

ASIA REPORT 2016



BANGLADESH

**Policing System Stands Against the Purpose
of Administering Justice**



Introduction:

The [Bangladesh Police](#) have been widely questioned for its brutal practices and habitual violations of human rights. The country's Police have one of the poorest human rights records world-wide especially in Asia for gross violations of human rights against its citizen taxpayers.

Human rights discourse in Bangladesh is still centered on individual incidents of rights abuses. Individual victims get attention from the human rights community. The activists often blame one or more individual perpetrators, concerning particular incidents. The Institutions that unleash and nourish the violation-prone system hardly get adequate publicity in the country's discourse. Such an incident-centred human rights approach requires a PARADIGM SHIFT.

Rights are enshrined in Constitutions, domestic laws, jurisprudence, and international treaties. Enshrining rights has no value unless they are enjoyed and implemented in the citizens' daily life. To implement rights in daily life, citizens of every nation-state need a set of Institutions that are designed for action in protecting them through a certain course of actions. In another words, the guarantees of rights in legal documents are worthless if effectively functional Justice Institutions – such as policing, prosecution, and the judiciary – do not exist. The Justice Institutions that are incapable of guaranteeing rights, objectively and independently, in accordance with their professional standards, require REDESIGNING AND REBUILDING to be able to discharge their duties for the citizens.

The Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) published its human rights situation report titled “*Institutionalised Injustice: Asia Report 2015*”. That report had a chapter on Bangladesh titled “[Bangladesh – Institutions Cultivate Authoritarianism](#)”, which focused on the four institutional aspects, particularly the policing, prosecution, judiciary, and the prisons of Bangladesh. - The present report seeks to explore the policing and law enforcement systems. Specifically, it wants to explore the relation between the protection of rights and the balance of power structures in the country's system of governance.

Bangladesh's policing system operates as a coercive lethal force. Extreme political control and nepotism are inseparable. Chains of corruption and all forms of abuse of police power have made the Police a monstrous entity. Torture is institutionalised in the law-enforcement system for extortion and silencing of political dissidents. Gross violation of human rights – including enforced disappearances, extrajudicial executions, and kneecapping have become the regular business of the Police. Illegal arrest and arbitrary detention of innocent people and fabricating criminal charges is an unavoidable phenomenon. Credibility, accountability and transparency are alienated from the Police. In an overall, broken justice mechanism there is no capable Institution in place to hold back the extreme form of corruption and violence that the Police impose upon the ordinary person. In fact, the Bangladesh Police is broken as far as professionalism, efficiency and competence in upholding the Rule of Law are concerned. The Bangladesh Police is not an institution responsible for assisting the process of administering justice. It survives as the musclemen of the rulers of the day, standing in opposition to the purpose of the people--striving for justice and democracy.

Brief Background Information on Bangladesh Police:

Today's Bangladesh Police Institution was originally born out of the British colonial system. The mutiny of soldiers in 1857 against the British rulers led to the inception of an Institutional Policing System in India. The British rulers made into law the Police Act in 1861 to establish a policing system. Its aim was to spread control over the people in the region.

The Policing System was found to be a 'failed' one in the first assessment report by Sir Andrew Henderson Leith Fraser in 1902-1903 under the British rule. The Fraser Commission Report reads about Northern and Eastern Bengal: "*. . . [T]he System is stated to have failed from the utter inability of the public Authorities to secure the co-operation of the people in the administration of the Law. . .*" (Sir Andrew H. L. Fraser, Report of the Indian Police Commission 1902-03, Page 29). According to the Fraser Commission Report, the village police were responsible for collecting revenue on behalf of the British colonial regime.

The British rulers promulgated the Police Regulation of Bengal in 1943 for regulating the operations and actions of the Police. There are 1290 Regulations in it, dealing with the overall activities of the entire Policing System. This means internally within the department and externally in the public arena.

With the partition of India in 1947, today's Bangladesh became part of East Pakistan Province. Under the Pakistan regime at least four separate Commissions were set up between 1948 and 1969. There had been no thorough reforms of the Police following the recommendations of those Commissions. It was 24 years before the inception of Bangladesh as an independent Nation-State.

