



**BANGLADESH HINDU PERSECUTION
REPORT
July 2023**

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Sriti O Chetona
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In 2023, the plight of minorities in Bangladesh continued to worsen, with Hindus and indigenous tribal populations facing acts of aggression such as abuse, looting, destruction, kidnapping, rape, murder, eviction, and coerced conversion to Islam. This report provides an overview of the incidents compiled by Sriti o Chetona (SoC) from public information (including photos) that are available on social media and newspapers. This report provides an overview of the atrocities committed against these communities in Bangladesh in July 2023.

Overview

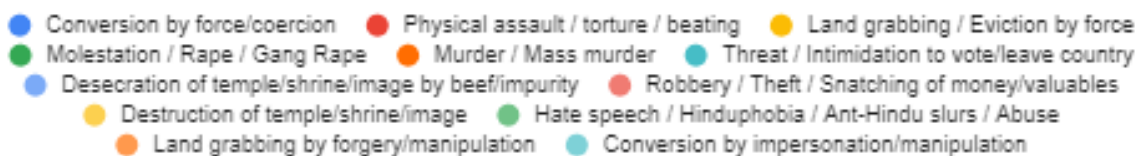
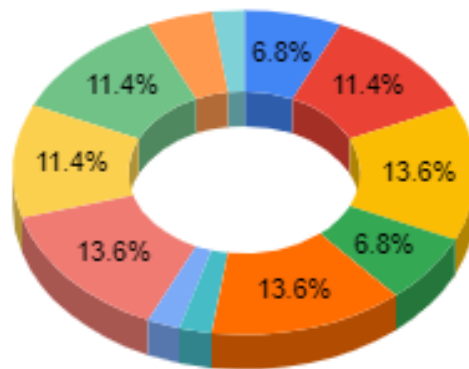
In this report, we analyzed the incidents of persecution primarily by following metrics:

- Persecution category (collated by SoC team)
- Geographical division,
- Victim's social group (individual, family, community)

In addition to the above-mentioned metrics, we will also look into the data by religious belief, gender and age of the victims.

The top categories for July 2023 are “Land grabbing / Eviction by force” (13.6%); “Murder / Mass murder” (13.6%), Robbery / Theft / Snatching of money/valuables (13.6%), “Destruction of temple / shrine / image” (11.4%), Hate speech / Hinduphobia / Ant-Hindu slurs / Abuse (11.4%) and Physical assault / torture / beating (11.4%).

Persecution By Category

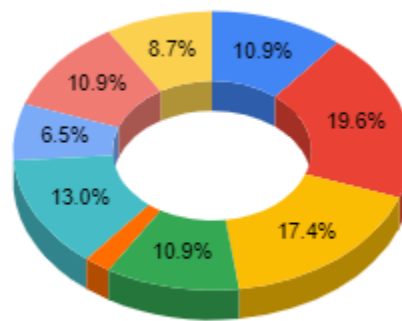




When we look into the top five persecution categories mentioned above by geographical administrative division (eight in total), Chittagong division in the south-east adjacent to Myanmar and the Indian state of Tripura, has the highest number of incidents, accounting for 22% of the incidents followed by Dhaka with 19% of the total incidents.

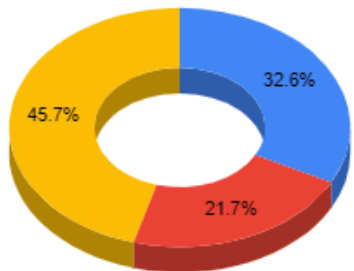
When we analyze data by geographical divisions, Chittagong division accounts for 19.6%, followed by Dhaka (17.4%), Rangpur (10.9%), Khulna (10.9%), and Barisal (10.9%) divisions. Online / Book / Media account for 13.0% of incidents.

