

**POLITICAL VIOLENCE**

**13** KILLING **225** INJURED

**RELIGIOUS MINORITIES FACED**

**19** CASES OF VIOLENCE

**CUSTODIAL DEATHS**

**13** CUSTODIAL DEATHS

**MOB VIOLENCE**

**06** KILLING **06** INJURED

**JOURNALISTS FACED**

**19** CASES OF VIOLENCE

**OPERATION DEVIL HUNT - 2**

**12607** ARRESTED

December 2025 was marked by a serious deterioration of human rights in Bangladesh, with rising violence, attacks on expression, and large-scale state repression. The killing of Dipu Chandra Das, a Hindu worker lynched following an allegation of religious defamation, shocked the nation and drew international condemnation, exposing the acute vulnerability of religious minorities.

Freedom of expression faced unprecedented threats as the offices of Prothom Alo and The Daily Star were attacked and set on fire, alongside assaults on cultural institutions including Chhayanaut and Udichi Shilpigoshthi. These incidents signaled a dangerous erosion of press freedom and cultural space.

Meanwhile, Operation Devil Hunt Phase 2, which led to the arrest of 12,607 people, raised grave concerns over mass arrests, due process, and political targeting. Together, these developments reflect a deepening human rights crisis marked by impunity, intolerance, and shrinking civic space.



**BURNING DIPU DAS TO DEATH**

On 18 September, Dipu Chandra Das, a Hindu garment worker, was killed in Dubaliapara area of Bhaluka, Mymensingh, following an allegation of religious defamation at his workplace. After the accusation spread inside the factory, tension quickly escalated. Dipu Das was beaten severely by a group of people and died from his injuries at the scene. Even after his death, the violence continued as the mob dragged his body to the side of the highway and set it on fire, creating panic and halting traffic. The incident shocked the country and drew strong criticism from international human rights groups and foreign observers. The killing exposed the extreme vulnerability of religious minorities and showed how unverified allegations can quickly turn into deadly mob violence in Bangladesh.

**JOURNALISM UNDER ATTACK**

Following the death of Inquilab Mancha convener Sharif Osman Hadi, large-scale attacks were carried out on the offices of Prothom Alo and The Daily Star in Dhaka. In the early hours of the night, groups of attackers vandalized the buildings, set fire to parts of the offices, and caused extensive damage to infrastructure, equipment, and workspaces. Several floors of the Prothom Alo office in Karwan Bazar were burned, while fire and destruction were also reported at The Daily Star building. These attacks were among the most serious assaults on press institutions in Bangladesh's history. The incidents created fear among journalists and media workers and raised grave concerns about press freedom, media safety, and the state's ability to protect independent journalism.

**DEVIL HUNT PHASE 2**

During Operation Devil Hunt Phase 2, launched nationwide to control law and order, law enforcement agencies arrested 12,607 people across the country. According to police headquarters, the operation involved large-scale raids, checkpoints, and searches in urban and rural areas. Authorities stated that the campaign aimed to curb violence and restore stability amid rising unrest. However, the scale of arrests raised serious human rights concerns, particularly regarding due process, mass detention, and the targeting of political opponents. Rights observers noted the lack of transparency in arrest procedures and warned that such operations, if conducted without accountability, risk normalizing arbitrary detention and expanding state repression under the guise of security enforcement.

## 1. Overview

December 2025 witnessed a disturbing escalation of violence, repression, and attacks on fundamental rights in Bangladesh. The month was marked by intense political clashes, widespread mob violence, and shrinking civic space, raising serious concerns about public safety and accountability. One of the most shocking incidents was the killing of Dipu Chandra Das, a Hindu worker lynched following an allegation of religious defamation, an act that drew national outrage and international condemnation and highlighted the extreme vulnerability of religious minorities.

