

Policy Analysis & Research Initiative

Monthly Human Rights Report

January 2025

In January 2025, Bangladesh witnessed significant human rights violations, particularly targeting religious minorities, journalists, and political activists. Religious minorities faced eight cases of vandalism, while journalists suffered one physical attack and three incidents of vandalism. Political violence was severe, with 11 killings, 358 injuries, and multiple acts of vandalism, primarily affecting BNP (275 cases, most of them were internal conflict), Jamaat-e-Islami (33), Awami League (11) and Anti-discrimination Students Movement (27). Additionally, six custodial deaths took place in prison and in the custody of Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs). The Indigenous community experienced one killing and 12 physical attacks including the incident in front of NCTB on 2 January 2025.

9 January 2025

Madrasah students attacked a 200-year-old shrine in Mymensingh.



15 January 2025

At least 20 people were injured in an attack by "Students for Sovereignty" on Indigenous protesters and supporters in Motijheel over the removal of Adibasi (Indigenous) Graffiti from textbooks.

Political violence dominated the landscape, reflecting deep polarization and instability, particularly among BNP supporters involved in in-party clashes over January 2025. Furthermore, religious minorities faced vandalism and attacks, journalists endured threats and indigenous communities experienced violence and marginalization.

The law and order situation remains fragile. Cultural events, concerts, and other religious gatherings are being canceled in various parts of the country due to threats from religious extremists. Mob violence remained rampant across the country.

These incidents underscore systemic failures in accountability, protection, and law enforcement, In some of the most discussed cases, the perpetrators were arrested.

1. Political Violence

Political violence remains the most concerning area in January 2025, with 11 killings and 358 injuries reported. The high number of injuries suggests large-scale clashes or confrontations, linked to political polarization and unrest. Most of the incidents were BNP's internal party conflicts to establish local dominance. Though the central leaders were warning continuously to avoid violence, that seems not working. Other groups, including student organizations and smaller political factions, also contribute to the violence, albeit to a lesser extent.

Figure: Political Voilance - January, 2025

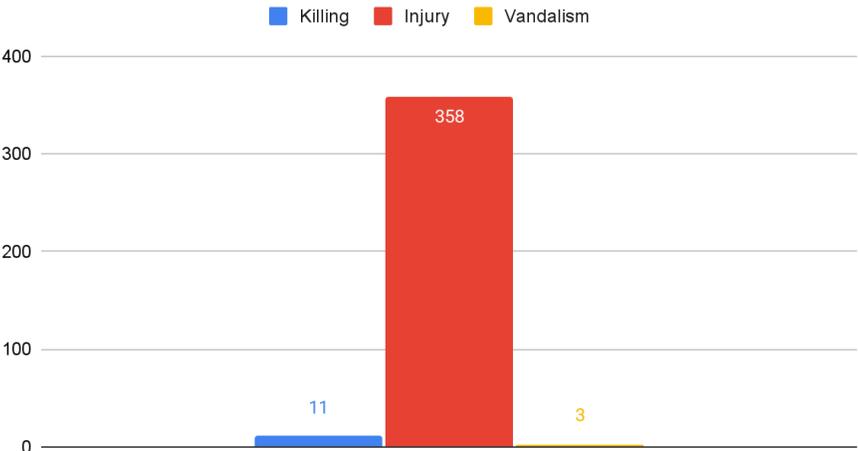
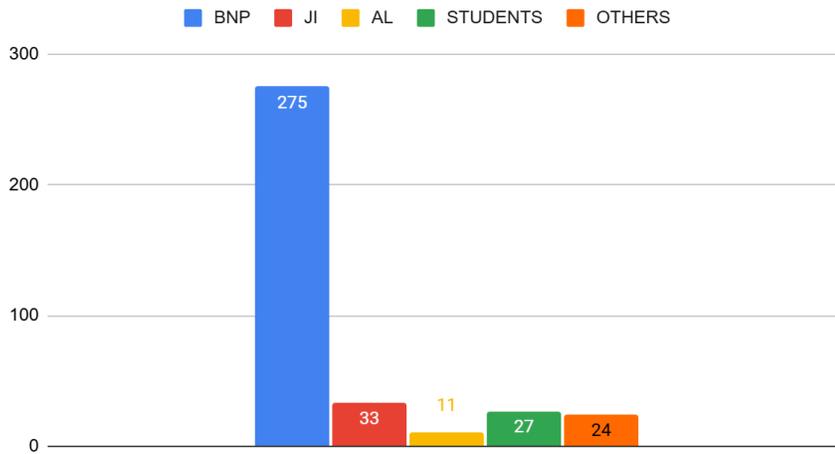