Persecution By Geographical Division



● BARISAL ● CHITTAGONG ● DHAKA ● KHULNA ● MYMENSINGH
 ● ONLINE / BOOK / MEDIA ● RAJSHAHAI ● RANGPUR ● SYLHET

Persecution By Victim Group



● INDIVIDUAL ● FAMILY ● COMMUNITY

When data is analyzed by the victim's social group, the attacks on temples and other community properties or general anti-hindu slurs, mass threat for conversion, expulsion from the country and abuse are considered affecting the whole community, which accounts for 45.7% of the victim group.

Most of the individual victims faced abduction and forced conversion in case of women and accusation of blasphemy, physical assault, murder in case of men.

When we analyze data by age, most of the minors are females facing rape and forced abduction for conversion and rape. One such glaring incident is the case of 13-year-old Oishy Saha. She was found in a hospital for excessive bleeding from sexual intercourse. She was kidnapped on May 22, 2023 and her adult kidnapper Kamarul had converted her to Islam, married her and established sexual relationship. The Islamic religious leaders continue to condone rape of minors by actively performing conversion and nikah (islamic marriage) of minors.

Looking into data by gender, the victims are almost equally divided, though the type of persecution varied between males and females. The vast majority of the persecution incidents are targeted against Hindus, Buddhists and indigenous people. Christians, liberal Muslims and atheists are also targeted, albeit less in number, possibly due to smaller demographics.

Featured Incidents

At Sriti O Chetona we strive to cover as many stories as possible. However, due to lack of resources we are not able to cover each and every incident. Only a handful of the occurrences get published. The section contains a selection of the news reports on the persecution of minorities that the SoC team compiled in July 2023.

Cox's Bazar: 70-year-old Buddhist monk Srimat Dharma Jyoti found injured inside monastery

July 2023: Buddhist monk Srimat Dharma Jyoti (70) was found injured inside his monastery on the night of July 2. He was the head of Maricha Shrabasti Buddhist Bihar in Ukiah. Local devotees found him injured in a pool of blood the next morning. He was initially admitted in Ukhia Health Complex. As his condition deteriorated, he was later moved to intensive care at Chittagong Medical College, where he died on July 5. Devotees claimed that he was a victim of robbery, but police said that the monk had said that he fell accidentally.

Moulvibazar: Awami Youth League leaders accused of rape and extortion

July 2023: Chalik Box (40), Hsanul Bari (35) and Saifur Rahaman (32) has been charged by police in rape and extortion of a 34-year old Hindu woman. All the accused are absconding at present. The victim was visiting a relative's home in Paikpara Bazar in Kulaura. The perpetrators broke into the house when the victim was alone and raped her. The perpetrators also videotaped their rape and demanded 200,000 taka (2,000 USD) ransom. They threatened the rape video would be posted in social media if their demand was not met. The victim's family initially paid 50,000 taka out of fear. However, the victim later filed a police report against the perpetrators. The victim has been sent to Moulvibazar Main Hospital for a medical check. Police have assured to arrest the culprits and bring them to justice.

Shariatpur: Three temples vandalized, stolen and *murti* damaged

July 2023: Unknown miscreants had broken the *murti* of Ma Ganga in a temple in Kartikpur village under Rambhadrapur Union of Bhedarganj Upazila on 1st July 2023. The temple is situated near a public road and locals suspect that the miscreants threw rocks at the murti from outside.



Broken Ma Ganga murti at Kartikpur, Bhedarganj Upazila, Shariatpur District

On 12 July, Shri Shri Digambari Mata Thakurani temple in Maheshwar Union under Bhedarganj was broken in and money from a donation box stolen. The thieves broke security grills and doors to access the donation box.



Shri Shri Digambari Mata Thakurani temple in Maheshwar, Bhedarganj Upazila, Shariatpur District

On 17th July, a Kali temple belonging to Babu Anil Kumar Dey, (Awami League local leader in Chaigaon) was broken in and vandalized.

Lalmonirhat: Kali temple broken in, donation and jewelry stolen, *murti* damaged

July 2023: On July 11 night, miscreants broke into the Kali temple in the cremation ground in Ratipur, Paschimpara in Gokunda Union, Lalmonirhat. The temple priest discovered the

burglary the next morning and locals were informed. According to the temple committee president Pramod Chandra Roy, the burglars stole items for puja, gold jewelry for the deity, and contents of the donation box. In total, items worth 400,000 taka have been stolen. The *murti* was also damaged. Police and local leaders have visited the site and promised adequate investigation.