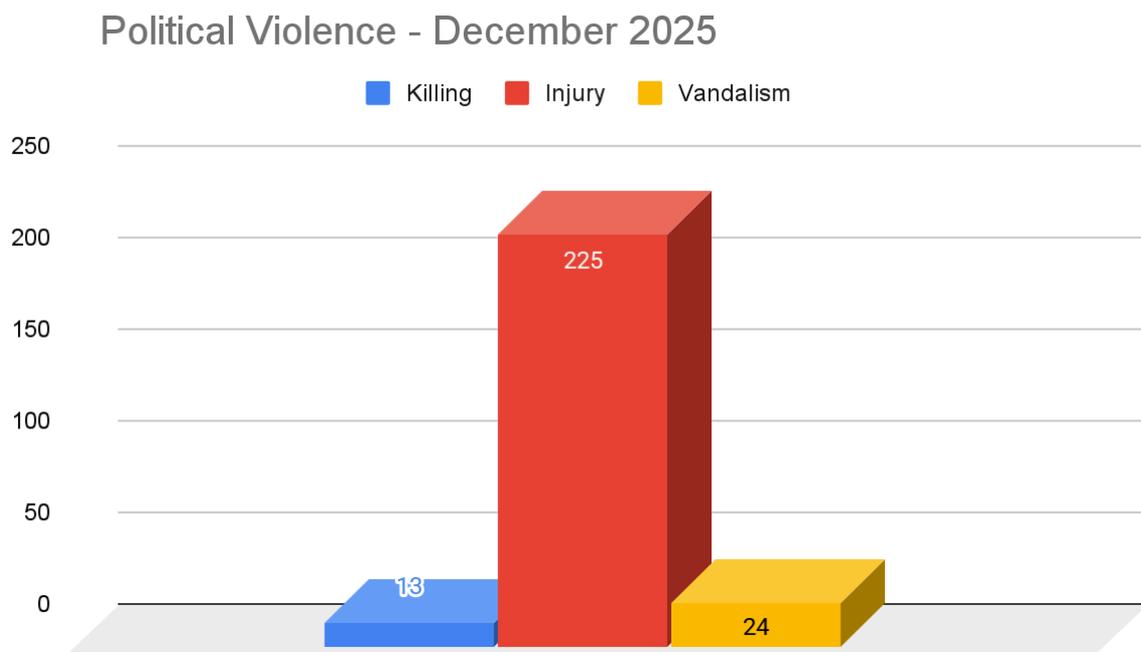
Freedom of expression came under severe attack as Prothom Alo and The Daily Star offices were vandalized and set on fire, while leading cultural institutions such as Chhayanaut and Udichi Shilpigoshthi were also targeted. These coordinated assaults represented one of the darkest moments in the history of Bangladesh's media and cultural sectors, sending a chilling message to journalists, artists, and dissenting voices.

At the same time, the state's response to unrest intensified through Operation Devil Hunt Phase 2, under which 12,607 people were arrested nationwide. While authorities framed the operation as a law-and-order measure, its scale raised serious human rights concerns regarding mass arrests, due process, and political targeting. Taken together, the events of December 2025 reflect a deepening crisis of human rights, where violence by both state and non-state actors increasingly threatens pluralism, expression, and the rule of law.