Figure: Number of Casualties by Groups

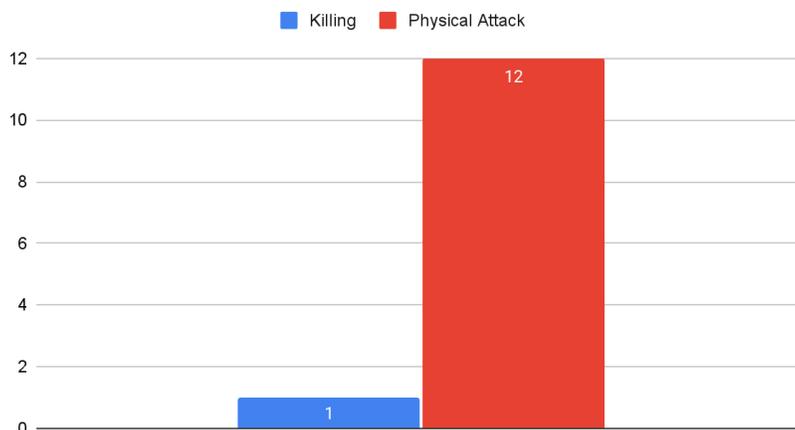


- ❖ On 8 January 2025, eight houses were vandalized, looted, and set on fire due to a dispute between two parties over local supremacy and the formation of a union BNP committee in Bagerhat Sadar Upazilla. At least 25 people, including women and children, were injured.
- ❖ On 11 January 2025, Clashes between BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami activists in Jhenaidah's Shailkupa Upazila over forming an ad hoc committee for a school injured at least 35 people from both sides.

2. Violence Against Indigenous Communities

Indigenous communities from Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) and the plains faced one killing and 12 physical attacks, highlighting their continued marginalization and vulnerability. This reflects broader patterns of discrimination and neglect toward indigenous populations.

Figure: Violence Against Indigenous Community - January, 2025

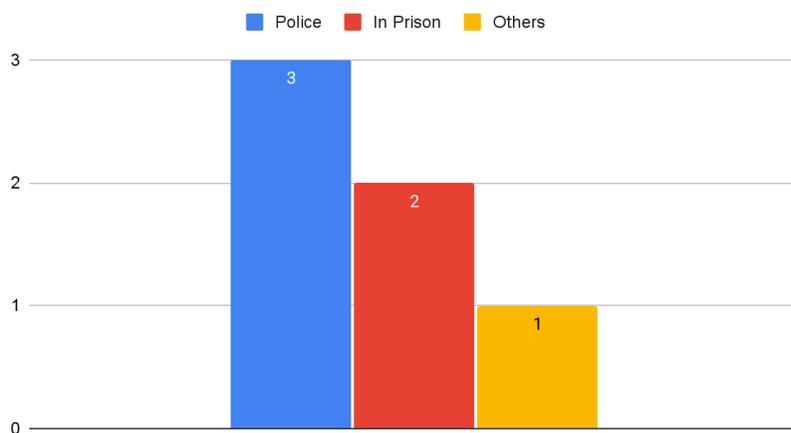


- ❖ On 2 January 2025, Mro Ang Marma - a Marma youth from Manikchori in Khagrachari District was found dead in Longodu, Rangamati allegedly in a 'gunfight between terrorists and law enforcement forces'. However, the Officer in Charge of the Langadu police station said they heard of the incident and sent a team for a detailed inquiry. One of the organizers of Rangamati UPDF stated that the person is not a member of their organization while law enforcers claimed he is a UPDF member.
- ❖ On 15 January 2025, At least 20 youth were injured in an attack on an Indigenous group and its supporters protesting the removal of graffiti from textbooks featuring the word "Adibasi". The attack was allegedly carried out by a group identifying themselves as *Students for Sovereignty*¹ in front of the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) office in Motijheel.