Kali temple broken in Ratipur, Lalmonirhat

Narail: Multiple incidents of minority property grabbing

July 2023: Samir Bhakta (48), a Hindu from Pakhimara Bazar under Naragati PS, Pahardanga Union has complained 15 people under the leadership of Yakub Shikdar attacked his tea shop to forcibly grab the property. The accused broke the tin roof of the shop and destroyed the trees in his land. The accused also brought in bricks to build a permanent structure for themselves.

The victim said Yakub Shikdar had attacked his business four months earlier and he had filed a legal case on 5 February 2023. The accused had paid bail and promised not to ambush Bhakta's business in future, but nevertheless set fire to his store on 12 June. The latest attack on the shop was on 1 July when the accused broke the tin roof.



Samir Bhakta's tea shop in Pakhimara Bazar, Narail destroyed

Chandramukhi Chowdhury, owner of a shop from Lohagara village in Narail has complained that K M Wahahidzuman has been trying to evict her business. The accused owns a shop next to the victim and has been trying to purchase it from her at a low price. When the victim declined to sell her property, the accused tried to grab her business by force. The accused attacked her shop, broke the existing lock and installed a new lock so that she can't access her property. The victim laments that she has no other option other than flee her motherland (“অত্যাচারে দেশ ছেড়ে আমাদের চলে যাওয়া ছাড়া কোন পথ নাই”). She requested the administration to take legal corrective measures.



Chandramukhi's Chowdury's shop in Lohagara village, Narail forcibly closed

Thakurgaon: 76 acres of minority-owned land illegally registered by land robbers with the help of government officials

July 2023: Seventy six acres of land belonging to Hindus in Courtpara, Goalpara, and Amtala villages have been illegally registered by land robbers with the help of Lahirihat sub-registrar Shafi Akramuzzaman. Mohammed Majibur Rahaman Sheikh has illegally registered the victim's land under the name of Jahangir Alam, Mohammed Mizan and Mamun Rashid. It is accused that sub-registrar Shafi Akramuzzaman and other influential political leaders are also involved in this conspiracy of land grabbing. Many of the accused in this illegal land transfer are now absconding. Two of the victims, Jaten Pal and Kanu Ram Pal said that the accused created a

fake government ID and sold the land on their behalf. They later found that legal land transfer deeds have been created without their knowledge. The victims have not been able to contact the new owners of the deed and are living in fear of eviction.

Narayanganj: Influential group of people created fake land deed usurp land belonging to Hindu artisan

July 2023: Dinesh Biswas, an artisan from Kahena village, under Jampur Union in Sonargaon has accused that a non-resident Bangladeshi Anisur Rahman (30) and his father Hajrat Ali (64) had been trying to grab the victim's ancestral land for many years. They created a false land deed on 19 July 2022 in their name and have been continuing to torment the victim. The victim came to know about the false land deed from neighbors and confronted the perpetrators on 2 July 2023. The victim in his police complaint said when the accused threatened to murder him and grab his land.

Jhalokati: Disabled Hindu woman raped

July 2023: A 19-year-old disabled girl was raped in home by Habib Hawaladar (50). The incident happened in Nalchiti, Jhalkathi on 8 July. When the victim's brother Nayan Chandra Saha tried to save his sister, the perpetrator was able to escape from the crime scene. He was later arrested by police based on the complaint filed by the victim's brother.



Habib Hawaladar (50) accused of raping 19-year old disabled girl



Sriti O Chetona stands for 'memories and consciousness' - memories of the once vibrant Hindu life and culture in East Bengal and the consciousness about the present plight of Hindus in Bangladesh. Sriti O Chetona is a not for profit project that regularly monitors and reports the ongoing incidents of persecution of Hindus in Bangladesh.

<https://www.sritiochetona.org>

sritiochetona@gmail.com