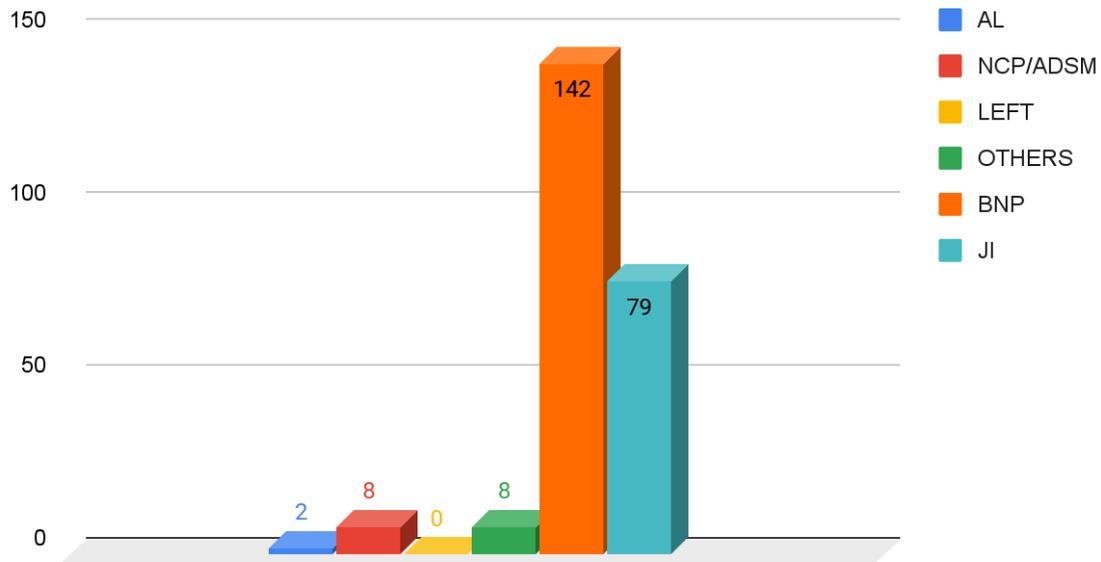
## 2. Political Violence

Political violence remained a central concern in December 2026, reflecting ongoing confrontations across the country. During the month, 13 people were killed and 225 injured in politically linked incidents, alongside 24 cases of vandalism targeting party offices, vehicles, and other symbolic spaces. Members and supporters of the BNP were most affected (142), followed by Jamaat-e-Islami (79), the National Citizen Party (9), and others (6). The data indicate that political violence disproportionately impacts opposition-aligned actors and continues to be used as a tool for intimidation and disruption, undermining political pluralism and safe participation in civic life.

In December 8, in Magura's Ramnagar village, [a clash between two BNP groups left Azizul Islam \(38\) dead and at least 50 injured](#); police arrested 6 individuals. In December 7, during campaign activities for the BNP-nominated candidate in Gazipur-1 ahead of the upcoming 13th national parliamentary elections, [attacks and arson on motorcycles occurred at three separate locations, leaving at least 35 people injured](#). In December 5, in Sutargopta area of Charamansa village, Bhabaniganj Union, Lakshmipur, a house belonging to BNP leader Belal Hossain was allegedly set on fire with a lock on the door and petrol poured inside, [resulting in the death of his 7-year-old daughter and injuries to Belal Hossain and his two other daughters](#).



## Political Violence by Party - December 2025



In December 17, in Velumia Union, Bhola Sadar, a dispute and scuffle occurred between a BNP worker and a Jamaat activist after the [latter was called a 'Razakar' during the Victory Day procession, leading to attacks, clashes, and looting at night, leaving at least 15 people injured](#). In December 28, in Bairigola Road, Sirajganj, a college student [Abdur Rahman was stabbed to death while sitting in a CNG](#); police have arrested one individual in connection with the incident.

