived links to the former administration and her religious identity [227], [228]. This purge has also extended to educators accused of enforcing uniform policies that restricted religious attire; several teachers in both Catholic-run and government institutions were targeted for “hurting religious sentiment” after allegedly banning the niqab or hijab, leading to intense protests and further forced departures [185]. Rights groups warn that this intellectual cleansing is creating a rigid monoculture that erodes secular values and academic freedom, leaving minority educators in a state of constant vulnerability.

Beyond individual primary and secondary schools, major academic institutions have become centers for ideological surveillance and the expulsion of dissenting voices:

March 15–16, 2025: Islamist student groups at Rajshahi University of Engineering & Technology (RUET) coordinated a massive mob to demand the permanent expulsion of a student, Wakar Kamal Atul, over Facebook posts comparing religious rituals. Simultaneously, two students at Pabna

University of Science and Technology (PUST) were expelled following similar allegations of criticizing Islam.

April 15–16, 2025: A similar expulsion attempt was launched against a student at Khulna University (KU). During the same period, Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University established a six-member committee to investigate “hurting religious sentiment” allegations, effectively institutionalizing the policing of free speech.

June 22, 2025: Students at the Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology (CUET) were expelled for allegedly criticizing religious doctrines.

January 16, 2026: This trajectory of institutional surrender reached a peak when two faculty members at the University of Asia Pacific were dismissed following intense protests and ideological pressure.

We collected the following table from local newspaper. It is also to be noted that most incidents like these often is not covered by any news media. Evidence compiled from private university group communications including archived screenshots reveals a systematic coordination of radical student factions gathering mobs to target their peers. These digital threads demonstrate a recurring pattern of intimidation, where students are threatened with expulsion or physical violence for perceived “offending” content. In several instances, these online mobilizations transitioned into physical assaults and public humiliations before police or administrative intervention occurred. The following data, corroborated by local media reports and private digital records, illustrates the escalating consequences for students caught in this “mobocracy”.

Investigative Findings: Mechanisms of Campus Erasure

Drawing from archived communications and direct campus observation, our team has identified the following patterns of institutional cleansing:

1. Digital Surveillance and Doxxing: Student groups utilize WhatsApp and Telegram to monitor the social media activity of peers and faculty, specifically looking for “secular” or “liberal” viewpoints to target.
2. The “Expulsion” Script: Once a target is identified, radical groups release coordinated “blasphemy” accusations, often accompanied by a digital countdown, to pressure university administrations into immediate suspension or expulsion.
3. Physical “Hand-overs”: In several documented cases, such as the ordeal of Hridoy Pal, students were physically restrained by mobs and “handed over” to law enforcement after being subjected to beatings, effectively using the police as an extension of mob will.
4. Ideological Vetting of Faculty: Investigators noted that at the University of Asia Pacific and Rajshahi University, radicalized students demanded the removal of faculty members based on their personal religious or political affiliations.

Date	Institution	Who	Incident
October 31, 2020	Five Different Universities	Five Students	Expelled for “defaming religion”.
September 24, 2022	Begum Rokeya University	A Student	Arrested for “speaking about religion”.

May 10, 2023	Begum Badrunnesa College	A Female Student	Sentenced to imprisonment under the Digital Security Act.
May 13, 2024	Jagannath University (JU)	Student Tithi	Expelled from her studentship and sentenced to five years imprisonment.
May 16, 2024	Comilla University	A Student	Expelled for “offending religion”.
October 19, 2024	College in Narsingdi	A College Student (female)	Arrested.
October 20, 2024	College in Narsingdi	A College Student (male)	Arrested.
November 07, 2024	Chittagong University, CU	Student, male	Mob in campus
February 4, 2025	BUTEX	A Student	Arrested by police after being assaulted by a mob for a religious offense.
February 13, 2025	University/College (Unspecified)	12 Students (including 11 female students)	Expelled for “insulting the Proctor and offending religion”.
February 24, 2025	College (Unspecified)	A College Student	Arrested.
February 26, 2025	Rajshahi University (RU)	A Student	Expelled from the hall and handed over to the police.
March 15, 2025	RUET	Atul	Demand for expulsion was made for “offending religious sentiments”.
March 16, 2025	Pabna University (Pabi)	Two Students	Expelled.
April 16, 2025	Nazrul University	Some Students	Investigation committee formed after a mob attacked them.
June 22, 2025	CUET (Chittagong University of Engineering & Technology)	A Student	Expelled.

“Lawfare” Against Religious Leadership

By late 2024, the strategy of persecuting minorities in Bangladesh evolved from physical mob violence to “lawfare”, the systematic use of legal and judicial mechanisms to criminalize and dismantle minority leadership. The primary target of this campaign was Chinmoy Krishna Das Brahmachari, a prominent Hindu monk and spokesperson for the Bangladesh Sammilit Sanatan Jagran Jote, who had become a vocal advocate for Hindu rights following the August 2024 political transition.

The Case of Chinmoy Krishna Das

On November 25, 2024, Chinmoy Krishna Das was arrested at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka on charges of sedition. The state’s case was built upon a rally in Chattogram where a saffron religious flag was allegedly hoisted above the Bangladeshi national flag, an act the interim government interpreted as a treasonous challenge to national sovereignty rather than a protected expression of religious identity [229]. On November 26, the Chattogram Metropolitan Magistrate Court denied his bail, sparking immediate and widespread unrest among his supporters who viewed the arrest as a politically motivated attempt to silence the community’s most prominent leader.