The Bangladesh Government set up separate Police Commissions in 1978, 1986, and in 1988 for reforming the Police. However, the reports have neither been published nor their recommendations been implemented to reform the Police. Apart from the inadequate governmental efforts, the United Nations Development Programme, United States Agency for International Development, European Commission, and Department for International Development initiated a Police Reform Programme in 2005. Millions of dollars were invested in the two-phased program that was drafted as a new Police Bill in 2007. The Bill received wide-range criticism from the country's human rights defenders and jurists. Their opinion was that the Police were being put above the scrutiny of the Judiciary, thereby guaranteeing immunity for the Police.

Bangladesh has catapulted into the donor-funded initiatives of creating agencies with impunity. The inception of the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) in 2004 and the latest launching of Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime Unit (CTTCU) were done with active support from, at least, five Western development partners. The actions of these two agencies, clearly suggest that the purpose of creating these special units was to insert Bangladesh into the global 'war against terrorism' in the post 2001 global phenomenon.



Police are seen illtreating an Environmental Rights Activist for protesting against a coal-fuelled powerplant being jointly implemented by Bangladesh and India in Sundarban, which may cause huge impact on the ecosystem of the region. AHRC File Photo.

Active and distant participation in this global controversial campaign has rapidly changed the attitudes of law-enforcement and crime investigation personnel together with guaranteeing the right to a fair trial. 'National security' is randomly used, as an excuse, to suppress most of the peoples' movements against the violence of the incumbent Police Institution. The peoples' struggles for democracy, Rule of Law, and fundamental freedoms are branded as 'terrorism'.

The immediate result of this

practice is death of the 'unarmed' men along with their women and children. This is a lame excuse for fighting militancy without credibility and absence of modern investigative techniques. The long-term impact will certainly be devastating, as far as the protection of people from State-sponsored atrocities are concerned.

Ironically, the Bangladesh Police manage to send their officers to peacekeeping missions under the United Nations supervision. Their participation in the UN peacekeeping missions fostered the following debate. How can the Police, being extremely unprofessional at home, serve abroad? And what quality of service do they provide for people in conflict areas in the world?

Recruitment and Training of Police:

The recruitment of individuals into the Bangladesh Police takes place in two ways¹: 1. The Cadre Service Officers are recruited under the supervision of the Bangladesh Public Service Commission. 2. The Non-Cadre Service Officers and Personnel are recruited directly by the Bangladesh Police itself. The Cadre Service recruitment starts with the rank of Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP), having at least a bachelor degree or above, through the Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) Police Cadres. The cadre service officers are promoted to the highest ranks that deal with the hierarchal managerial and commanding affairs. The non-cadre service recruitment starts with Police Constable, Sub-Inspector of Police, and Police Sergeant. The non-cadre police actually manage the day-to-day law and order, crime investigations, and traffic control across the country. They can reach up to the level of a Superintendent of Police, at best. In present circumstances, if luck favours them, they can secure promotions either on merit or through influence.

The recruitment process has been degraded to such an extent that today nepotism and corruption is a default practice. The career of a police officer begins with corruption. For example: the BCS recruitment exams have been taking place with scandalous question leakage by the relevant authorities to the examinees having close ties with the government. The recruitments that the Police maintain are entangled in entrenched bribery from the candidates. For example: a job-seeker has to pay BDT 0.6 million (USD 7,500) to 1 million (USD 12,500) for securing the rank of a Police Constable, which is the lowest level rank in the police. Bigger posts require larger amounts of money and political influence from the ruling political parties of the day. The unavoidable necessity of physical and psychological fitness of the new recruits for serving in the Police is undermined at the very beginning while corruption reigns the process. The ability to pay such huge amount of bribes and the capacity of securing political or bureaucratic influence makes the police arrogant and greedy for earning the money back as quickly as possible. As a result, the quality of the personnel never reaches the standard of what a professional Policing System requires for upholding the Rule of Law and developing a just society.

The foundational training course of the Bangladesh Police, of all ranks of cadre and non-cadre posts – from Constable to ASP – is conducted in the [Bangladesh Police Academy](#) at Sardah in Rajshahi District, in northern Bangladesh. For additional, separate in-service professional training there are semi-modern facilities for the staff in eight different training schools at different periods in their careers.

¹ According to the [Bangladesh Police](#), the department recruits their personnel in three levels; the Constables - having an academic qualification of Secondary School Certificate or equivalent degree; the Sub Inspectors (SI) and Sergeants - having a minimum bachelor degree. The ASPs - having bachelor or masters or equivalent degrees, are recruited by the Bangladesh Public Service Commission (BPSC) as the Cadre of top-level government officers through sitting for the examination of the Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS). All the recruited personnel are trained in the Police Academy at Sardah in Rajshahi district following the respective primary formalities of the department and the BPSC.