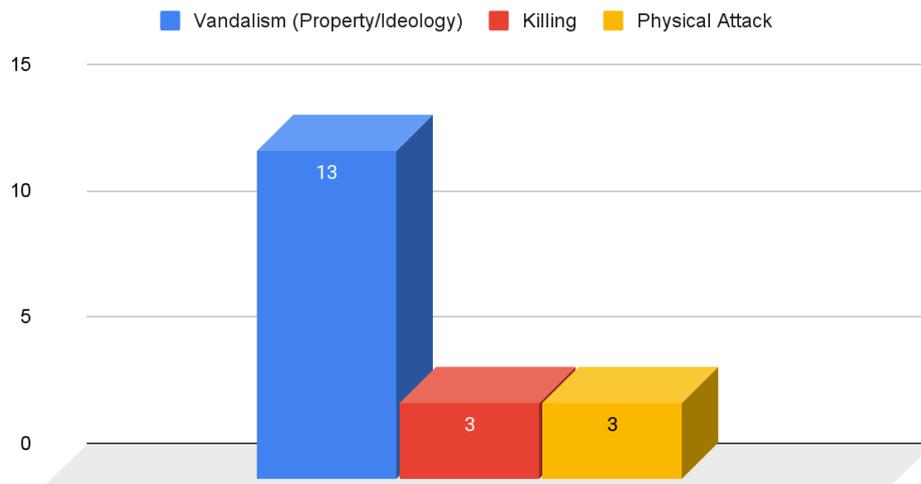


Most political violence in December 2026 stemmed from internal clashes within the BNP, resulting in deaths, injuries, and property damage. While opposition members and student activists were also affected, the incidents primarily reflect factional disputes and highlight ongoing risks to safety and accountability within party politics.

### 3. Violence Against Minorities

Violence against minority communities continued to be a serious concern in December, reflecting both physical insecurity and symbolic targeting. During the month, 3 members of minority communities were killed and 3 others were physically attacked. Beyond direct violence against individuals, 13 incidents of vandalism targeting property or ideological symbols associated with minority identities were documented.

Attack on Religious Minority - December 2025



In September 18, in Dubaliapara area of Valuka, Mymensingh, a Hindu garment worker [Dipu Chandra Das was beaten to death over alleged religious insult, and his body was later dragged to the roadside and set on fire](#); the incident sparked nationwide outrage and drew international criticism, while police recovered the body and are preparing legal action.



In December 28, in Khiarpura village, Kursha Rahimapur Union, Taraganj, Rangpur, [freedom fighter Jogesh Chandra Roy \(75\) and his wife Subarna Roy \(60\) were killed by throat-cutting](#); police recovered the bodies, and the incident drew local outrage for targeting a respected teacher and war veteran.

In December 19, in Rauzan, Chattogram, [attackers tried to burn and kill three Hindu families](#) by setting fire to the house of Tejendra Lal Shil after locking the doors from outside.

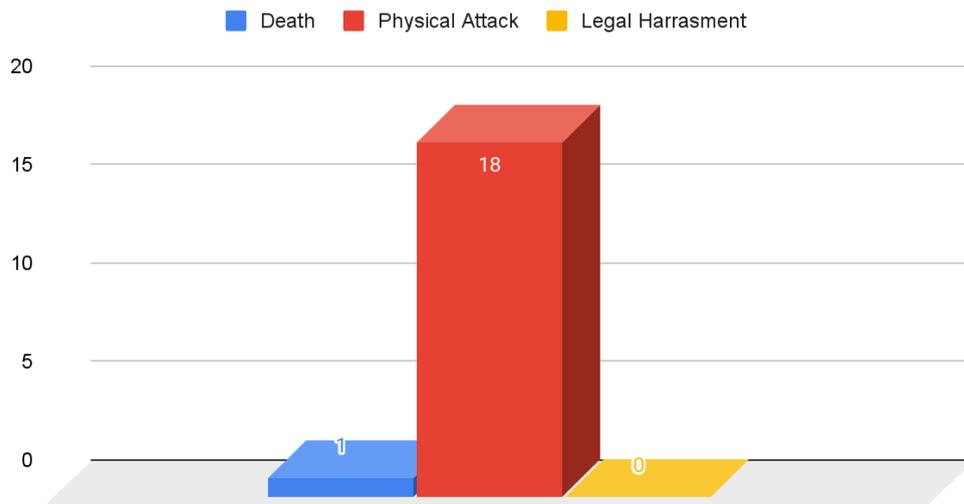
The nature of these incidents suggests that minorities are being targeted not only for bodily harm but also through attacks intended to intimidate entire communities. The continuation of such incidents without visible accountability reinforces a sense of vulnerability among minority groups and signals a broader failure to protect equal citizenship and religious or cultural freedom.

## **4. Freedom of Expression**

### **4.1 Attacks on Journalists and Media Houses**

One journalist was killed in December, while at least 18 others were physically attacked in connection with their professional activities. In addition, 2 incidents of vandalism targeting media equipment or offices were recorded, alongside 2 cases of threats or intimidation and 1 instance of legal harassment.

