



**BANGLADESH HINDU PERSECUTION
REPORT
September 2023**

Published by
Sriti O Chetona
5 November 2023

Table of Contents

Overview for September 2023	3
Featured Incidents	6

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 or reported against these communities in Bangladesh in September 2023.

Overview

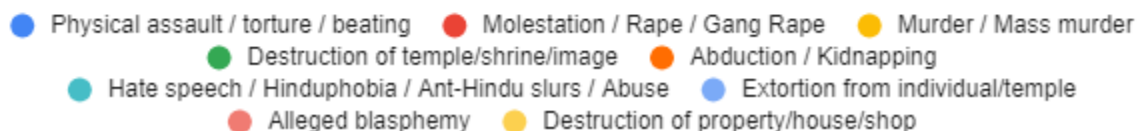
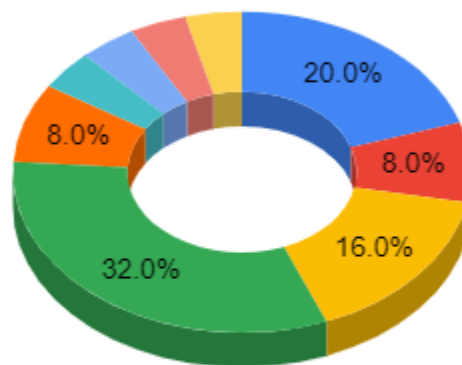
In this report, we analyzed the incidents of persecution primarily by following metrics:

- 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 September 2023 are “Destruction of temples/shrine/image” (32%), “Physical assault / torture / beating” (20%), “Murder / Mass murder” (16%), “Abduction / Kidnapping” (8%), and “Molestation / Rape / Gang Rape” (8%).

Persecution By Category



The uptake in attack on religious symbols coincided with Durga puja, the biggest religious festival of Hindus in the country. In 2021 there was a countrywide attack on Hindus over false

accusation of blasphemy and desecration of Quran, which later on was found out to be done by a Muslim man. However, he was let free earlier this year because of mental illness.

In 2022 there were 32,168 puja pandals which has increased this year by 239. To add insult to injury, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan told the Hindus not to increase the number of Durga Pujas. One can imagine the brouhaha if a leader in a Western country demands the religious minority to curtail their religious festival. However, Hindus of Bangladesh do not have the political power to make human rights organizations pick up their cause.



This month, Dhaka ranks highest with incidents of persecution, accounting for 32% of total incidents.

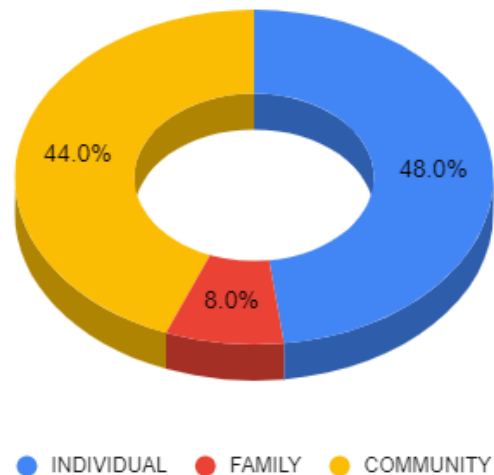
Chittagong division in the south-east adjacent to Myanmar and the Indian state of Tripura, has the second highest number of incidents, accounting for a quarter of incidents.

Khulna ranks third with 20% of incidents, followed by Rangpur, Shylhet, Rajshahi and Mymensingh.

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 44% of the victim group. For this month, attacks on temples and images have taken an uptick due to the upcoming Durga puja that is celebrated by Hindu community.

Most of the individual victims faced abduction, rape, blasphemy and forced conversion in case of women and accusation of blasphemy, physical assault, murder in case of men. Individual men and women consist of 48% of the victims.

Persecution By Victim Group



When we analyze data by age, most of the minors are females facing rape and forced abduction for conversion and rape.