The Murder of Saiful Islam Alif (November 2024)

The denial of bail for Chinmoy Krishna Das led to chaotic clashes between protesters and law enforcement outside the Chattogram court premises. During this turmoil, at approximately 1:19 PM on November 26, Saiful Islam Alif, an Assistant Public Prosecutor and member of the Chattogram District Bar Association, was brutally murdered. Witnesses and forensic reports indicate that Alif was dragged into a nearby community center, where he was hacked to death with sharp weapons and beaten with

sticks. Initial misinformation falsely identified Alif as Das’s defense lawyer, but subsequent reports confirmed his role as a government prosecutor and his political affiliation with the BNP, a detail that further politicized his death and fueled anti-minority mobilization. [230], [231]

The Indictment and Judicial Critique (January 2026)

On January 19, 2026, the legal process culminated in the Chattogram Divisional Speedy Trial Tribunal formally indicting Chinmoy Krishna Das and 38 others for the murder of Saiful Islam Alif. Legal observers have criticized the indictment as a “political show trial,” noting that Das was in police custody inside the courtroom when the murder occurred outside. By applying Section 109 (abetment) of the Penal Code, the state has effectively sought to hold a religious leader vicariously liable for the spontaneous actions of a crowd.

This mass indictment, which includes many key figures in the Sanatani movement, is viewed by rights groups as a “decapitation strike” against the minority leadership structure, coinciding with growing demands from Islamist groups like Hefazat-e-Islam to ban organizations like ISKCON entirely. [229], [230], [231], [232], [233]

Silencing authors, poets, reporters and artists

Efforts to document these crimes or bring them into public view have been systematically obstructed within what is often described as the *new Bangladesh*. A climate of fear has emerged in which authors, poets, artists, and cultural figures across religious, ideological, and ethnic backgrounds have faced physical attacks, online harassment, and legal intimidation.

Journalists

In a move that drew condemnation from the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) and Reporters Without Borders, the Press Information Department (PID) revoked the permanent and temporary press accreditation cards of 167 journalists in multiple phases between October and November 2024.

The said administrative action crippled the ability of senior journalists to access the Secretariat, official briefings, and government functions.

Shakil Ahmed and Farzana Rupa

This husband-and-wife duo from Ekattor TV attempted to leave the country on August 21, 2024. They were detained at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport and subsequently arrested.

They were placed on remand and charged in a murder case involving the death of a garment worker, Fazul Karim. The charges allege that their reporting “incited” the violence.

Mozammel Haque Babu

The Chief Editor of Ekattor TV was arrested while allegedly trying to cross the border. He faces charges of genocide at the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT), a mechanism originally designed to try 1971 war criminals.

The Case of Munni Saha

In December 2024, Munni Saha was surrounded by a mob in Karwan Bazar who verbally abused her. Police “rescued” her but then detained her in connection with a murder case.

Mob Sieges on Prothom Alo and The Daily Star

Prothom Alo (the largest Bengali daily) and The Daily Star (the largest English daily) have historically been independent voices, often critical of both the Awami League and military regimes. However, in the post-August polarization, they were branded by Islamist and radical student groups as “Indian agents” and “anti-Islamic.” Protests began outside their offices, with groups burning newspapers and demanding their closure.

Following the assassination of Inqilab Moncho leader Sharif Osman Hadi (see Section 7), the violence peaked. On December 19, 2025, mobs stormed the Prothom Alo office in Karwan Bazar and the Daily Star office in Farmgate. Assaultants vandalized the lobbies and set fire to the entrances.

Staff were trapped on the upper floors and roofs, fearing for their lives, until security forces intervened. The editor of New Age, Nurul Kabir was physically manhandled by the mob when he tried to intervene, illustrating that no journalist was safe from the collective rage.

Targeting Cultural Centers

Hadi’s death triggered a wave of “revenge” attacks on institutions associated with secular Bengali culture, which the radicals conflated with Indian influence.

Chhayanaaut: On December 19, 2025, the Chhayanaaut Sangskriti Bhaban in Dhanmondi was attacked. Founded in 1961 to promote Bengali culture (specifically Tagore songs) during the Pakistani era, Chhayanaut is the citadel of secular Bengali identity.

Destruction: Mobs vandalized the auditorium and set fire to the classrooms of Nalonda (the school within the complex). Witnesses reported slogans denouncing the institution as a “promoter of Indian culture.”

Udichi Shilpi Goshthi: On the same day, the central office of Udichi (the largest cultural organization in the country) on Topkhana Road was set on fire. Udichi has historically been a leftist, secular organization and a target of Islamist bombings in the late 1990s.

James Concert Attack: On December 26, 2025, a concert by rock legend James (Nagar Baul) in Faridpur was attacked. A mob threw bricks at the stage, injuring 25 people and forcing the cancellation of the event. The attackers chanted slogans against “cultural pollution,” linking western-influenced rock music to the broader cultural malaise they sought to cure.

Table 7 High-Profile Journalists with Revoked Accreditation (Partial List)

Name	Role	Media Outlet	Significance
Zafar Wazed	Director General	Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB)	Head of the state's press training body.
Mozammel Haque Babu	Chief Editor	Ekattor TV	Head of a secular, pro-liberation war news channel.
Shyamal Dutta	Editor	Bhorer Kagoj	Prominent secular editor; faced mob attacks on his office.
Naem Nizam	Editor	Bangladesh Pratidin	Editor of the highest circulated newspaper.
Farida Yasmin	President	Jatiya Press Club	First female president of the Press Club; removed forcibly.
Munni Saha	Chief News Editor	ATN News	Prominent TV journalist known for field reporting.
Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury	Editor	The Daily Observer	Senior journalist and former media advisor to PM.
Farzana Rupa	Special Correspondent	Ekattor TV	Known for aggressive questioning; arrested at airport.

