

**POLITICAL VIOLENCE**

**05** KILLING **365** INJURED

**RELIGIOUS MINORITIES FACED**

**09** CASES OF VIOLENCE

**CUSTODIAL DEATHS**

**13** CUSTODIAL DEATHS

**MOB VIOLENCE**

**13** KILLING **05** INJURED

**JOURNALISTS FACED**

**19** CASES OF VIOLENCE

In January 2026, at least 25 people were killed and more than 400 were injured in incidents related to political violence, attacks on religious minorities, custodial deaths, mob violence, and suppression of civic freedoms across Bangladesh. The month was marked by heightened political tension ahead of the national election, escalating inter-party conflicts, persistent targeting of religious minorities, and recurring attacks on journalists and indigenous communities.

The overall human rights situation reflected growing instability, weak law enforcement accountability, and a shrinking civic space. Violent political confrontations, religiously motivated attacks, custodial deaths, and restrictions on freedom of assembly indicated a deteriorating environment for democratic participation and civil liberties.

These included the assassination of a BNP leader in Jashore, repeated deadly attacks on Hindu business owners, and violent confrontations between police and protesting workers. Together, these events reveal a persistent pattern of insecurity and institutional fragility.



**CUSTODIAL DEATHS**

A total of 13 custodial deaths were recorded: 1 in police custody, 10 in prison, 1 during joint-force operations, and 1 involving army personnel. These deaths intensified concerns over torture, neglect, and lack of accountability in detention facilities.

Several deaths occurred under suspicious circumstances, with families alleging negligence and abuse. In multiple cases, authorities failed to provide transparent explanations, fueling public distrust and demands for independent investigations.

These incidents underscore systemic weaknesses in custodial oversight mechanisms and persistent violations of detainees' fundamental rights.

**JOURNALISM UNDER ATTACK**

In January, 1 journalist was killed, 17 were physically attacked, and 1 received direct threats. Media workers were frequently targeted while covering political protests, labour demonstrations, and violent confrontations.

During the Sherpur political clashes on 28 January, two journalists were assaulted, and their motorcycles vandalized while they attempted to document the violence. In several other incidents, reporters covering protests faced intimidation, physical assaults, and obstruction by both political activists and security forces.

**MOB KILLING SPIKES**

Mob violence resulted in at least 13 deaths and 5 serious injuries during January. Many incidents stemmed from suspicion, misinformation, and lack of immediate legal intervention.

On 7 January, three youths were severely beaten by a mob in Narayanganj after being falsely accused of attempting an online job scam. Police rescued them in critical condition, emphasizing the dangerous consequences of public vigilantism.

Similar incidents across multiple districts involved public beatings, lynchings, and fatal assaults based on unverified allegations, underscoring a growing culture of instant justice and collective violence.

## 1. Overview

In January 2026, at least 25 people were killed and more than 400 were injured in incidents related to political violence, attacks on religious minorities, custodial deaths, mob violence, and suppression of civic freedoms across Bangladesh. The month was marked by heightened political tension ahead of the national election to be held on 12 February 2026, escalating inter-party conflicts, persistent targeting of religious minorities, and recurring attacks on journalists and indigenous communities.