Looking into data by gender, the male victims outnumber female victims by 2:1. The type of persecution varied between males and females. The vast majority of the persecution incidents are targeted against Hindus(96% of incidents recorded this month), 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 September 2023.

Jhenaidah: Hindu maid Chinta Rani Das raped by her employer

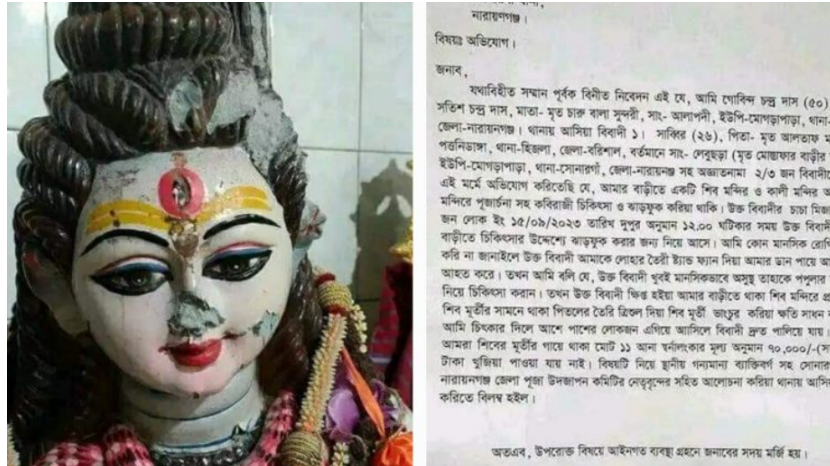
September 2023: On 3 September, Chinta Rani Das, a Hindu woman working as housemaid in the house of Mashiur Mattuburr (35), was raped by her employer in his home in Kaklash village in Kaliganj upazila under Jhenaidah district. The perpetrator had called the victim to his home in the pretext of work. When the victim fell ill, her son filed a police complaint on her behalf. Due to the extreme poverty of the victim, police had arranged for her treatment for free. The perpetrator was absconding immediately after the crime and was arrested almost a week later from neighboring Kachari Binni village.



Mashiur Mattuburr (35) after his arrest

Narayanganj: Attack on temple dedicated to Shiva and Kali

September 2023: On September 15, Sabbir Mullick (26) and his gangs attacked the family temple of Gobinda Chandra Das. The incident is from Alapadi village under Sonargaon Thana in Narayanganj district. According to the police complaint filed by Mr Das, he works as a village shaman. The perpetrator was brought in for treatment to him but he told the family that he is not able to treat mental illness and suggested the family members seek treatment in the hospital. The perpetrator got upset and broke the murti of Shiva. When villagers came to rescue, the perpetrators fled but jewelry worth approximately 70,000 taka (approx USD 700) was found missing.



Broken deity and police complaint filed by Gobinda Chandra Das

Rangamati: Bangladeshi army personnel accused of raping a 16-yr old Hindu tribal girl

September 2023: On 3 September, six army personnel is accused of raping a minor girl belonging to Marma tribe. The army personnel forcibly entered the house of the victim in Raikhali under Kaptai Upazila in Rangamati district and gang raped her. The victim was admitted to the hospital in critical condition. The army personnel is also accused of threatening the family not to disclose this incident or seek legal action.

The area is mostly inhabited by Hindu tribals belonging to Marma and Jhum tribes, and young women are often victims of sexual assault by army personnel and Bengali Muslim settlers. In 2023 alone, 12 incidents of rape has happened, but only two rapists have been arrested. Twenty four rapists in the remaining ten incidents have not faced any charges or been arrested.

The incident has created a lot of anger in the community. Brihattar Parbatya Chattogram Pahari Parishad, Hill Women's Federation and Democracy Youth Forum held the protest demonstrations in the capital Dhaka and locally at Khagrachari over this incident in Rangamati and another attempted rape on another tribal woman by a Bengali Muslim settler in Ramgarh. The protestors demanded exemplary punishment and deterrent to such heinous crime in future. In a protest march organized by Hill Women's Federation and Parbatya Chattogram Nari Sangha, 700 ethnic minorities took part with brooms and sticks.