The Burning of Rahul Ananda's Home

On August 5, 2024, as crowds celebrated the fall of the government, a mob attacked the residence of Rahul Ananda, the frontman of the popular folk-fusion band Joler Gaan. Located in Dhanmondi 32, adjacent to the Bangabandhu Memorial Museum, the 140-year-old house was a cultural hub. Assaultants looted the property before setting it ablaze. Rahul Ananda, his wife (an artist), and their son narrowly escaped into hiding. The fire consumed over 3,000 handcrafted musical instruments, representing decades of collection and innovation. The house itself, a heritage structure, was gutted. While Ananda later stated that the attack might have been collateral damage due to his proximity to the Sheikh Mujibur Rahman museum (which was also torched), the incident sent a chilling wave through the artist community. It demonstrated that even beloved, apolitical cultural figures were not safe from the collective rage of the “revolution.” The targeting of a Hindu artist's home also raised concerns about the communal undertones of the violence, although Ananda refused to frame it solely through a religious lens.

Shahriar Kabir: The Conscience in Chains

Shahriar Kabir (75), a journalist, filmmaker, and human rights activist, is the most prominent political prisoner from the creative sector. Kabir was the driving force behind the Ekattorer Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee (Committee for the Elimination of the Killers and Collaborators of 1971), which campaigned for the war crimes tribunals. He was arrested on September 17, 2024, from his home. In a Kafkaesque twist, the man who spent his life documenting genocide was charged with “crimes against humanity” and implicated in murder cases related to the 2024 protests. Despite his age and severe health issues, he was placed on a 7-day remand. During a court appearance, he was physically attacked by a mob while in police custody and denied a wheelchair. In November 2025, the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (WGAD) declared his detention arbitrary and called for his immediate release. As of January 5, 2026, the Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention continues to demand his release, but he remains incarcerated.

The Arrest of Poet Sohel Hasan Galib (February 2025)

The arrest of Sohel Hasan Galib, a noted poet, associate professor, and training specialist at the National Academy for Educational Management (NAEM), signals a chilling expansion of state-led blasphemy enforcement into the realm of literary and academic expression [234], [235], [236]. On February 13, 2025, Galib was apprehended by the Detective Branch (DB) of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police in Fatullah, Narayanganj, following a social media outcry over his 2024 poetry collection, *Amar Khutba Guli* (published by Ujan Prakashani) [112], [234], [237]. The state’s action—unlike spontaneous mob cases—was a deliberate judicial move; Galib was charged under Section 54 of the Code of Criminal Procedure for “hurting religious sentiment” through a poem that radical groups like “Touhidi Janata” deemed satirical of the Prophet Muhammad [114], [238], [239]. Following his arrest, Galib was placed on a two-day remand for interrogation and subsequently sent to jail after a Dhaka court rejected his bail petition on February 17 [240], [241]. The professional consequences were immediate: the Ministry of Education removed him from his post at NAEM and attached him as an “Officer on Special Duty” (OSD) at a remote college, effectively terminating his active academic career [242], [243]. International rights organizations, including PEN Bangladesh and PEN America, have condemned the arrest as a “stifling of thought,” warning that it criminalizes the humanities and subjects creative literature to the same restrictive theological vetting as casual social media posts [120], [244], [245].

Rakhal Raha (March 2025)

The legal persecution of Rakhal Raha (Sazzadur Rahman), a prominent writer and member of the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) revision committee, underscores the dangerous “irony” of Bangladesh’s post-2024 judicial environment: the act of defending free speech is itself criminalized as a religious offense [246], [247]. On March 3, 2025, Raha was sued under the Cyber Security Act (CSA) for “hurting religious sentiment” following a Facebook post in which he shared a satirical piece and questioned the legitimacy of the blasphemy charges against poet Sohel Hasan Galib [248], [249], [250]. The Dhaka Cyber Tribunal promptly ordered the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) to investigate Raha, a decision that followed weeks of escalating death threats, bounties on his head, and public calls for his execution from radical groups such as “Touhidi Muslim Janata” [238], [246], [251]. Despite the NCTB chairman formally dismissing separate fabricated corruption allegations against him, the state’s legal machinery remained active until the case was eventually scrapped on May 22, 2025, after the interim government repealed the CSA and issued the new Cyber Security Ordinance [247], [252], [253]. International human rights bodies, including Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, have cited Raha’s case as a forensic example of how “lawfare” is used to purge secular intellectuals from state-building roles, effectively aligning the judiciary with majoritarian extremist demands [88], [197], [254].

Table 8 High-Profile Journalists with Revoked Accreditation (Partial List, continued)

Name	Designation	Institution	Details of Persecution
Gautam Chandra Pal	Faculty (Chemistry)	Azimpur Girls School & College	Surrounded by students and forced to sign resignation letter.

