

[Protecting human rights in Bangladesh](#)



Inside this document

About Bangaj	2
Legal Status	2
Mission	3
Executive Committee	3
Activities	4

About Bangaj

Bangladesh returned to democracy following the fall of an autocratic regime through a popular upsurge in 1990. Since then, three credible elections were held successfully. However the growth of constitutional liberties still faces some challenges.

Democracy or free and fair elections alone are not enough to protect the rights of the disadvantaged and vulnerable groups. Unfortunately, continued occurrences of election violence, arbitrary arrests, custodial death, and torture by state and non-state actors hamper the enjoyment of civil and political rights, often with ominous consequences. The need for an independent and objective human rights organization in safeguarding basic human rights, particularly civil and political rights of the people of Bangladesh is strongly felt.

In 2015, a group of human rights activists initiated discussions and underscored the need to uphold the civil and political rights of the people of Bangladesh along with social, cultural and economic rights. Eventually, a decision was arrived at to form an organization in order to advance such rights. On October 06, 2015, Bangaj came into being with the aim to create a wider monitoring and awareness raising system on the abuse of civil and political rights. The principal objectives of the organization are to raise the awareness of human rights and its various abuses, on the one hand and to create a vibrant democratic system through election monitoring on the other. The organization also performs policy advocacy to address the current human rights situation. Bangaj has no

field or branch offices. Instead, it has trained more than 120 people all over the country to be human rights defenders, who are relied upon for information outside Dhaka. These activities help contribute to eventual positive steps towards the creation of transparency and accountability in the responsible sectors of the government with an aim to improve its human rights record and to facilitate an active democracy with the participation of people from all sections of society.

In Bangladesh, women, children, religious and ethnic minorities are among the groups that are most vulnerable to human rights abuses. Furthermore, poor people's inability to access the justice system is blatantly obvious. Keeping this in mind, the organization's fact-finding missions in rural Bangladesh also play a role in awareness raising among the vulnerable groups. Bangaj always emphasizes the active participation of the grassroots community. It realizes that empowerment is the precondition to establish human rights, which is based on a recognition and faith in people's own power and resources. With this in mind, Bangaj is working with the vision of "society where full enjoyment of human rights by every human being will be ensured".

Bangaj has been able to established itself as one of the leading human rights organizations of the country. It has developed a strong network of partners and human rights defenders not only all over Bangladesh, but also in the region.

Legal Status

Certificate of Registration of Societies (Under Act XXI of 1860)

Reg. No. S-12242/2015;

Date-06/10/2015

Registration Authority: Register of Joint Stock Companies & Farms (RJSC),
Bangladesh

Mission

- Promotion of human rights through awareness building, documentation, fact finding, monitoring and research;
- Advocacy and lobbying for incorporation and ratification of various international instruments by the government and also for the enactment of human rights friendly laws and necessary amendments of existing laws;
- Fighting against impunity and working for the prevention of torture and enforced disappearances;
- Fostering mass awareness on rights and duties;
- Strengthening the human rights movement and establishing participatory democracy and good governance in Bangladesh;
- Incorporating gender sensitivity in strategic planning of all programmes and projects in consultation with human rights defenders and network members;
- Mobilizing and networking between the activities of its members and enhancing institutional capabilities of individual groups, organisations and agencies on human rights issues;
- Advocacy, lobbying and campaigning for people's participation in governance and also for introducing participatory democracy;
- Monitoring of national and local government elections for ensuring free and fair electoral process to ensure voter's right to participate;
- Facilitating mass awareness raising events on national and international days that create positive images of work.

Executive Committee

- Md. Aminur Rahman, President
- Nazme Sabina, Vice-President
- Md Asad Rahman, General Secretary
- Adv. Muniruddin, Additional General Secretary
- Dr. GM Abdus Salam, Organizing Secretary
- Ms. Masuma, Secretary-Women & Child Affairs
- Md. Ariful Islam, Secretary-Finance



Activities

Research

The Research Team at Bangaj is responsible for the archival preservation and enhancement of the fact finding reports. This involves the inclusion of legal rights, available data and statistics from previous years and recommendations into the main text of the fact finding reports as well as translation and editing work. The work also involves the preparation of human rights reports, collection of data regarding various human rights abuses throughout the year and writing and publication of various articles on human rights abuses for public knowledge.