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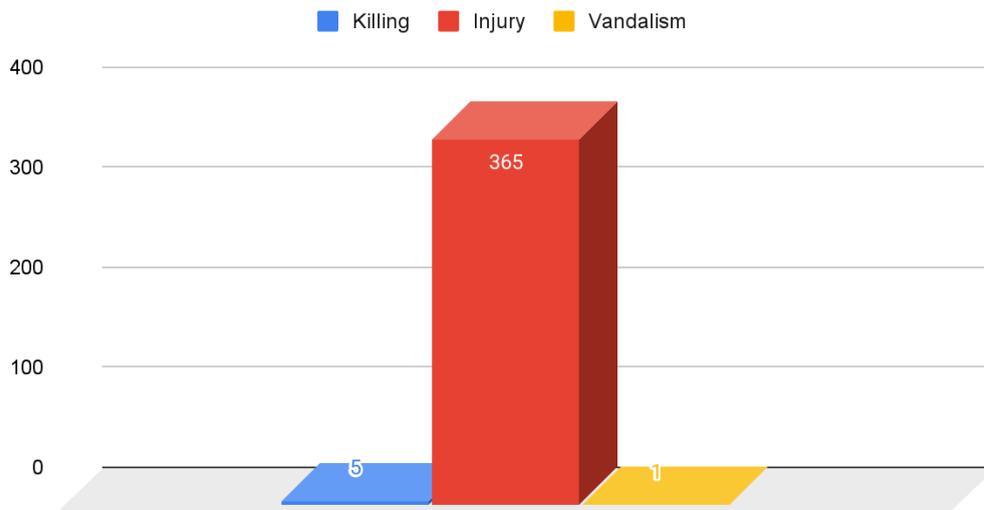
These included the assassination of a BNP leader in Jashore, repeated deadly attacks on Hindu business owners, and violent confrontations between police and protesting workers. Together, these events reveal a persistent pattern of insecurity and institutional fragility.

## 2. Political Violence

During January, at least 5 people were killed and 365 were injured in incidents of political violence, with the highest number of injuries recorded among BNP members (178), followed by Jamaat-e-Islami (131), National Citizen Party – NCP (10), and others (25). Most incidents stemmed from inter-party clashes and electoral tensions.

On 3 January, BNP leader Alamgir Hossain (55) was shot dead in Jashore city while returning home. Assailants fired at close range, killing him instantly, while police launched an investigation amid claims of political targeting and rising insecurity for opposition figures.

## Political Violence - January 2026

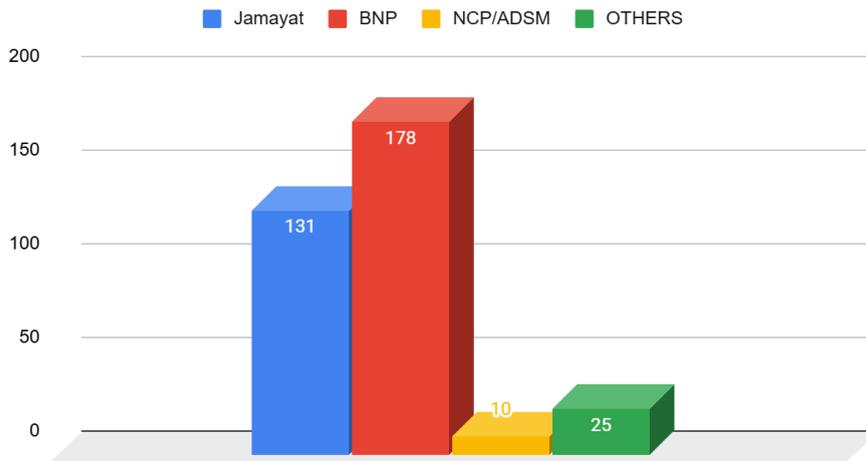


On 10 January, violent [clashes erupted between BNP and Jamaat supporters in Bhola over alleged religious campaigning slogans, leaving at least 30 injured](#). Security forces, including navy personnel, intervened using batons and crowd-control measures to disperse the crowd.



On 28 January, [a large-scale confrontation between BNP and Jamaat activists during an election manifesto event in Sherpur left 54 injured, while Jamaat leader Maulana Rezaul Karim later died from his injuries](#).