Sonali Rani Das	Associate Professor	Nursing, Red Crescent Society	Forced to resign on August 19, 2024, amid intimidation.
Khuku Rani Biswas	In-charge	Jessore Nursing Institute	Held hostage in her office for 5 hours by hijab-clad students; forced to resign.
Adrish Aditya Mandal	Principal	Kapotaksha College, Khulna	Physically intimidated into resigning.
Prof. Amit Roy Chowdhury	Treasurer	Khulna University	Forced to step down during the administrative purge.
Prof. Shukla Rani Halder	Teacher (English)	Govt. Brajmohan College	Pressured to quit following protests.
Keka Roy Chowdhury	Acting Principal	Vikarunnisa Noon School	Targeted removal from a premier Dhaka institution.
Dr. Abdul Bashir	Dean, Faculty of Arts	Dhaka University	While Muslim, he was targeted for allegedly penalizing students involved in Quran recitation; accused of being anti-Islamic.

The Migration and “Infiltration” Dynamic

The systemic violence has triggered a massive, albeit silent, exodus of minorities toward India. Indian government data from 2025 showed a threefold increase in the number of undocumented migrants leaving India to return to Bangladesh in some sectors [255], but more critically, a surge in those attempting to flee Bangladesh [256], [257], [258]. The Indian political establishment has categorized these refugees as “illegal infiltrators,” complicating the humanitarian response. The Indian Border Security Force (BSF) has apprehended thousands, but the porous border remains the only escape route for many [259]. On January 8, 2026, the Bangladesh Interim Government suspended visa services at its missions in India (New Delhi, Kolkata, Agartala), citing “security concerns.” This bureaucratic blockade effectively trapped minorities who might have sought legal means to travel to India, forcing them into the hands of human traffickers [72].

Economic Boycotts and Land Grabs

Beyond physical violence, minority communities face a sustained campaign of economic strangulation and asset seizure. The breakdown of law and order following the political transition in 2024 has accelerated land grabbing, with local powerbrokers exploiting the vacuum to occupy ancestral Hindu properties. This is often achieved through extreme violence; for instance, in late 2025, the brutal murders of Samir Kumar Das in Feni and Shanto Chandra Das (both Hindu auto-rickshaw drivers) demonstrated a pattern where lethal force is used to facilitate the theft of essential livelihood assets [260]. In these cases, victims were lured to secluded areas, killed, and their vehicles stolen, leaving their families both bereaved and destitute.

Institutionalized extortion networks have also emerged to target minority-owned businesses. The killing of Rana Pratap Bairagi, a prominent Hindu businessman and newspaper editor in Jashore in January 2026, underscored the risks faced by those who resist these networks [261]. Bairagi was lured from his factory and shot at close range, an act that local rights groups view as a warning to the broader business community. Reports from the USCIRF and the Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council indicate that these economic pressures, combined with “Vested Property” legacy issues and

coordinated boycotts, are designed to force minorities into a “silent exodus” by destroying their financial viability [98].

The Government’s January 2026 Report: A Forensic Critique

On January 19, 2026, the Bangladesh Interim Government released a comprehensive review of police records from 2025 in an attempt to categorize and clarify the nature of violence against minority communities [43], [72], [73], [262], [263], [264]. The report documented 645 total incidents but classified only 71 as “communal,” a designation primarily reserved for the vandalism of temples and religious sites. The remaining 574 cases, including 58 incidents of rape, 23 land disputes, and 106 thefts, were labeled as purely “criminal” or “social” in nature, effectively detaching them from a religious or ethnic motive. Critics and international observers argue this reclassification strategy is a forensic maneuver designed to minimize the perception of systematic persecution. By framing sexual violence and land seizures as neutral crimes, the government risks ignoring the well-documented use of these acts as tactical weapons of ethnic cleansing and intimidation, potentially creating a culture of impunity that absolves the state of its duty to provide specialized protection to vulnerable groups.

The disparity between the interim government’s classification of violence and the reported reality on the ground has significantly strained Bangladesh’s diplomatic relations with key global partners, leading to heightened scrutiny and policy shifts. The Indian Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has repeatedly voiced deep concern over the “disturbing pattern” of recurring attacks on minorities, their homes, and religious establishments. In a January 2026 briefing, MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal described the tendency of Bangladeshi authorities to attribute these communal incidents to personal rivalries or political vendettas as “troubling,” arguing that such dismissals only embolden perpetrators and deepen the insecurity felt by vulnerable groups. New Delhi has rejected the interim government’s narrative on several occasions, urging Dhaka to take swift and firm action to uphold the safety of its minority population as a prerequisite for regional stability. [265]

In the House of Commons, the situation has sparked intense debate, with MPs like Bob Blackman describing the atmosphere in Bangladesh as “disastrous” and “horrificed” by reports of Hindu men being murdered on the streets and temples being burned [266], [267]. On January 15, 2026, the issue was formally raised to pressure the UK government to intervene, with parliamentarians explicitly linking the protection of religious minorities to the legitimacy of Bangladesh’s upcoming February elections. While the UK government has condemned “all acts of violence” and continues to support the humanitarian response, the rhetoric in Parliament suggests a growing lack of confidence in the interim administration’s ability to ensure a free and inclusive democratic process.

The United States has expressed significant concern over human rights abuses and the deteriorating environment for religious freedom, with the State Department recently condemning the “horrific” lynching of minority individuals. Reflecting a broader wariness regarding the country’s stability and the potential for irregular migration, the U.S. government announced in January 2026 that Bangladesh would be added to the “visa bond list.” [268] Under this new policy, many Bangladeshi citizens applying for tourist or business visas are required to post financial bonds of up to \$15,000, a move

viewed by diplomatic observers as a direct response to the heightened security risks and social unrest currently unfolding in the country.