Another activity of the Research Unit is to keep international and regional human rights organization's updated and aware of human rights conditions in Bangladesh. The Research Team is also responsible for the writing of booklets and monographs based on Bangaj's activities and updating its web page.

Fact Findings

Bangaj fact-finding activities cover instances of extra judicial killing, enforced disappearance, torture, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment and abuse of some specific laws leading to human rights violations, repression against innocent people and application of unnecessary force by law enforcement agencies.

Bangaj identifies incidents of human rights violations, which are reported in the newspapers but need further enquiry and information to clearly establish the actual abuse faced by the victims, causes behind the abuse and the persons responsible. While the media focuses on human rights violations more from a journalistic perspective confined within reporting the incident only, Bangaj fact-finding goes deep into the incidents from socio-legal perspective. Bangaj also conducts fact-finding of incidents of human rights abuses, which are not reported in newspapers but are reported by Bangaj.

Advocacy and Networking

Through regular campaign and discussion meetings on various issues of human rights and their abuse, Bangaj brings together various groups of people, including policymakers, politicians, law enforcement agencies, lawyers, human rights activists and NGO activists, journalists from various media and victims of human rights abuse. The findings and recommendations are discussed and the policymakers are asked for comments and suggestions. In this way, and also through its publication of reports in the print media, Bangaj carries out its advocacy activities.

Activities

Documentation

Bangaj has a Documentation Team that keeps the organization updated with human rights abuses published in the major national dailies. The work of the Documentation Team is to gather and document relevant information for fact-finding purposes from both the daily papers and personal and organizational sources/contacts, including human rights defenders.

Key topics of documentation:

- Extrajudicial killings
- Torture
- Custodial deaths/death in jail
- Enforced Disappearances
- Human rights violations at the Border
- Political Violations
- Freedom of the Media
- Freedom of Association
- Violence against women (Dowry, Rape, Acid, Stalking)
- Illegal Fatwa
- Situation of RMG Workers
- Ethnic and Religious Minority
- Public Lynching
- Death Penalty
- Remand
- Hartal

Every month, the documentation team develops separate tables and graphs of the reported and published human rights abuses in order to determine and analyze the rise or fall of such incidents. These are included in monthly and annual human rights reports of human rights violations, which are disseminated to the media for publication and to other national and international NGOs. Other activities of the unit include cataloguing material for future reference and research work; compiling information for in-house use and in response to external requests; and preparing such documents and material for inclusion in the annual human rights reports.

The system of documentation prevalent in the organization reinforces Bangaj's other activities of fact-finding, re-search and advocacy. Systematic documentation of such violations and dissemination of information to interested organisations and individuals involve maintaining newspaper clippings and gathering of information from other sources.

Bangaj has earned good repute and credibility in human rights documentation, because of the organisation's strictly neutral reporting policy. National and international media, foreign missions stationed in Dhaka and local, regional and international human rights organisations and networks regularly use information and statistics maintained by the

Activities

Bangaj has earned good reputation and credibility in human rights documentation, because of the organization's strictly neutral reporting policy. National and international media, foreign missions stationed in Dhaka and local, regional and international human rights organizations and networks regularly use information and statistics maintained by the Bangaj documentation unit.

HRD Training

Since 2015, Bangaj trained more than 120 Human Rights Defenders from various districts of Bangladesh with the support of different partners. The aim of the training programs were to create a grassroots and local human rights defenders network for mobilizing people in order to strengthen the social movement against human rights violations. Apart from training on human rights issues, fact-finding, documentation, report-writing and advocacy, Bangaj human rights defenders are also given training on election monitoring focusing election related violence prior to every national and local government elections.

Bangaj has a country-wide network of human rights defenders, who work as volunteer and watch dog in their locality.

Communication Address

Bangaj Society

Road-29, House-406, Flat-8

Mohakhali DOHS

Dhaka-1206

Phone: +88029887948

Cell: +8801745474303