Affected people by party - Jan 2026

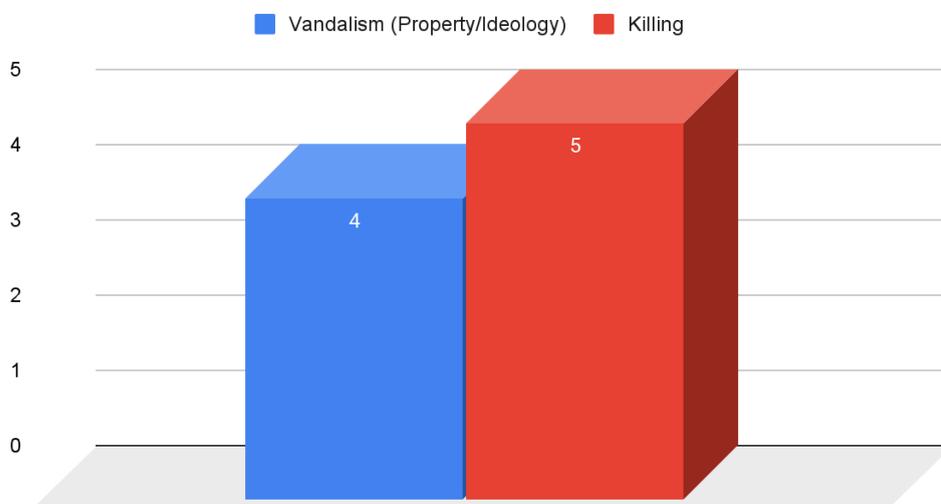


The incident highlighted intensifying political hostility and the increasing lethality of public confrontations.

### 3. Attacks on Religious Minorities

At least 5 members of religious minority communities were killed and 4 incidents of vandalism were recorded in January, reflecting a disturbing continuation of targeted violence, particularly against Hindu community. Many attacks were brutal, involving arson and extreme physical brutality.

Attack on Religious Minority - January 2026





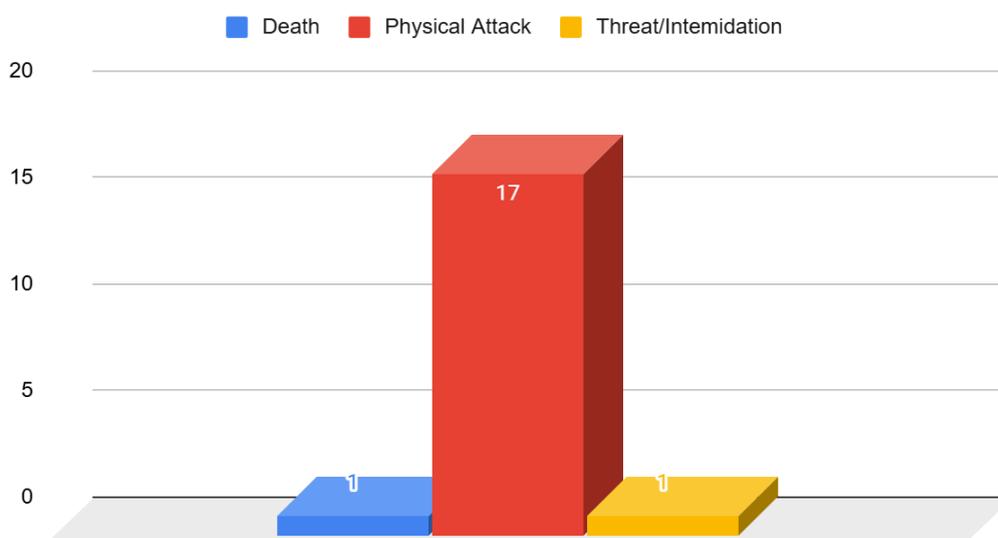
On 24 January, [Chanchal Bhowmik \(25\), a garage worker, was found burned to death in Narsingdi](#), with CCTV footage suggesting deliberate arson. Locals and family members strongly rejected the theory of accident, calling for a thorough and impartial investigation.

Earlier in the month, Khokon Chandra Das, another Hindu trader, died after being stabbed and set on fire in Shariatpur. These consecutive incidents triggered widespread fear among minority communities and raised urgent concerns over religiously motivated violence.

