

General allegation

111th session (6-10 February 2017)

Bangladesh

1. The Working Group received information from credible sources alleging obstacles encountered to implement the Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance in Bangladesh.
2. The sources reported grave human rights abuses and violations committed by Bangladesh Security and Intelligence Forces as well as Law Enforcement Authorities. In particular, the Rapid Action Battalion, detective branch of the police, and the Bangladesh Directorate General of Forces Intelligence are said to be directly implicated in such abuses and violations. These violations include enforced or involuntary disappearances, arbitrary detention, extrajudicial killings and practices of torture, ill and other degrading, inhuman and cruel treatment.
3. The sources mentioned that 319 cases of disappearances in Bangladesh have been recorded in total between January 2009 and November 2016, with a substantial increase since 2013. The cases of Hummar Quader Chowdhury, Mir Ahmed Bin Quasem and Former Brigadier General Amaan Al-Azmi, respectively abducted without lawful order on 4 August, 9 August and 22 August 2016, have been highlighted by the sources as examples of hundreds, if not thousands, of such instances occurring in recent years. As of the other reported disappearances, two groups are said to be primarily targeted, namely leaders and activists of the primary opposition, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, and student activists of the Islami Chhatro Shibir, the student wing of Bangladesh Jamaat-E-Islami party. Ordinary citizens and members of the ruling party are also said to have been targeted.
4. The sources informed that the Bangladeshi authorities refused the detainees access to a lawyer or family, have publicly denied having arrested political opponents and have systematically denied access to the complaint mechanisms or, if not denied, controlled the mechanism and further investigation, refusing to register complaints in which the words “enforced disappearance” appeared.
5. Additionally, according to the sources, the Bangladeshi Government is known to handle unlawfully arrested individuals in three ways, namely fabricating charges; dropping them across the Indian border where they are subsequently arrested as illegal migrants, or not seen again; or executing them in what is called “cross-fire shootings”.