



JOINT STATEMENT

BANGLADESH: Crackdown Against the Independence of Lawyers in Bangladesh Under the Interim Government

France/ Belgium/ Poland/ Egypt/ Thailand/ Kazakhstan/ India; November 5, 2025: The JusticeMakers Bangladesh in France (JMBF), the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE), the National Bar Council (CNB), the International Observatory of Lawyers at Risk (OIAD), the Arrested Lawyers Initiative, the Arab Center for the Independence of the Judiciary and the Legal Profession (ACIJLP), the International Association of People's Lawyers – Monitoring Committee on Attacks on Lawyers, the People's Vigilance Committee on Human Rights (PVCHR), the Banglar Manabadhikar Suraksha Mancha (MASUM), the 'NEVER AGAIN' Association, the Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network (APRRN), the Public Association Dignity, the Programme Against Custodial Torture and Impunity (PACTI), the Solidarité Internationale LGBTQI (SIL) and the Families of the Disappeared (FOD) express grave concern over the continuous politically motivated repression against the independence of the legal community in Bangladesh under the current Interim Government.

Lawyers are being systematically targeted solely for performing their professional duties and exercising their political beliefs. The France-based human rights organization, Justicemakers Bangladesh in France (JMBF), has documented 268 verified incidents of persecution affecting 849 lawyers between August 2024 and September 2025 under the current Interim Government. To access and download the full report, please visit the following link: <https://www.jmbf.org/2025/10/press-release-jmbf-releases-2025-report.html>

The evidence reveals a coordinated, politically motivated campaign orchestrated by the Interim Government, led by former Nobel Peace Laureate Muhammad Yunus, and its allies, targeting lawyers for their political affiliations, professional responsibilities, and organizational engagements. This campaign has undermined the independence of the legal profession, obstructed justice, and threatened the rule of law.

Patterns of Persecution

According to JMBF's verified documentation, the crackdown includes multiple overlapping tactics:

1. **Fabricated Cases:** 200 incidents affecting 721 lawyers, including false charges of murder, attempted murder, sabotage, seditious conspiracy, extortion, and other crimes, used to criminalize and silence legal professionals.
2. **Arbitrary Imprisonment:** 75 incidents involving 203 victims (including 57 incidents/73 lawyers imprisoned following arrest, and 18 incidents/130 lawyers imprisoned after voluntary surrender before the court).
3. **Physical Violence:** 26 incidents affecting 51 lawyers, involving assault, intimidation, and harassment.
4. **Targeted Killings:** 4 lawyers murdered outside custody, intended to instill fear within the legal community.
5. **Vandalism:** 7 incidents targeting chambers, homes, and offices, disrupting professional and personal lives.
6. **Professional Sanctions:** 16 cases involving expulsions from bar associations and license cancellations, stripping lawyers of their professional legitimacy.
7. **Misrule of Bars:** 16 bar committees forcibly occupied, with lawyers affiliated with the Bangladesh Awami League (BAL) systematically barred from contesting 44 district bar association elections through canceled or refused nomination papers.
8. **Other Forms of Repression:** 30 incidents affecting 50 lawyers, including surveillance, harassment, extortion, smear campaigns, death threats, and threats of fabricated prosecutions.

Politically Targeted Persecution

The repression has been overwhelmingly politically motivated, disproportionately affecting lawyers affiliated with the Bangladesh Awami League (BAL). JMBF documented 236 incidents involving 795 victims, representing 88% of all incidents and 93% of all victims nationwide. These figures demonstrate a deliberate effort to neutralize pro-BAL lawyers and obstruct justice.

Call to Action

We strongly condemn these politically motivated and systematically targeted attacks and call on the Interim Government of Bangladesh to:

1. Immediately end all forms of persecution against lawyers in Bangladesh.
2. Release all imprisoned lawyers and withdraw all charges unconditionally.
3. Ensure protection of lawyers from harassment, intimidation, and violence.
4. Guarantee justice for persecuted lawyers and prevent further persecution.
5. Create an enabling environment for lawyers to perform their duties without fear or interference.
6. Provide adequate physical, psychological, and financial protection and compensation to persecuted lawyers and their families.

7. Launch an independent investigation into all incidents of persecution, with the participation of an international investigative committee, to ensure perpetrators are held accountable.
8. Enact a Protection of Lawyers Act in line with the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers.

We also urge the international community, including bar associations and human rights organizations, notably the United Nations Human Rights Council, the European Parliament, and the European Commission, to closely monitor the situation and provide support to lawyers under threat in Bangladesh.

We reaffirm our commitment to protecting the independence of lawyers and to upholding justice, human rights, and the rule of law.

For further information:

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Signatories

1. The JusticeMakers Bangladesh in France (JMBF), Paris, France, <https://www.jmbf.org>
2. The Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE), Brussels, Belgium, <https://www.ccbe.eu>
3. The National Bar Council (CNB), Paris, France, <https://www.cnb.avocat.fr>
4. The International Observatory of Lawyers at Risk (OIAD), Paris, France, <https://www.protect-lawyers.org>
5. The Arrested Lawyers Initiative, Brussels, Belgium, <https://www.arrestedlawyers.org>
6. The Arab Center for the Independence of the Judiciary and the Legal Profession (ACIJLP), Cairo, Egypt, <https://www.acijlponline.org>
7. The International Association of People's Lawyers – Monitoring Committee on Attacks on Lawyers, Bordeaux, France, <https://defendlawyers.wordpress.com>
8. The People's Vigilance Committee on Human Rights (PVCHR), Varanasi, India, <https://www.pvchr.asia>
9. The Banglar Manabdhikar Suraksha Mancha (MASUM), Hooghly, India, <http://www.masum.org.in>
10. The 'NEVER AGAIN' Association, Warszawa, Poland, <https://www.nigdywiecej.org>
11. The Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network (APRRN), Bangkok, Thailand, <https://www.aprrn.org>
12. The Public Association Dignity, Astana, Kazakhstan, <https://www.kkassiyet.wordpress.com>
13. The Programme Against Custodial Torture & Impunity (PACTI), Hooghly, India, <http://www.masum.org.in>
14. The Solidarité Internationale LGBTQI (SIL), Paris, France, <https://www.asso-sil.fr>
15. The Families of the Disappeared, Negombo, Sri Lanka