As of the latest news, the perpetrator in case of attempted rape in Ramgarh has been attrested, but none has been arrested in the Rangamati rape incident.



700 people took part in protest march against sexual atrocities faced by native tribal women by Bangladeshi army personnel and Bengali Muslim settlers

Faridpur: Durga *murti* for upcoming Durga Puja vandalized

September 2023: On 18 September 2023, the Durga murti for upcoming puja next month was found broken in Tambulkhana Bazar under Khajuri Union in Faridpur upazila. It is to be noted that a similar incident happened in the same temple in 2021 and the perpetrator was caught by the locals and handed over to the police. However, the perpetrator was let go within 15 days by the police as they found he was mentally challenged. This is a similar pattern in many cases of temple and deity desecration. Police and legal establishment in a vast majority of the cases let the perpetrators free without any serious punishment.

Minority leaders visited the site and expressed anger and frustration. Rana Dasgupta, Dr. N Bhoumik, U Talukdar and N Rosario said in a joint statement that these types of incidents have been normalized as perpetrators do not face any consequences. They demanded the culprits be arrested and face justice within 48 hours.



Durga idol vandalized at Tambulkhana Bazar temple in Faridpur, Bangladesh

Habiganj: Religious extremists attack Vishwakarma Puja mandap

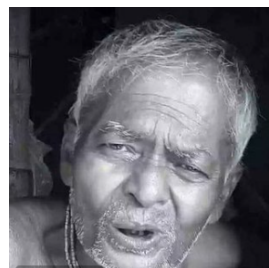
September 2023: On September 19 2023, religious extremists attacked a Vishwakarma Puja Mandap in Rameshwar village of Habiganj, under Madhabpur Upazila. Mr Sudan Chandra Das, a local organizer said that the event was peaceful until a group of Muslim extremists attacked the mandap with weapons at around 10 pm and started assaulting the crowd participating in the puja activities. Some of the organizers of the puja event were injured seriously. The perpetrators did not even spare women and children. Chairs and other equipment were broken along with the murti of Viswakarma. Twelve Hindus were injured in the attack. The injured include Ramprasad Sarkar (34), Sujan Sarkar (21), Shymal Sarkar (27), Anjan Sarkar (22), Gautam Das (21), Nibesh Sutradhar (45), Dobinda Sarkar (27), Parimal Sarkar (30), Hitendra Sarkat (32), Shymal (45), Ayan Biswas (80) and Bikashi Mallick. The injured are being treated in Madhabpur Upazila Health Center.



Religious extremists attacked Viswakarma puja in Rameshwar village, Madhabpur

Chandpur: Elderly Hindu couple murdered at home

September 2023: On September 8 morning, Uttam Barman (62) and his wife Kajali Rani Barman (55) were found murdered inside their residence with their hands and feet tied. Police suspected that the perpetrators broke into the home at night, tied them up and suffocated them to death. The couple worked as a caretaker in the house they lived in. Police arrested 10 men led by Md Mizan, who is considered the mastermind behind the murder plot, 16 days after the incident.



Uttam Barman (65)

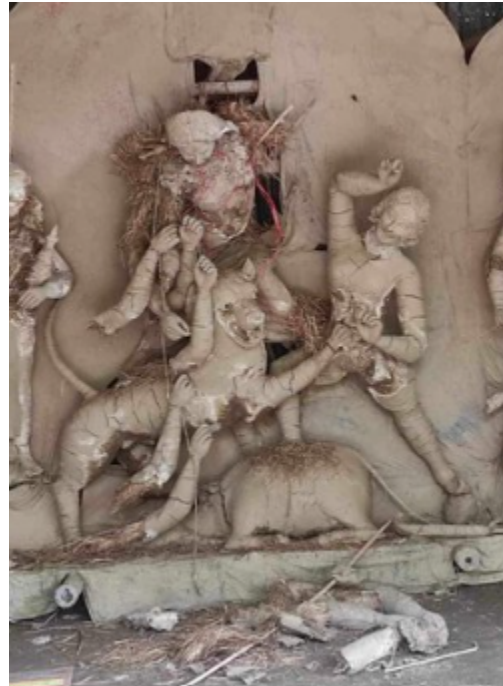


Kajali Barman (55)