Table 9 Phase 03 Violence Indicators (Aug 5, 2024–Present)

Indicator	Statistics/Details	Source
Total Incidents	2,010 (Aug 4-20, 2024) reported by BHBCUC; Govt claims fewer communal cases.	[71]
Deaths (Minorities)	82 confirmed (Aug-Nov 2024); 15 targeted murders (Dec 2025-Jan 2026).	[74]
Forced Resignations	49+ teachers verified; systematic removal of officials via mob coercion.	[177]
Migration to India	3,536 undocumented apprehended leaving BD (Jan-July 2025) vs 1,049 (2024) – a 3x increase.	[259]
Temples/Churches	152 temples damaged (Aug 2024); 25 attacks on statues (Jan-Apr 2025).	[74]
CHT Violence	4 killed, 110+ homes burned (Sept 2024); Military firing on protesters.	[25]

The mechanisms of erasure have undergone a profound evolutionary shift, adapting much like the survival strategies observed in the natural world. In an era defined by ubiquitous digital surveillance and the global internet, the high-visibility atrocities of the past, such as the wholesale “cleansing” of entire towns or villages, are increasingly difficult to hide from the international definition of genocide. Consequently, the strategy has mutated from direct, overt massacres to a more insidious methodology of granular attrition. Persecution is now conducted through “slow burn” tactics: the calculated, incremental elimination of community members, masked by a rotation of shifting justifications that reclassify communal targeting as criminal disputes, personal vendettas, or legal loopholes. This pattern mirrors a global shift where majoritarian regimes weaponize administrative pretexts to exile, displace, or execute minorities while maintaining a facade of forensic deniability. This strategic pivot, shifting from mass violence behind closed doors to public, “justified” individual killings, requires extreme vigilance to decode. Without a robust intervention to stop this slow push-back and rapid, isolated killing, the territory risks achieving a state of 99% homogeneity within the next decade, which will stand as the ultimate marker of this modern, evolved genocide.

THE TRAJECTORY OF EXTINCTION

The forensic examination of minority persecution in Bangladesh from 1947 to 2026 reveals a trajectory of unrelenting decline. What began as state-sponsored ethnic cleansing in East Pakistan evolved into structural economic disenfranchisement in independent Bangladesh and has now metastasized into a hybrid form of mob rule and administrative erasure in the post-2024 era.

The data indicates that the mechanisms of persecution have become more sophisticated. While mass riots still occur, the Vested Property Act (Phase 02) and Forced Resignations (Phase 03) represent “soft” cleansing techniques that hollow out the community’s economic and intellectual resilience without always generating mass casualty figures that attract international intervention.

However, the resurgence of terrorist-style killings in 2025-2026 and the tripling of undocumented migration attempts to India suggest that the “Silent Exodus” is no longer silent. It is becoming a desperate route. The collapse of the Awami League’s “protection racket,” combined with the Interim Government’s denialism, has left minorities in an existential vacuum. Without immediate, robust international monitoring and legal protection, the data projects that the next decade could witness the final erasure of Bangladesh’s pluralistic identity, rendering it a de facto mono-religious state.

The trajectory documented throughout this dossier suggests a harrowing historic recurrence; the current epoch mirrors the existential precipices of 1947 and 1971, yet with a more calculated and structural finality. As Hindus, atheists, and other non-Muslim communities flee in a desperate rout, the region faces an imminent demographic extinction that threatens to finalize the “Silent Exodus” into a total erasure of the pluralistic social contract. There is a profound concern that minority lives have been reduced to political capital for far-right factions seeking to consolidate power; the current pattern of “slow-burn” targeted killings, the deliberate execution of individuals “one here, one there”, serves as both a performative display of dominance and a volatile prelude to potential mass-murder events orchestrated for political leverage. Whether through this incremental attrition or the looming specter of a wholesale purge, the instrumentalization of minorities as pawns in a majoritarian power struggle signifies that the territory is at its most critical threshold of total erasure since its inception.

DISCLAIMER OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

This dossier was compiled using a combination of primary forensic investigation and secondary data aggregation from verified international and domestic human rights monitors. To ensure the highest standards of linguistic clarity, structural organization, and objective tonality, the authors utilized Large Language Model (LLM) technology for the final drafting and refinement of this report. The use of AI was strictly limited to language restructuring (enhancing the scannability and readability of complex geopolitical data) and objective neutrality checks (removing subjective bias and ensuring that all claims are directly supported by cited evidence, such as medical records, legal indictments, and cross-referenced casualty lists). The core data, forensic analysis, and conclusions remain the sole responsibility of the investigative team at Amnesty Freedom.

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This strategic framework and the accompanying forensic dossier were prepared by Amnesty Freedom. The intelligence, data analysis, and policy recommendations contained herein represent the collective output of ground teams, researchers, and human rights defenders. This document serves as a formal testament to the crisis and a blueprint for the necessary intervention to preserve liberty in Bangladesh.



