Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)
LEGAL AID BOARD

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Information on police protection in Bangladesh.

In a section titled "Executive Summary And Recommendations" an *International Crisis Group* report states:

> "After decades of misuse and neglect, Bangladesh's police are a source of instability and fear rather than a key component of a democratic society. Human rights abuses are endemic and almost all Bangladeshis who interact with the police complain of corruption." (International Crisis Group (11 December 2009) *Bangladesh: Getting Police Reform on Track*)

In a section titled "Politicising The Police" this report states:

> "Political and bureaucratic interference are the most significant impediments to police efficiency and have resulted in the worst forms of abuse including illegal detention, death in custody, torture and pervasive corruption. The result is almost universal public disdain for the police force. A former IGP explained that this sentiment is certainly justified: 'Most of the perceptions of the police being unresponsive to the public, politicised and involved in human rights abuses and corruption are true'." (ibid, p.14)

In a section titled "Role of the Police and Security Apparatus" the 2010 *US Department of State* country report on Bangladesh states:

> "Police are organized nationally under the Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA) and have a mandate to maintain internal security and law and order. Under recent governments, police were generally ineffective and reluctant to investigate persons affiliated with the ruling party." (US Department of State (11 March 2010) *2009 Human Rights Report: Bangladesh*)

In a section titled "Summary of the ALRC's research on politics – Corruption Nexus in Bangladesh: An Empirical Study on Impacts on Judicial Governance" the *Asian Human Rights Commission* report on Bangladesh for the events of 2009 states:

> "Different forms of corruption can be found at most stages of criminal investigations. The police play a key role in corruption in investigative and trial cases. It is difficult to lodge a complaint in a criminal case in a police station. It is also difficult to file a complaint case before the cognizance magistrate courts. Political leaders and other actors with vested interests try to influence the filing or lodging of criminal cases. False cases are often instigated by rival groups. The police often refuse to record cases on political grounds. They tend to distort the circumstantial and physical evidence portion of the First Instance Report (F.I.R.)" (Asian Human Rights Commission (December 2009) *The State of Human Rights in Bangladesh 2009*, p.31)

This section of the report also states:

> “Strong persuasion is required to have immediate police action launched after a case is lodged. Bribes for court staff are an inevitable expectation for services rendered at all stages from the filing to the disposal of a criminal case. The Officer-In-Charge of a police station plays a vital role in the investigation and its supervision. Investigative Officers (I.O.) have been found reluctant to arrest the offenders in cognizable cases if not persuaded to do so. The I.O. seldom visits places where crimes have been committed and often threaten to falsely implicate persons unless they are paid off. Witness statements are generally not properly recorded. Vital incriminating and evidentiary elements are purposely omitted. The power of arrest without a warrant is grossly abused by the police. Police remand has become a profitable business, while torture is reported as being endemic during remand. The police are reluctant to conduct identification parades. Allegations abound concerning the manipulation/falsification of laboratory reports, post-mortem reports and other medical information.” (ibid, p.31)

In a section titled “Ongoing extra-judicial killings and impunity” this report states:

> “Seeking justice concerning extra-judicial killings remains unthinkable because the police threaten complainants with extra-judicial killings themselves, under the justification of ‘crossfire’ incidents, whenever a relative of a victim goes to the police station to register a complaint. The message is clear to anyone that dares to complain about extra-judicial killings by the authorities in Bangladesh: complain and be killed. This leads to the perpetrators of such grave human rights abuses being able to operate and re-offend in the knowledge that their crimes will be accompanied by total impunity. This situation gives rise to a climate of severe fear in the country, including for journalists, lawyers, doctors and human rights defenders that encounter such cases, as speaking out concerning these killings also results in reprisals.” (ibid, p.39)

See also submission to the Human Rights Council from the *Asian Legal Resource Centre* which states:

> “The ALRC has also documented cases that show that the police also threaten complainants with extra-judicial killings under the cover of ‘crossfire’ incidents. The message is clear to anyone that dares to complain about extra-judicial killings by the authorities in Bangladesh: complain and be killed. This leads to the perpetrators of such grave human rights abuses being able to operate and re-offend in the knowledge that their crimes will be accompanied by total impunity. This situation gives rise to a climate of sever fear in the country, including for journalists, lawyers, doctors and human rights defenders that encounter such cases, as speaking out concerning these killings also results in reprisals. For example, Mr. Jahangir Alam Akash, a journalist and human rights defender in the northern city of Rajshahi, publicised a number of televised reports highlighting the details of ‘crossfire’ killings along with the inconsistencies of such claims by the Rapid Action Battalion over the last few years. On October 23, 2007, officers of the Rapid Action Battalion led by Major Rashidul Hassan Rashed, illegally arrested him from his home. Mr. Akash was arbitrarily detained and tortured in a Rapid Action Battalion camp in Rajshahi.” (Asian Legal Resource Centre (13 February 2009) *Bangladesh: The perpetrators of over 1000 extra-judicial killings must be brought to justice*)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any

particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

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