Gopalganj: Durga *murti* broken inside local temple

September 2023: On 27 September night, unknown religious fanatics broke the Durga murti that was being built inside a temple in Charpara village under Gopalganj district. It is to be noted that Gopalganj is considered a liberal bastion, home of Bangladesh Father of the Nation, Sheikh Mujibar Rahaman, and birthplace of the current prime minister of the country, Sheikh Hasina.

Police have visited the site and promised to take proper action, but at the time of the report, no one has been arrested for the crime. Local religious minority organizations and Hindu population expressed their anger and frustration on this continual attack on religious sites and symbols. Kajal Chandra Das from Bangladesh Hindu Christian Buddhist Aikya Parishad, Arjun Karmakar Joy from Sanatan Juboshakti Parishad have taken to social media to express frustration on this ongoing religious assault.



Broken Durga murti from Charpara village in Gopalganj

Narail: Durga *murti* broken before Durga Puja

September 2023: A day after the attack on Durga murti in Gopalganj under Dhaka division, a similar incident happened in Narail under Khulna division. On 28 September 2023 night, the Durga murti in Kalia Purulia Sarbojanin pandal was broken. At the time of the report, no public complaint has been filed and local Hindus feel that the news will be suppressed by authority



Broken Durga murti in Kalia, Narail

Chittagong: Hindu minor sisters missing from college

September 2023: Two 17-year-old sisters from Kanchana union under Satkania upazila went missing on September 18. Akhi Das and Rima Das left for college that day and did not return home.

Their family filed a complaint at Satkania Police Station on 19 September. Their mother, Sikha Das also filed another complaint to Rapid Action Battalion(RAB) -7 the next day.

The girls were later recovered from capital Dhaka after two weeks.



Moulvibazar: Dalit Hindu community assaulted

September 2023: On 15 September, Safiq and Rafiq Miyan along with 25 miscreants attacked Dalit Hindus in Harijan Pally in Arambagh village in Srimandal upazila under Moulvibazar district. The attackers were equipped with home-made weapons like sticks, metal rods, machete and swords. The perpetrators assaulted the locals with sharp weapons, attacked and broke temples, sexually assaulted women, and looted homes and businesses. Multiple people were injured in the attack, with seven people severely injured and hospitalized. The hospitalized include Kesab Ravidas (30), Maina Ravidas (55).

A victim, Joy Ravidas has said cash and jewelry worth 10 lakh taka (USD 10,000) has been stolen from his home, in addition to his house and neighborhood temple being broken.



Victims of Harijan Pally of Arambagh village, Sreemangal upazila describe the attack on them

Kurigram: Hindu family attacked, robbed

September 2023: Around midnight on 8 September, Maminul Islam, Ibrahim Ali, Jaminul Islam, Abdul Latif, Joni Miah, Aminul Islam attacked the home of Sagar Chandra Das with sharp weapons. They severely beat up the homeowner's father - Narayan Chandra Das (55), mother - Balamoni (40) and wife Santana (20). The miscreants derobed the victims and physically assaulted the family, snatched jewelry from his wife's body and stole cash and other valuables from the home. The parents have been admitted to Upazila hospital for treatment. The victim has filed a police report in Chilmari Model police station on 9 September 2023



Home of the victim was ransacked, valuables stolen and religious symbols intentionally broken

Rajbari: Hindu businessman abducted for extortion

September 2023: A Hindu businessman, Ratan Karmakar (48) has reported that he was kidnapped and held captive at Rajbari Baliakandi Upazila office by the cousin of Awami League leader Maniruzzaman Monir. The perpetrators demanded 80,000 taka (USD 800) donation to the party fund and also forced him to sign in white papers, which he is afraid could be used against him in future. The victim complained that he had started building a new house and since then political clouts have collected donations from him four times earlier, but he did not complain as the amounts demanded were not exorbitant. Maniruzzaman Monir countered that Mr Karmakar takes drugs and is mentally unstable. Police officer Asaduzzam said complaints and counter complaints by both parties have been filed to the police.