Countering the Rise of Islamist Extremism in Bangladesh

A Strategic Security Framework

The forensic evidence presented in the dossier *The Anatomy of Erasure: A Dossier on Human Rights Violations in Bangladesh (1947–2026)* documents a trajectory of erasure that has mutated from the mass violence of 1947 and 1971 to the structural and granular attrition of 2026. Our investigation establishes that this modern persecution is driven by a sophisticated blasphemy algorithm, administrative purging, and the weaponization of the judiciary to silence dissent. This creates a climate of impunity where the state apparatus frequently withdraws, allowing radicalized mobs to function as the de facto enforcers of a new, exclusionary social order. This crisis is no longer a matter of internal political dispute but a humanitarian catastrophe and a global security risk requiring immediate global intervention. To avert the total annihilation of Bangladesh's pluralistic identity that could help the rising Islamic extremists to find a new breeding ground here, we propose a path forward grounded in the principles of human organizations of the free world: the granting of unconditional safety and protection to the persecuted and the wisdom to recognize that tolerance and diversity are the bedrock of civilization.

Unification and Ideological Liberation

The survival of minorities in Bangladesh depends on the dismantling of the sectarian divides that fracture resistance. We announce the immediate unification of Ex-Muslims, Hindus, Christians, Buddhists, and Indigenous communities into a single strategic bloc. This coalition will no longer negotiate for survival in isolation but will stand as a united front to demand equal rights, land restitution, and physical security.

Recognizing that the *blasphemy algorithm* targets ideological dissent as viciously as religious identity, we are launching the Ex-Muslim Program. This initiative will provide sanctuary, legal aid, and platforms for those renouncing extremism to embrace rationalism. It asserts the right to freedom of conscience as a non-negotiable human right. Given that the population of Bangladesh is approximately 85-93% Muslim, and that the primary ideology weaponized to violate human rights is Islamic extremism, statistically the most potent counterforce is the segment of this very population that has renounced their religion to fight back. This resistance is an act of extraordinary bravery; these individuals confront the dual leviathan of state prosecution weaponized through Section 295A of the Bangladesh Penal Code (1860) and the unregulated terror of religious mobs who utilize doxxing to target their homes. Despite lacking the resources to relocate or mount a legal defense, these souls continue to resist. From the operational experience of Amnesty Freedom, we have identified a disturbing pattern of performative advocacy that threatens to undermine genuine resistance. We observe that certain established organizations utilize the banner of this cause to host a ceaseless rotation of high-visibility seminars, press briefings, and social gatherings. These activities generate a theater of progress, creating a false sense of security among international observers and victims who believe action is being taken. However, forensic analysis suggests this inefficacy is not accidental but structural. These entities have historically and intentionally elevated demonstrably incompetent leadership to key decision-making roles. The concern raised that this could be a calculated strategy: by

placing ineffective leaders at the helm, these organizations ensure the crisis remains unsolved, thereby perpetuating their own relevance and funding streams at the expense of tangible solutions. To ensure that resources are not siphoned by opportunistic actors, we categorically state that international partners, including the United States, must not provide direct funding to individuals without proper investigations. Instead, aid must be exclusively directed toward established organizations to build robust organizational infrastructure: a dedicated network of defense lawyers to combat lawfare and immediate access to physical sanctuaries for those whose coordinates have been compromised by the mob. This strict conditionality ensures that the sanctuary is reserved for those in genuine peril, eliminating the incentive for fraud.

Our forensic review of contemporary resistance movements reveals a critical operational flaw: the prevalence of siloed advocacy that prioritizes specific communities (Hindu, Christian, or Buddhist) in isolation. We suggest that this fragmentation is a massive structural liability; to effectively dismantle the machinery of extremism, the counterforce must mobilize the entire nation. The nomenclature and narrow operational goals of current organizations allow virtually no space for Secular Muslims, Ahmadiyyas, Sufis, or Shias to align with them. By failing to integrate these groups where they practically emerge from the demographic block comprising nearly 90% of the population, existing initiatives have effectively severed the minority resistance from their broadest possible base of support. We conclude that leaving these potential allies on the periphery has been the primary driver for the stagnation and lack of tangible progress observed in the human rights struggle to date.

The Resurrection of the Creative Conscience

We categorically acknowledge that this is not a conflict between faiths, but between extremism and humanity. Millions of Muslims in Bangladesh reject the radicalization of their state and stand in solidarity with their Hindu, Christian, Buddhist, and Indigenous neighbors. These allies are vital partners in our vision for a secular, sapient Bangladesh, and they too face the threat of violence for their refusal to conform to extremist monoculture. Crucially, the Bangladeshi creative population comprising writers, poets, artists, and musicians who predominantly hails from Muslim families, even as many among them now identify as atheists, ex-Muslims, or secular humanists alongside their Hindu, Christian, and Buddhist peers. For decades, this cultural vanguard has been systematically pushed to the precipice, and today, the nation exists in a suffocating state of total self-censorship. To truly save Bangladesh, the free world must prioritize the liberation of these silenced voices. If this creative class can be empowered to reclaim its agency without fear of the mob or the state, the requirement for heavy-handed external intervention diminishes significantly; it is the resurrection of their voice that holds the singular power to retrieve the country's inherent multi-cultural nature from within.

To truly save Bangladesh, the free world must prioritize the liberation of these silenced voices. Sustainable geopolitical strategy recognizes that no external power can indefinitely subsidize a cause; the momentum for repair must ultimately come from the affected population itself. Bangladesh possesses a resilient cultural base which is historically secular and pluralistic and has the inherent capacity to drive this internal correction. By empowering this indigenous creative class to reclaim their agency, the United States invests in a self-sustaining solution. It is the resurrection of their voice that

holds the singular power to retrieve the country's multi-cultural nature, thereby serving as the strategic alternative to indefinite and costly direct intervention.