3. Deaths in Custody

Five custodial deaths were reported in January 2025, three in police custody and 2 in prison. This raises serious questions about the treatment of detainees and the accountability of law enforcement agencies.

Figure: Death in Custody



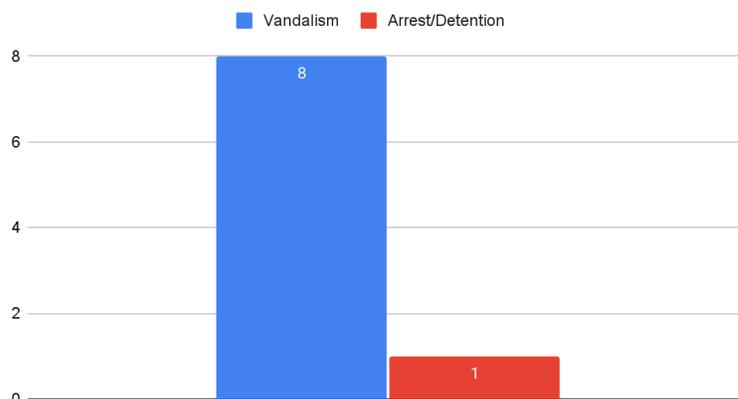
¹ Students for Sovereignty is a new organization based on University of Dhaka. Student leaders accuse the group of having ties to 'fundamentalist' organisations that have resurfaced under different banners over time. Their key focus of activities are based on CHT issues.

- ❖ On 10 January 2025, Sheikh Zahirul Islam, General Secretary of Sreepur Upazila Sramik League², died in Gazipur District Jail. The prison authorities said he died of a heart attack. However, his family claimed that Zahir was tortured to death inside the jail.
- ❖ On 13 January 2025, A former Chhatra Dal³ leader who was detained in a joint operation in Sonaimuri, Noakhali, died in hospital. His relatives and local BNP leaders alleged that he died due to beatings after his arrest and lack of timely treatment, which the police denied. The deceased, Abdur Rahman (34), is the son of Sayedul Haque of Hirapur village in Sonapur Union of Sonaimuri Upazila.

4. Attacks on Religious Minorities

Religious minorities continue to face targeted violence, with 8 cases of property vandalism reported in January 2025. This indicates the rising concerns about the state's ability or willingness to protect vulnerable communities.

Figure: Attack on Religious Minorities - January, 2025



- ❖ On 9 January 2025, a Milad Mahfil, Dua, and Sama Qawwali program at the shrine of Hazrat Shah Sufi Syed Kalu Shah (RA) in the heart of Mymensingh city was disrupted by an attack by madrasa students from nearby madrasah. They demolished a part of the 200-year-old shrine.

² The Bangladesh Jatiya Sramik League (Bangladesh National Workers' League) is the worker's wing of Bangladesh Awami League.

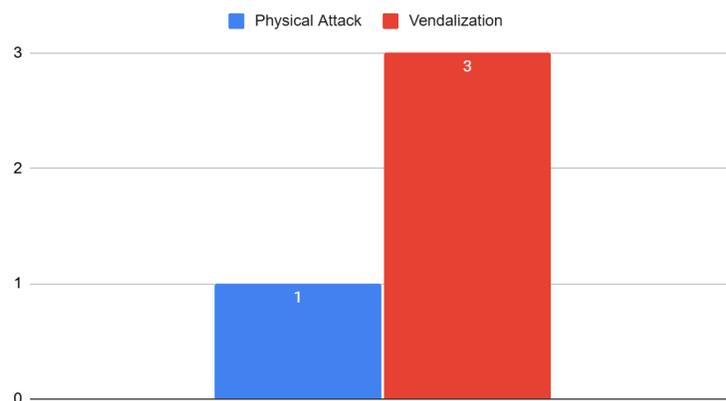
³ Chatra Dal of Bangladesh Nationalist Student Party is a student wing of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)

- ❖ On 27 January 2025, a group, identifying themselves as the "Conscious Muslim Citizen Society", vandalized the fence erected for Oros, a religious gathering, and allegedly took away cattle from Kutubbagh Darbar Sharif in the capital's Farmgate area.