Ratan Karmakar, describing his ordeal to media

Jhenaidah: Two Hindu youths found dead

September 2023: On 3 September 2023, two dead bodies were recovered from two different places in Jhenaidah. The first victim has been identified as Gokul Chandra Karmakar (32), who was found hanging from an electrical pole in Kaliganj. The dead has been identified as the son of Jiban Chandra Karmakar from Mymensingh. Police said the dead person was mentally challenged and lived on his own. There was no suicide note, neither was any injuries to the body. Police are investigating the cause of death and the body has been sent to post mortem to Jhenaidah Main Hospital.



Gokul Chandra Saha was found hanging from an elect pole



Amit Saha's wife publicly accuses Hossain of murdering her husband

The dead body of Amit Saha was recovered from Dhopaghat, Gobindapur. It was found near the road, wrapped in polythene in a sack. Police believe he was killed elsewhere and his dead body was dumped at the location after murdering him. Amit Saha's wife Trisha Nandi accused Mohammed Razlu Hossain of her husband's murder. She also accused him of blackmailing the family and trying to establish a physical relationship with her. When her husband came to know about it, they decided to go back to their village. On August 31, Razlu Hossain had come to their home and taken Amit Saha with him, which was the last time he was seen alive. The accused Razlu is politically affiliated with Jubadal.

Tangail: Durga *murti* vandalized

September 2023: On 23 September, the Durga murti in Delduar, Tangail was found broken in multiple spots. Locals believe the vandalism occurred on Friday, the prior night. Police have been informed. Atia Union Awami League and Delduar Upazila Hindu Christian Buddhist Aikya Parishad leader Krishnakant De Sarkar lamented on the vandalism incident and hoped for justice.



Broken murti in Delduar, Tangail

Kurigram: Hindu poet and folk singer Radhapada Roy assaulted

September 2023: Radhapada Roy, who started his life as a laborer, has composed over 100 spiritual poems and songs, touching the heart and soul of rural Bengalis. Roy was attacked by Kadu Miah (42) and Rafiqul Islam (36) in Madhaikhal, under Nageshwari Upazila of Kurigram. The perpetrators hit him with bamboo sticks and the victim had to be hospitalized from his injuries. There is confusion about the root cause behind the attack - some say it is due to personal feud, while others opine that the attackers are open about their disapproval of music due to their association with Jammāt-e-Islami.



Rural poet Radhapada Roy

Bagerhat: Hindu woman arrested on charges of blasphemy

September 2023: On 24 September, Rupali Rani Das (45) got into a dispute with a Muslim woman named Momena Begum, while getting water from a public well. The incident is from Gouramba Union, Rampal Police Station under Bagerhat district. Begum issued threats during the altercation and spread misinformation in the village about Rupali Rani Das making derogatory comments about Islam and Prophet Mohammed. On 25 September, local Muslims demanded Rupali publicly ask for forgiveness, which she did. On September 26th, Yasin Khandakar (33) filed a complaint against Das under sections 153, 298 and 506 of Bangladesh Penal Code. Local Hindus assert that the accusations are unfounded and influenced by

personal enmity. Even though the sections under which Das is accused of are eligible for bond, the judge directly sent her to jail. Multiple human rights, women and minority organizations were present in the hearing, but none dared to help her in fear of backlash from religious fanatics.

Coincidentally, a similar incident happened in Pakistan involving Asia Bibi getting into an altercation about drinking water. She had spent eight years on death row before she could migrate out of the country with her family. We pray that Rupali Rani Das and her family are safe and gets a chance to live with honor in her motherland.





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