Expectations from the United States Administration

The time for passive observation has passed. The *slow-motion genocide* documented here demands that the United States leverage its diplomatic and economic power to enforce a cessation of hostilities. We urgently recommend the following concrete actions to address the escalating crisis:

1. Declaration of a Green Zone

To protect a vulnerable population estimated at nearly 60 million people currently at risk including religious minorities, indigenous peoples, and secular dissenters, the United States must advocate for and help establish an internationally monitored "Green Zone." This designated safe zone is essential to prevent further mass displacement and to provide a physical sanctuary where these communities can live free from the terror of lynching and lawfare.

2. Sanctions and the Infiltration Threat

We expect the U.S. State Department to impose targeted sanctions and visa restrictions on the individuals and officials identified in this dossier as perpetrators of killings and administrative purging. Special urgency is required regarding the perpetrators of the Educational Purge identified by our ground teams within Bangladesh's top universities. A significant portion of these instigators have adopted a strategy of forensic evasion: they systematically "clean up" their online profiles and radical digital footprints, presenting a curated, secular, and inclusive face to consular officers. This deception is calculated to secure entry into the Western world, including the United States, under the guise of higher education. Once admitted, this pathway is leveraged to obtain permanent residency and citizenship. We posit that these individuals constitute a massive wave of ideological infiltrators effectively acting as "sleepers agents" within the free world who utilize their protected status to fund and propagate the very extremism they fled, thereby destabilizing their host nations while financing the erasure of minorities back home.

3. Combating Exploitation

We explicitly call upon the United States government to extend this rigorous oversight to the international domain, preventing the weaponization of this crisis by external opportunists. Intelligence from the personal network of the counterforce indicates an alarming trend: the rise of internal and external entities exploiting this humanitarian crisis for financial gain and political leverage. We have observed actors abroad raising significant funds and courting media attention while providing zero direct assistance to the victims on the ground. These "crisis entrepreneurs" weaponize the suffering of vulnerable populations in Bangladesh to advance personal political agendas within the Western world. It is our assessment that previous efforts by the United States and its allies to mitigate this crisis failed precisely because they relied on intelligence and narratives provided by these compromised intermediaries. Therefore, we demand a rigorous vetting process: the United States must investigate these diasporic and external entities to ensure that con artists do not accrue domestic lobbying power.

The flow of information and resources must be audited to ensure that the monopoly on the narrative is wrested from those who profit from the problem and returned to those actually fighting it.

4. Economic Conditionality

We urge the United States to operationalize its economic influence by making all future bilateral aid, trade preferences, and security cooperation strictly contingent upon verifiable human rights benchmarks. Bangladesh's access to Western markets is the lifeline of its economy, and it must be inextricably linked to the physical security of its minority populations. We recommend the establishment of an annual “Minority Safety Certification” process, conducted by independent international observers rather than state agencies, as a prerequisite for the continuation of development assistance and trade partnerships. The message must be unequivocal: the state cannot benefit from the global free market while simultaneously enabling the erasure of its own diversity.

5. Security Sector Accountability

We call for the immediate application of strict human rights vetting (consistent with “Leahy Law” standards) regarding the deployment of Bangladeshi security forces in United Nations Peacekeeping missions. Bangladesh’s role as a top contributor to UN peacekeeping grants its military significant global legitimacy and revenue; however, this privilege must not be extended to forces implicated in domestic crimes against humanity. The United States, as a primary funder of the UN, must demand that the UN Department of Peace Operations (DPO) suspend the deployment of any units or commanders identified in this dossier as architects of the killings in July-August 2024 or the ongoing ethnic cleansing. The message must be simple and severe: a military that wages war on its own minorities cannot be trusted to keep the peace abroad. We must aggressively expand the international definition of state culpability to include strategic negligence. History confirms that state apparatuses are not always the direct instrument of erasure; often, they simply withdraw to allow the mob to act as a proxy, utilizing the resulting chaos as political leverage. Therefore, we assert that the standard for UN Peacekeeping eligibility must be absolute: any government strictly proven to be neglecting its primary duty to protect vulnerable communities from mob violence must be barred from UN missions, regardless of whether their military was directly deployed in the atrocity. A regime that treats the safety of its own minorities as a negotiable political asset has forfeited the moral authority to enforce peace on the global stage.

6. Diplomatic Visibility

The weaponization of the judiciary to silence minority leadership exemplified by the “sedition” charges against monks and the “blasphemy” framing of educators and writers in Bangladesh flourishes in darkness. We recommend that the U.S. Embassy in Dhaka establish a “Legal Observation Unit.” This unit must mandate the physical presence of U.S. diplomatic staff at the court hearings of high-profile minority detainees (such as Chinmoy Krishna Das) and any victims of the *blasphemy algorithm* such as ‘hurting religious sentiment’. This visibility signals that the international community is acting as a witness to these show trials, stripping the state of the anonymity it requires to execute judicial injustices.

7. Humanitarian Corridors and P-2 Designation

Recognizing that the *Silent Exodus* is now a desperate rout, the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) should designate Bangladeshi religious minorities, ex-Muslims, and secular dissenters as a Priority 2 (P-2) Group of special humanitarian concern. However, to prevent the “infiltration” described in Point 2, the vetting for this program must not rely solely on standard UNHCR referrals, which can be compromised by local prejudices. Instead, referrals should be cross verified through the “Counterforce” coalition we have established, ensuring that sanctuary is granted to the true victims of extremism rather than economic migrants or disguised radicals.