5. Harassment of Journalists

Journalists experienced incidents of property vandalism and physical attacks. While the number is relatively low compared to other categories, it underscores the risks faced by media personnel in reporting on sensitive issues.

Figure: Attack on Journalists

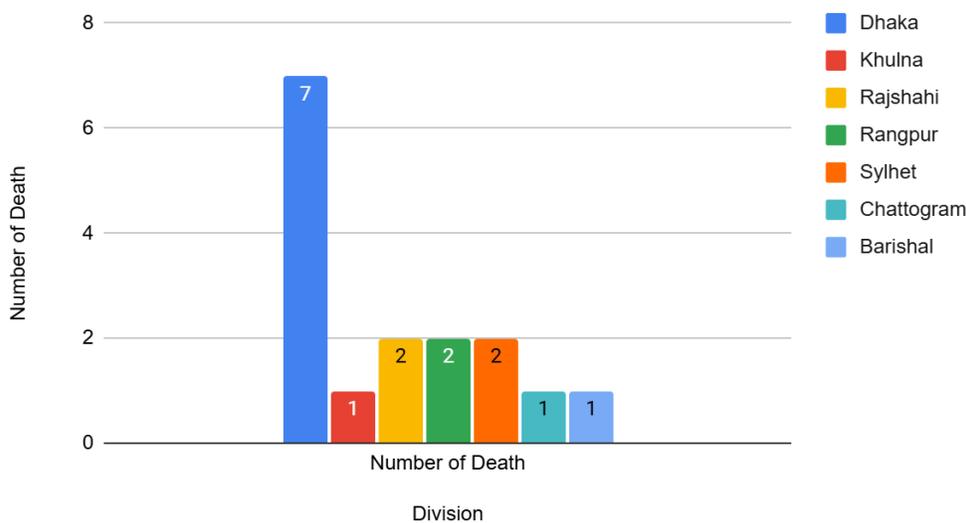


- ❖ On 4 January 2025, three people - including the parents of journalist Sougato Basu were injured when a miscreant broke into the journalist's house in Madhukhali upazila of Faridpur district while the journalist was not at home. The injured are Shyamlendu Basu (65) and Kakoli Basu (60), parents of Aiker Patrika staff reporter Sougato Basu, and their 15-year-old neighbor.
- ❖ On 5 January 2025, a local journalist Arif Hossain Harish was abducted for hours and tortured by some miscreants in Sirajdikhan, Munshiganj. He is the Sirajdikhan Upazila correspondent of the daily Lakhokantha.

6. Mob/ Vigilante Violence

The statistics from [ASK](#) highlight the alarming frequency of mob-related violence in Bangladesh, with 16 reported deaths across various regions in January 2025. The data underscores a growing issue with organized mob violence and suggests a need for stronger law enforcement and community-based interventions to address the root causes and prevent further tragedies.

Number of Death vs. Division - January, 2025



Some other concerning incidents in January 2025

- ❖ A [women's football match](#) scheduled in Joypurhat's Akkelpur upazila was called off after some locals and madrasa students vandalized the venue at Tilakpur High School ground on 29 January 2025.
- ❖ On 19 January, Some locals detained 12 young men and women from a resort in Sylhet accused of anti-social activities, and [forcibly married off eight of them](#). A part of the resort was also set on fire during the incident. The incident occurred at Regent Park and Resort in the Silam area of South Surma.

The human rights scenario in Bangladesh in January 2025 reflects a complex and challenging environment, with political violence and targeted attacks on vulnerable groups on the rise. Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive approach that prioritizes accountability, protection of vulnerable communities, and systemic reforms to ensure the rights and safety of all citizens.

Note: This report is prepared from the sources of prominent newspapers and online portals such as The Daily Star, Prothom Alo, New Age, Samakal, Bdnews24, Bangla Tribune, and ASK. The figures may vary with the statistics of other organizations due to the method and standards PARI follows.