## 4. Freedom of Expression

### 4.1 Attacks on Journalists

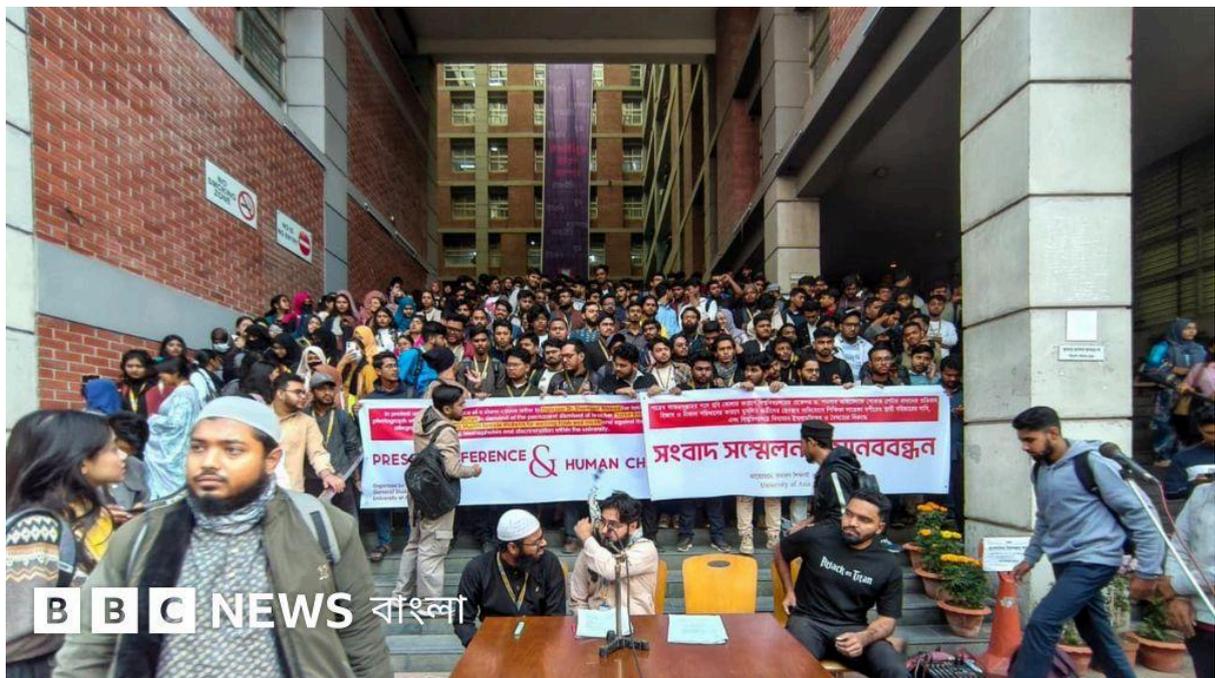
Violence against Journalists - January 2026



In January, **1 journalist was killed, 17 were physically attacked, and 1 received death threats**. Media workers were frequently targeted while covering political protests, labour demonstrations, and violent confrontations.

During the [Sherpur political clashes on 28 January, two journalists were assaulted](#), and their motorcycles vandalized while they attempted to document the violence. In several other incidents, reporters covering protests faced intimidation, physical assaults, and obstruction by both political activists and security forces.

## 4.2 Attacks on Freedom of Expression



Layeqa Bashir, an Assistant Professor of Sociology and a woman human rights defender at the University of Asia Pacific (UAP), Bangladesh, was [arbitrarily dismissed on 18 January 2026 following pressure from a section of students who accused her of hurting religious sentiment](#). Her colleague, Dr. A. S. M. Mohsin, was also terminated. The dismissals occurred without due process after a campaign of online harassment, threats, and public demonstrations.

The controversy began with a private Facebook post on 10 December 2025, where Bashir commented on challenges in suspect identification related to face veiling. Former students launched coordinated attacks, [labeling her “Islamophobic” and issuing threats](#). University authorities demanded her resignation, and despite her request for a formal investigation, harassment continued.

Fearing for her safety, she filed a General Diary with the police on 22 December. On 18 January, hundreds of students gathered on campus, demanding her removal, after which university officials announced her termination. The University Teachers’ Network of Bangladesh condemned the action, warning that it undermines academic freedom and sets a dangerous precedent. Bashir remains distressed and fears for her physical and psychosocial safety amid rising mob violence and shrinking space for academic freedom in Bangladesh.