The ongoing violence must come to an end immediately. We urge the U.S. administration to make future aid and diplomatic recognition contingent upon the demonstrable safety of these minority groups. Whatever steps are necessary to halt this erasure must be taken.

8. Intellectual Sanctuary and Cultural Preservation

The “Educational Purge” aims to decapitate the intellectual resilience of the minority community. We propose the creation of an “Academic Rescue Initiative” specifically for the verified teachers and students forced to resign or be expelled under mob pressure. The U.S. should offer emergency scholarly visas and remote fellowships to these individuals, ensuring their survival without granting entry to the perpetrators. Furthermore, funding should be allocated for the “Digital Archiving of Bengal's Pluralism,” ensuring that the literature, music, and art currently being destroyed (like that of Rahul Ananda) is preserved in secure, offshore digital repositories to prevent the total erasure of the region's secular history.

9. Algorithmic Accountability and Digital Sovereignty

We call upon the U.S. administration to enforce strict corporate responsibility standards on American technology firms operating in the region. The “blasphemy algorithm” where unverified digital footprints trigger lethal mob violence is facilitated by platforms like Facebook and YouTube. The U.S. must demand that these companies establish dedicated, Bangla-speaking “Rapid Response Teams” focused on identifying and de-escalating coordinated hate speech and doxxing campaigns before they transition into physical violence. These platforms must be held accountable for preventing their algorithms from serving as the command-and-control infrastructure for ethnic cleansing.

10. Appointment of a Special Envoy

To ensure these measures are not lost in the bureaucracy of broader South Asian policy, we strongly advise the appointment of a “Special Envoy for the Protection of Religious Minorities in Bangladesh.” This official would report directly to the Secretary of State, tasked with a singular mandate: to monitor the “Green Zone,” audit the “Minority Safety Certification,” and serve as the direct liaison for the “Counterforce” coalition. This appointment would institutionalize the U.S. commitment to preventing the demographic extinction of these communities.

11. Global Magnitsky Act Activation

While visa restrictions (Point 2) stop physical travel, they do not stop the flow of capital. We urge the U.S. Treasury Department to invoke the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act to freeze the assets of the financiers and masterminds behind the “Ochlocracy.” Our forensic analysis indicates that the “mob” is not spontaneous but funded; it requires logistics, transport, and digital infrastructure. The United States must identify and block the international banking channels used by these “shadow commanders” to move stolen wealth abroad. By cutting off the financial lifeline, the machinery of erasure will starve.

12. Terror Designation for Radicalized Militias

The U.S. State Department must re-evaluate the classification of specific “student” and “political” wings that have transitioned into paramilitary operations. When a group utilizes weapons, organizes systematic neighborhood sweeps, and executes extrajudicial killings (as documented in Phase 03), they are no longer “protesters”, they are Non-State Armed Actors. Crucially, we must address a repetitive historical trend: entities that were once tortured or marginalized by political opponents often weaponize their past trauma to justify their own emergence as oppressors. Historical victimization is not a license for present-day tyranny. Intelligence indicates that these factions are cashing in on their history of peaceful activism or persecution to mask their current operational doctrine, which has shifted toward lethal violence. The United States must not be blinded by this victimhood camouflage. There is an urgent need for deep-dive investigations to look past these curated histories; even organizations with a legitimate record of past suffering must be scrutinized if they are now the architects of oppression. We recommend that these specific radicalized factions be designated as Entities of Particular Concern (EPC) or placed on the Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) watchlists. This designation is essential to preventing them from accessing global platforms, fundraising systems, and international legitimacy while operating death squads at home.

The twelve recommendations outlined above constitute an emergency framework that can act as a tourniquet for a bleeding nation. They require the United States and the international community to abandon the failed diplomacy of “concern” in favor of the diplomacy of consequence. To continue with business as usual, funding the state machinery while it purges its own citizens, validating compromised NGOs, and ignoring the weaponization of the judiciary, is to become complicit in the extinction of these communities.

This crisis has ceased to be a localized South Asian issue; it has metastasized into a direct strategic concern for the Western world, specifically the United States. The mechanisms of persecution we have documented includes the weaponization of American digital platforms to the migration of radicalized ideologies, demonstrate that this threat respects no borders. Allowing a culture of impunity to consolidate in Bangladesh inevitably incubates a security risk that will manifest domestically within Western nations. Therefore, intervention is not merely a humanitarian gesture for a distant population; it is a forensic necessity for the preservation of democratic stability and national security within the United States itself.

We stand at the final threshold. If the free world fails to intervene with the strategic precision and economic leverage proposed here, the silent exodus will conclude in total silence: the silence of a land

where no dissenting voice remains. Should this silence prevail, the resulting vacuum will inevitably transform the territory into an incubator for forces hostile to the free world. Such a transformation establishes a long-term strategic threat that, while currently latent, will eventually manifest against Western security interests, potentially decades into the future. Preemptive action is, therefore, not merely a humanitarian obligation but a geopolitical imperative to prevent the consolidation of a sanctuary for future extremism.

To conclude this discussion, we should not consider this a rescue mission for the persecuted; it is a defensive imperative for the free world to prevent the consolidation of a sanctuary state for extremism. The trajectory is clear, the evidence is forensic and has been building up rapidly, and the time for hesitation has expired. History will not judge the international community by the eloquence of its sympathies, but by the speed of its intervention.