## Voilance against Journalists - December 2025



In December 18, following the announcement of Sharif Osman Hadi's death, [attackers vandalized and set fire to the offices of Prothom Alo and The Daily Star in Karwan Bazar, Dhaka](#), causing significant infrastructural damage and prompting police and fire service intervention. This incident is considered one of the worst attacks in the history of Bangladeshi media. At the same time, [Nurul Kabir, editor of the English daily News Age and president of the Editors' Council executive committee, was assaulted](#) while trying to stop attackers during vandalism and arson at *The Daily Star* building.



In December 14, at the Martyred Intellectuals Memorial in Mirpur, journalists were attacked while paying tribute; [at least 5 journalists were injured](#), reportedly by supporters of the Volunteer Party. In December 8, in Savar, [several journalists covering the Upazila Settlement](#)

[Office were allegedly attacked and their cameras attempted to be snatched;](#) a written complaint has been filed at Savar Model Police Station.



These attacks demonstrate that risks to journalists extend beyond physical violence to include psychological pressure and legal intimidation. The cumulative effect is a climate of fear that discourages investigative reporting and critical coverage, particularly on political violence and state actions.

#### **4.2 Freedom of Speech**

On December 20, in Mohanpur, Rajshahi, a young man named [Ahmed Zobayer \(23\) was killed when an excavator was deliberately driven over him](#) after he and several others protested the illegal digging of a pond on farmland.



The excavator operator, Abdul Hamid, was later arrested by police. Locals reported that the protest began when a muezzin announced the excavation over the mosque microphone, and villagers, including Zobayer, went to stop the work. During the confrontation, Zobayer was knocked down and crushed under the excavator, dying on the spot. Furious villagers captured the operator and set the excavator on fire. The initiator of the pond excavation, Anisuzzaman (Bakul), a local BNP leader, fled the scene on a motorcycle, which villagers later set on fire as well. This incident highlights the extreme risks faced by ordinary citizens who speak out against illegal or harmful activities in their communities, showing how protests for justice and local rights can escalate into deadly violence.

## 5. Freedom of Assembly and Association

On December 4, a march organized by the Left Democratic Alliance, anti-fascist Left Front, Bangladesh JASAD, and National Ganfront was held to protest the cancellation of lease agreements at Laldiya Container Terminal and Pangaon Port Terminal, and to demand that Neumuring and Patenga terminals not be handed over to foreign companies. The protesters started from the National Press Club, aiming to surround the office of the Chief Adviser at the Jamuna building. At Kakrail Mor, [police stopped the march, leading to several minor scuffles between law enforcement and demonstrators](#). A few protesters were injured and taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, and the road was temporarily blocked.

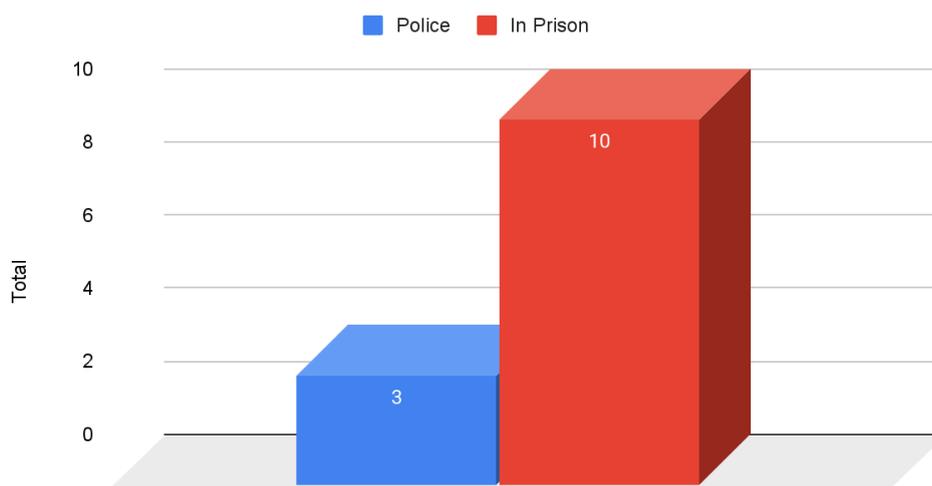


The incident illustrates how peaceful demonstrations are often met with police restrictions, highlighting ongoing challenges to citizens' right to assemble and protest, even when the demands concern national sovereignty and public policy.