The foundational training programs for the new recruits has the reputation of being seriously corrupted. This is according to Bangladeshi Police Officers who were in communication with the Asian Human Rights Commission. The instructors extort bribes from the trainees for each and every step in the entire process of their training.

The Police recruits are not provided with modern training or adequate, appropriate equipment for conducting credible crime investigations. The country's Forensic Medicine Examination System, as a whole, is still primitive. Whatever the standard of the academic training/education provided the new recruits in the Police Academy, the day-to-day practice is never in compliance with the actual purpose of having a policing system.



A protester is being picked up by the Police - the way often arrests are made in Bangladesh.
AHRC File Photo.

The policy-makers of Bangladesh who are the politicians of the ruling parties and the bureaucrats – oppose bringing about fundamental changes in the Police Institution through education and global exchange. One can ask the question, why does it happen? The ultimate answer is that the politicians and bureaucrats directly benefit politically and financially from a bad policing system. It helps them to stay beyond the purview of the criminal justice system. How do they snag this benefit? The answer is: by all and any means! For example: the Police can be against anyone who gains political advantage against their opponents. And, justice can be systematically denied to the victims of the opposition by using the Police while the ruling party is in power.

Likewise, Bangladesh's unscrupulous bureaucrats also need a policing system, which matches its corrupt standards, for keeping up the system of exaction intact. This situation allows the Police to abuse their power extensively during the process of crime investigations. The abuse of Police power destroys the actual purpose of having a nation-wide criminal justice system.

Infrastructure of Bangladesh Police:

The Bangladesh Police have some 200,000 police personnel to serve 160 million people in the country. According to geographical administrative jurisdictions in the country, the Police are divided into 8 Ranges, headed by the Deputy Inspector General (DIG); 7 Metropolitan cities, headed by Commissioners equivalent to DIG or Additional Inspector General of Police; 64 districts, headed by a Superintendent of Police (SP). There are over 650 police stations, headed by Inspectors serving as Officers-in-Charge (OC), located in urban and rural areas. The Assistant Superintendents of Police (ASP) are assigned to supervise the Circle consisting of two or more police stations in each jurisdiction.

The police have several UNITS such as the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), Special Branch (SB), Detective Branch (DB), Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI), Railway Police, Industrial Police, Highway Police, Tourist Police, and Battalions such as Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), Armed Police Battalion, Special Security and Protection Battalion—all having different goals of policing in the country. Officers of the rank of Deputy Inspector General or Additional Inspector General of Police currently head each of these units. There are Prosecution Police, often known as ‘Court Police’, to assist the Public Prosecutors’ offices at the Magistrate’s Courts and the Session Judge’s Courts.

Legislation related to Policing:

[The Police Act of 1861](#) was the first and basic legislation that established the Police Institution. Without any substantive amendment the same British Colonial Law is still in effect today. The [Code of Criminal Procedure of 1898](#) empowered the Police to greatly serve the purposes of the ruling elites of the colonial era. The [Police Regulation of Bengal](#) (PRB) came into effect in 1943 under the British regime. It contained two items: 1. detailed regulations to control the conduct and disciplinary matters of the Police. 2. a certain accountability before the district administrators cum ex-officio District Magistrates. These three laws have their respective and inter-related provisions to hold the Police accountable before the Magistrates, despite attributing excessive power to the Police leading to abuse.

The Bangladesh Government promulgated the [Dhaka Metropolitan Police Ordinance](#) in 1976 when the country started turning towns into major cities, similar to a metropolis. The Dhaka Metropolitan Police Ordinance, which has been replicated whenever a new city is being given a new identity, has draconian² provisions to curtail the rights of citizens. The provision of the Police being accountable before the District Magistrate under the Code of Criminal Procedure has been barred in the Ordinance.

² Chapter VII of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police Ordinance – 1976, Accessible at http://bdlaws.minlaw.gov.bd/print_sections_all.php?id=511

The Purpose of Policing and the Realities of Bangladesh:

The concept of a Policing System emerged with the purpose of upholding the Rule of Law to ensure constant assistance to the Judiciary in administering justice. The people of an independent Nation-State need a Policing Service which is fundamentally different from the agenda of the colonial master. In order to comply with the people's aspirations there has to be a definite basic system of checks and balances in place. This assures accountability and transparency in the Policing System.