Akash Mia, a 22-year-old man from Jamalpur was arrested on 26 January following [allegations of desecrating the Holy Quran](#). According to police, the incident occurred late on 25 January when Akash allegedly tore pages from a copy of the Quran at home after failing to obtain money for drugs, leading to public outrage. Local residents attacked him, and he narrowly escaped lynching by taking shelter in a nearby shop. Police and army personnel later rescued him and took him into custody.

A formal case was filed at Sadar Police Station for hurting religious sentiment, and he was produced before the court. The incident underscores the extreme sensitivity surrounding religious issues and the growing risk of mob violence in Bangladesh.

## **5. Freedom of Assembly**

**At least 2 major protest events were violently suppressed in January**, leaving over 60 people injured, including police personnel and workers. Public demonstrations faced aggressive dispersal methods, including sound grenades, batons, and tear gas.



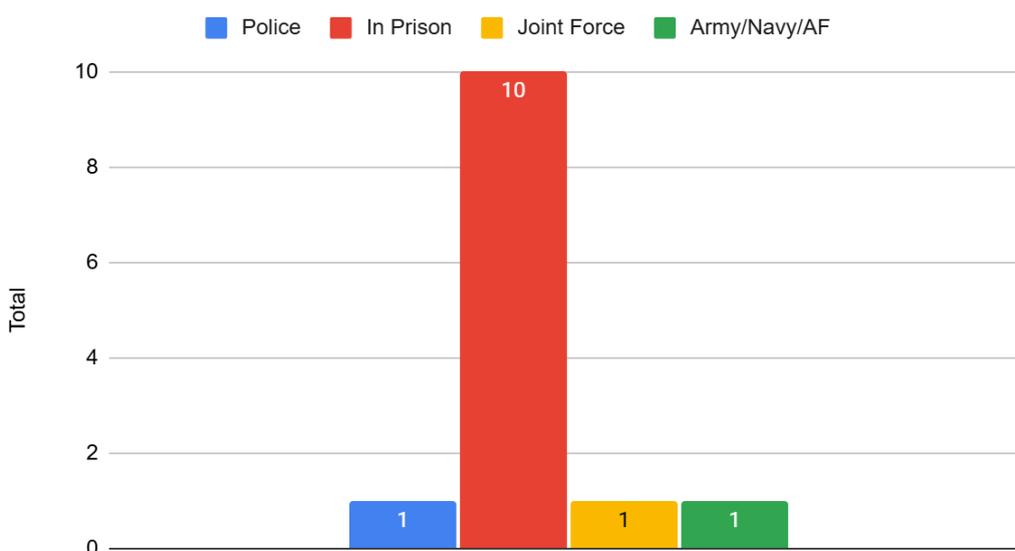
On 4 January, mobile phone traders protesting the implementation of the National Equipment Identity Register (NEIR) in Dhaka's Karwan Bazar were [dispersed using sound grenades and baton charges, resulting in multiple injuries and widespread disruption.](#)

On 24 January, violent clashes between police and garment workers in Gazipur injured over [50 workers and 10 industrial police members.](#) Police fired sound grenades and tear gas to disperse workers demanding unpaid wages and better working conditions, highlighting deep labour rights concerns.

## **6. Custodial Deaths**

A total of 13 custodial deaths were recorded: 1 in police custody, 10 in prison, 1 during joint-force operations, and 1 involving army personnel. These deaths intensified concerns over torture, neglect, and lack of accountability in detention facilities.

## Custodial Death - January 2026



On 12 January 2026, Shamsuzzaman Dablu (52), [General Secretary of Jibannagar Municipal BNP in Chuadanga, died after being detained during a late-night army operation on Monday](#). Witnesses and party leaders say he was arrested from his pharmacy and taken to the local health complex, where doctors declared him dead. BNP leaders allege he died due to severe torture during interrogation, while the army claims he suffered a heart attack. His death sparked protests, road blockades, and demands for accountability.

A man named [Mukul Mia allegedly died in police custody in Rangpur](#) on 22 January night, sparking serious concerns over custodial abuse. According to his family, police arrested Mukul around 11:30 pm from his home in connection with a vehicle-related case.