## 6. State Violence and Custodial Deaths

State violence remained a major human rights concern in December, particularly in relation to deaths occurring under state custody. During the month, 3 deaths were reported in incidents involving police, while 10 individuals died while in prison custody. These figures raise serious questions about the use of force, detention conditions, and the adequacy of oversight mechanisms.

Death in Custody - December 2025



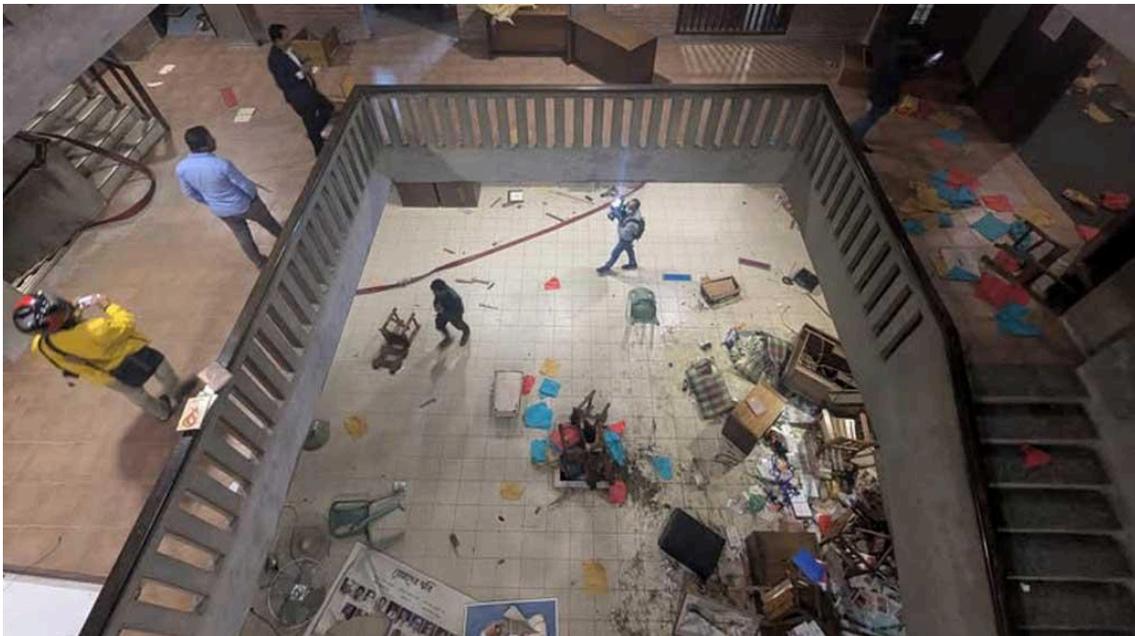
In January 5, in Cox's Bazar, Razuul Karim (36), [a UP member and accused in the murder case of former Teknaf UP member Md. Yunus, died while in police custody](#) at Cox's Bazar Sadar Hospital, confirmed by Teknaf police. In 17 December, the [body of a female detainee was found hanging inside the Women and Children Help Desk room at the police station in Homna](#), Comilla; police claimed she committed suicide by tying her scarf to a ceiling fan. In December 21, Wasikur Rahman alias Babu (43), a [banned Awami League leader, died from a reported heart attack while being transferred from Kashimpur Central Jail](#) on remand; authorities confirmed his death citing medical reports.