Police action in a peaceful rally in Dhaka for saving the largest mangrove - Sundarban from coal-fueled power plant's environmental damages. AHRC File Photo.

The Bangladesh Police manifest the State to the people in the country. The Police are seen to behave like rabid monsters in uniform paid by taxpayers' money. They treat citizens like detestable animals. Look at the pattern of policing, the non-compliance in maintaining citizens' complaint mechanism, the level of inefficiency in investigating crimes, the use of weapons and torture and the chain of corruption. The Police have rooted these things in society. Their derogatory attitudes towards the PUBLIC have lead to a very poor reputation of the Bangladesh Police Institution. No one trusts the Police except the authoritarian superior, ruling elites. In Bangladesh, there is a spree of gross human rights violations by the Police with subsequent impunity of perpetrators in the Law-Enforcement Agencies. What they enjoy is incompatible in any civilised society, let alone in a State striving for democracy and the Rule of Law.

Given the realities of the present day, the question arises. Is Police conduct regulated by clear legislation and policy instruments? What happens when the Police, as the key law-enforcement agency, becomes reckless in performing their duties? The answers to these questions are extremely chilling in the negative.

The Police and law-enforcement agencies do not have comprehensive guidelines for the use of force and firearms. These guidelines are in compliance with the [Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials](#), as adopted by the United Nations. The following loopholes let the Police walk free: domestic legislation, Judicial Magistrates ignorance about legal provisions to hold the Police accountable and government policy guaranteeing impunity.

The law-enforcement agencies face almost zero percentage prosecution against the large number of cognizable crimes being committed every day in Bangladesh. The police department does not let the criminal justice system take its course to adjudicate the crimes committed by police personnel. Instead, the police administration systematically covers up their colleagues scandalous crimes. The excuse offered is initiating ‘departmental proceedings’, which breeds and nourishes corruption.

Police Victimise Police:

It is not only the ordinary people accusing the Police in Bangladesh. The non-cadre police officers accuse their cadre service top-ranking officers for their indifference to reforming the policing system. The officers of the ranks of Inspector and Sub Inspector explain that in the existing system, they –as field based police officers – have to maintain law and order; control the complaints mechanism; conduct crime investigation; assist the Courts to produce the defendants, evidence and witnesses for trial; ensure police patrol; and perform protocol duties for the VIPs within their jurisdictions. All done with poorly arranged logistics and sub-standard salaries. In contrast, the cadre service officers do not have to shoulder the aforementioned professional hazards. Each has an official vehicle and driver, a desk in a well-furnished office together with better family housing facilities. The allocations of resources between the cadre and non-cadre officers of the Bangladesh Police, and the recognitions of achievements, appear to be similar to the caste-based discrimination of an Indian Hindu-dominant society.

The cadre service officers of top hierarchies, from the IGP to the SP of the districts, systematically force their subordinate officers to routinely pay high amounts of bribes. An ordinary posting, preferred transfer, a promotion, or escape from petty or medium punishment in departmental proceedings is costly. It could be from few hundred thousand to several million Taka in Bangladesh currency, depending on the circumstances. The IGP wants the DIG of each Range or Commissioners of a Metropolitan City to pay a certain amount of a monthly bribe in every possible event. Then, the DIG orders the SPs and Deputy Commissioners of Police to pay bribes. The same order reaches to the Officer-in-Charge (OC) and Sub-Inspectors of the police of each of the police stations or outposts across the country. Therefore, there is a strong chain of corruption within the Bangladesh Police. Apart from the police hierarchy, the influential leaders of the ruling political parties, including the Ministry of Home Affairs, extort money from the police officers for keeping their job ‘smooth’ in the local jurisdiction. Thus, the non-cadre police officers, who deal with the ordinary crimes control, registration of complaints, crime investigation and other grassroots based operational functions, are forced to be corrupt, abusive, and violent. From beggars and street-hawkers to industrialists and religious shrines – everyone comes under the jaw of extortion by the police throughout the country. The Police have a propelling role in rooting corruption as a norm into Bangladeshi society.

According to the Inspectors and Sub-Inspectors, the non-cadre police officers posted to the police stations are disproportionately overloaded with work. The police department deprives them of just treatment and benefits all the while harassing them from within. The working environment, along with housing and extremely poor logistics facilities, severely frustrates them. The ultimate result is, that the nation is overburdened with an inefficient, corrupt and torturous policing system expected to uphold the Rule of Law in the land.