These incidents underscore systemic weaknesses in custodial oversight mechanisms and persistent violations of detainees' fundamental rights.

## 7. Attacks on Indigenous Communities

At least 15 indigenous persons were physically attacked in January, mainly in the Chittagong Hill Tracts region. The incidents reflected longstanding land disputes, criminal intimidation, and inadequate state protection.

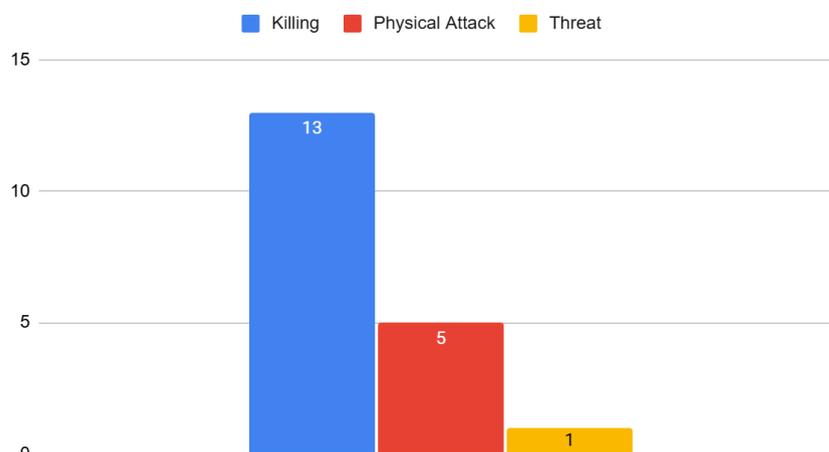


On 17 January, [armed assailants attacked members of the Mro community in Bandarban's Alikadam, injuring at least 10 villagers, including three critically](#). The attackers reportedly used machetes and sticks, forcing residents into fear-driven displacement. Victims alleged that repeated attacks occurred even after filing police complaints, highlighting the vulnerability of indigenous populations and the persistent failure of law enforcement protection in remote areas.

## 8. Mob Violence

Mob violence resulted in **at least 13 deaths and 5 serious injuries during January**. Many incidents stemmed from suspicion, misinformation, and lack of immediate legal intervention.

Mob Violence - January 2026



On 7 January, [three youths were severely beaten by a mob in Narayanganj after being falsely accused of attempting an online job scam](#). Police rescued them in critical condition, emphasizing the dangerous consequences of public vigilantism.

[A 45-year-old truck driver, Monirul Islam, was allegedly beaten to death in Kushtia](#) over suspicions of theft from a neighbor's house. Family members found him critically injured outside his home late Friday night. He was rushed to Kushtia General Hospital, where doctors declared him dead. His family demands justice.

A 35-year-old man, [Mizanur Rahman alias Roni, was allegedly beaten to death in public in Kabirhat, Noakhali, after being branded a robber](#). The killing was reportedly instigated by Enamul Haque Masud, former BNP general secretary of Narottampur Union. The incident occurred on Saturday night near Kalirhat market. Following the killing, sweets were distributed in the local market, sparking widespread outrage. The victim, a father of two, was sent for autopsy at Noakhali General Hospital.

Similar incidents across multiple districts involved public beatings, lynchings, and fatal assaults based on unverified allegations, underscoring a growing culture of instant justice and collective violence.

## **9. Conclusion**

January 2026 exposed a troubling deterioration in Bangladesh's human rights landscape, marked by political killings, minority-targeted violence, custodial deaths, suppression of protests, and widespread mob justice. The concentration of violent incidents across diverse sectors reflects deep institutional, political, and social crises.

The persistence of inter-party clashes, attacks on religious and indigenous communities, and shrinking civic freedoms signals an urgent need for systemic reforms. Without immediate

measures to ensure accountability, strengthen rule of law, and protect vulnerable populations, such violations risk becoming further normalized.

Ensuring transparent investigations, independent judicial oversight, and meaningful protection of civil liberties remains essential to restoring public trust and safeguarding democratic values in Bangladesh.