December 2026 saw multiple deaths in police or prison custody, including individuals accused in high-profile cases and political figures. While some deaths were reportedly due to

natural causes, others remain suspicious, raising concerns about the treatment of detainees, access to timely medical care, and the lack of independent oversight. These incidents underscore the ongoing risks of custodial harm and the need for stronger safeguards to protect detainees' rights and ensure accountability.

## 7. Organized and Targeted Mob Violence

Organized and targeted mob violence continued to pose a significant threat to both personal safety and property. In December, 5 people were killed and 6 others physically attacked in incidents involving organized mobs. Additionally, 10 cases of vandalism targeting property or ideological symbols were documented.



In December 18, following the announcement of the death of Inquilab Munch leader Sharif Osman Hadi, [a mob of approximately 50–60 people attacked the Chaayanaut building](#). The attackers first set fire to the parking lot, then broke down the building's doors and entered the premises. Inside, they vandalized and destroyed musical instruments such as the tabla, harmonium, and tanpura, as well as books, papers, and office equipment. Clay artworks and other artistic installations were damaged, and much of the furniture in offices and rooms was destroyed. The attackers also disabled the building's monitoring systems, including CCTV cameras, speakers, lights, and fans. Law enforcement authorities have registered a case based on [a complaint filed by Chaayanaut's chief manager, Dulal Ghosh, naming between 300 and 350 unknown individuals as suspects](#). In December 14, [the central office of cultural](#)

[organization Udichi Shilpi Gosthi was set on fire in Topkhana Road, Dhaka.](#) The fire caused extensive damage to important documents, musical instruments and furniture from Udichi's 57-year history. The cultural organization believes that anti-independence fanatics and communal forces were involved in the arson.



In December 24, [a man known as “Samrat” was beaten to death by villagers in Panchha, Rajbari.](#) He was accused of extortion and terrorizing the community. Police have filed three cases, including one for murder, but his true identity is disputed. In December 23, [lawyer Naeem Kibria \(35\) was beaten to death by a group of unidentified youths](#) after a traffic incident in Bashundhara Residential Area, Dhaka; he was taken to Kurmitola General Hospital, where he was declared dead.

The persistence of mob violence reflects weaknesses in preventive policing and rapid response, as well as a broader social tolerance for collective punishment and vigilantism. Without decisive intervention, such violence risks becoming an accepted mechanism for resolving disputes or asserting dominance.

## **8. Mass and Arbitrary arrest: ‘Operation Devil Hunt – Phase 2’**

In December 2026, law enforcement authorities continued nationwide security operations under ‘Operation Devil Hunt – Phase 2’, citing the need to maintain law and order. According to police headquarters, [a total of 12,607 individuals were arrested during Phase 2](#), as

confirmed on 1 January by the Additional Inspector General (Media and Public Relations), A. H. M. Shahadat Hossain. The scale of arrests indicates a broad enforcement operation affecting a large number of individuals across the country.

Earlier of this year, phase 1 conducted from 8 to 28 February, [saw 11,313 arrests, mostly involving individuals affiliated with the former Awami League government](#). The operation was launched following attacks on political residences, including Dhanmondi 32 and an attempted attack on the home of former Minister A. K. M. Mozammel Haque in Gazipur, during which 15–16 student activists were reportedly injured. Across both phases, the scale of arrests raises concerns about due process, proportionality, and potential politically selective enforcement, particularly given the limited public information on charges and judicial outcomes.

Without transparency and judicial oversight, such operations risk undermining the rule of law rather than strengthening public security.

## **9. Conclusion**

December 2026 reveals a troubling environment for human rights in Bangladesh. Political clashes, particularly internal disputes within parties, caused multiple casualties and injuries. Religious minorities and cultural figures faced targeted violence, while journalists and media institutions suffered some of the most severe attacks in recent history. Custodial deaths and state violence highlighted gaps in accountability, and peaceful assemblies were often met with police restrictions and force. Collectively, these incidents underscore the urgent need for stronger protections for civil liberties, impartial law enforcement, and effective mechanisms to prevent and respond to rights violations.