The Police and the Politics of Authoritarianism:

Police actions are bound to be politically motivated and biased in favour of the ruling elite in Bangladesh's reality in 2017. Bangladesh's incumbent regime policy appears to be worse than its predecessors in regard to the practice of arbitrary deprivation of right to life. The Government has been implementing a policy of disappearing political dissenting voices. Enforced disappearance has been re-introduced as a regular practice of the law-enforcement agencies after almost three decades. The Prime Minister, has publicly endorsed and ridiculed instances of enforced disappearances. The law-enforcement agencies, including the Police and Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), are abducting citizens as part of Government policy.

The high number of enforced disappearances has been the most frightening scene for the Bangladeshi people in recent years. Such disappearances mean abduction, killing, and disposal of bodies often by State forces like the RAB and other law-enforcement agencies. The consistent practice of enforced disappearances and the absence of justice for the victims is a clear indication of the collapse of any legal protection. The families of the disappeared face multiple challenges in pursuing their search to find the whereabouts of their loved ones or seeking legal remedies from the justice mechanism. There are no investigations into the complaints of the ongoing disappearances or any other form of legal remedy. In fact, even the possibility of any investigation and prosecutions does not exist. In addition, over a thousand persons have been extra-judicially executed with no possibility of obtaining any form of legal redress. Another chilling practice is what is referred to as 'kneecapping' by law-enforcement. The State picks up people, transports them to an unknown place, with hands and legs tied. Here they are shot in each knee. Victims are left to bleed and taken to hospital when they are in extreme danger of death or are willing to pay bribes to the officers. At the hospital, their legs are often amputated. They will suffer permanent disability the rest of their lives. Fabricated charges are levelled against them and they are thrown in jail, where conditions are appalling.

In 2016, at least, 91 people were disappeared in Bangladesh by Law-enforcement agencies. During the same year, 178 people were killed extra-judicially while at least

16 people were 'kneecapped'. The statistics could be much higher provided the victims speak out publically. Telling their stories defies the deepened process of intimidation and harassment by State Agencies. Politicians, including ministers, parliamentarians, and local government representatives of the ruling political party take advantage by using the Law-Enforcement Agencies to assassinate their political opponents.



Police shot tear gas shell at environmental rights activists in Dhaka pointing gun straight to the bodyline of the protesters. AHRC File Photo.

Law-Enforcement, on the one hand are unprofessional in discharging their mandatory legal responsibilities while on the other hand they have no choice but to keep violating human rights with acts of vicious cruelty. The recruitment, postings, and promotions of law-enforcement personnel largely depend on the political identities of the individual candidates. Being hailed from the incumbent government's preferred districts, families, communities, and relations reign over merit and fitness in the entire process. The regime has set an agenda of deep silence in society. It is then able to perpetuate power without the people's mandate and without a credible electoral process. The officers of the law are expected to act in a fashion that silence is established, by any means. The nepotism-based recruits had performed better, in the eyes of the regime, to set a competitive environment for the rest of the members in law-enforcement. Anyone having an unsteady attitude in complying with the requirements of the regime may be in peril. So, the only choice is to keep fulfilling the Government requirements. As a result, the grooming of the Police has not emerged as a useful institution for the purpose of assisting the process of administering justice in Bangladesh. Regrettably, the Police, as a state entity, stand opposite to the purpose of administering justice. It works as a lethal force for the ruling politicians and financially powerful elite, who wear a uniform at the taxpayers' expense. Out of

numerous instances, the [setting fire of the Santal huts by the police](#) at Gobindaganj in Gaibandha district in November 2016 is a glaring one.³ The Police are ready to commit crimes

of any nature against the citizens at the wish of the ruling party and the Executive Authorities. They do not care about the legal implications or moral or ethical obligations as human beings when they commit these crimes routinely. The Government, which runs state affairs with or without the people's mandate, deliberately wants a coercive policing system and a dysfunctional justice mechanism in place.

In the given context, which Bangladesh has been plunged in today, the State behaves as an extremist entity. Extremism begets extremisms and anarchy. The State, by behaving in an extreme manner with its citizens and undermining the basic concept of justice decade after decade, spreads and nourishes extremes in society. State extremism is reflected through both the behaviour and actions of the public institutions on all tiers plus the responses of certain non-state actors. It gives rise to various socio-ideological groups with low or high profiles, to unleash violent actions that are incompatible with the people's aspirations. The Bangladesh Government is currently taking the advantage of the ongoing global war on terror and the pro-Western Islamophobia – products and by-products of extremisms – to renew and perpetuate governmental power at home. The incumbent regime and its external supporters and actors have invested their collective resources to create psychopaths to destroy the harmonious social fabric of Bangladesh.

³ Al Jazeera News, *Exclusive: Bangladesh Santal tribe fighting government authorities in a land dispute*, 11 December 2016, audio-visual report shows the police in uniform are setting fire to the huts of the Santal community at Gobindaganj in Gaibandha district: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OOdAiKlik24>

Conclusion:

The Asian Human Rights Commission has found the following aspects to be responsible for making the Bangladesh Police a monstrous and coercive entity: 1. physical and psychological unfitness; 2. inadequate and substandard education; 3. under-resourced logistics; 4. political and bureaucratic nepotism; 5. chain of corruption within and around the policing and justice mechanism; 6. excessive police power in laws in absence of a proper accountability mechanism; 7. discrimination among the police officers by the hierarchies; 8. ignorance of the judicial officers – particularly the Judicial Magistrates – on how to hold the police accountable despite the availability of certain legal provisions; 9. governmental policy of using the law-enforcement agencies for creating fear in the society to silence and eliminate critiques through gross abuse of human rights; 10. culture of impunity; 11. inadequate studies on the systemic failure of the justice institutions by the government, human rights groups and the international community; and 12. possessing and promoting a belief that professionals like lawyers, judges, doctors, bureaucrats, politicians, and civil society actors that the ‘system is okay with some small defects here and there’ without looking into the depths of the causes.

The relationship between a bad policing system i.e. dysfunctional justice mechanism and authoritarian governmental system is inseparable. Both complement each other and lead an entire nation toward a completely wrong destination. Bangladesh has already been derailed from the track of the people's aspiration due to its justice mechanisms, particularly the coercive and torturous policing system. The power-hungry politicians and corrupt bureaucrats have deliberately destroyed the institutions even further from where the colonial masters left the wreckage of the institutions. The policing that Bangladesh has today plays an active role in driving innocent people to emigrate abroad on a large scale.

Bangladesh urgently needs re-engineering of its policing, prosecutorial and adjudication systems. The entire justice mechanism needs adjustment if it wants to create a liveable nation-state for its population accommodating a population of all religions, ethnicities, and races. This can be only done by the Government of Bangladesh which is accountable to the people of Bangladesh.

There are examples available in Asian jurisdictions where the people have rebuilt their institutions. Hong Kong was able to establish the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) in the 1970s. This one institution has worked efficiently to change the characteristics of the Police and other public institutions to such an extent that coerciveness and corruption in the policing system has not been alleged by citizens for many years. The police behave respectfully with the citizens who are not afraid of seeking help from the police. The same Hong Kong Police had a very bad reputation for corruption in the 1970s. But it has earned the reputation of an honest and professional Police Institution, despite rare criticisms and allegations of breaching the law in recent years. There are specific distinctions between the police of Bangladesh and Hong Kong. The Bangladesh Police is coercive and torturous in its day-to-day work and has lost the people's trust. And since the Hong Kong Police have given up such practices decades ago, they have earned the trust of its citizens by their credible and professional service.

The Bangladeshis need to decide how much they will endure to survive the brutal atrocities inflicted by their own law-enforcement agencies. The sooner they initiate transformation to a civilised Policing System, the better life they can envisage for themselves and future generations.

The International community needs to revise their understanding of spending resources. Creating new entities like the Rapid Action Battalion and Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crimes Unit is neither a solution for securing their investments in Bangladesh nor protecting the native citizens from gross human rights abuses. Instead of wasting money – as was done in the ‘Police Reform Programme’ – there should be comprehensive understanding of the entire dysfunctional justice mechanisms in which the policing system plays the vital role. Picking and choosing among the political rivals of the country to feel ‘comfortable’ is not a solution to entrenched problems. Rather, it is important to stand beside the people in building the country with a functional and independent justice mechanism for a thriving liberal democracy. The Rule of Law and a just society. Such initiatives will pay off if the international community wants to avoid more Bangladeshi immigrants. There should be genuine and prompt action to support the aspirations of the people.

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The Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) works towards the radical rethinking and fundamental redesigning of justice institutions in order to protect and promote human rights in Asia. Established in 1984, the Hong Kong based organisation is a Laureate of the Right Livelihood Award, 2014.

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