

## **Three Bangladeshi Men Tortured at the Hands of BSF at the Boikari Border, Shatkhira**

### Fact Finding Report Odhikar

At 8.00 am on March 21, 2009, Md. Sultan Hossain Dhabok (20), Bokul Hossain Dhabok (19) and Alamgir Hossain Dhabok (18) from the village of Choyghoriya of the Boikari Union, Shatkhira, went to the neighbouring Khoitola field near 'zero point' at the Boikari border to cut grass. At around 11.00 am, BSF Officers from India's Dubli Camp entered the Bangladesh border, abducted the three and tortured them. At 1.00 am on March 22, 2009, the injured Sultan and Bokul were rescued. However, Alamgir could not be found.

Odhikar engaged in a fact finding of the incident. During the incident, Odhikar spoke with,

- the two rescued men, Sultan and Bokul
- Relatives and neighbours of the three men
- Eyewitnesses and rescuers
- The Doctor at the hospital
- Members of the law enforcement agencies



Injured Sultan Hossain Dhabok and Bokul Hossain Dhabok

#### **Sultan Hossain Dhabok (20), victim of torture**

Sultan Hossain Dhabok told Odhikar that at 8.00 am on March 21, 2009, he and his neighbours Bokul and Alamgir went to the nearby Khoitola field near zero point at the border of the Boikari Union to cut grass. At 11.00 am, 7-8 armed BSF<sup>1</sup> Officers from the

<sup>1</sup> BSF: Indian Border Security Force

Dubli Camp opposite the border entered Bangladeshi territory and kidnapped the three men at gun point. Sultan Hossain Dhabok said that all three of them were physically tortured by the BSF Officers at the Dubli Camp on the Indian side. The BSF Officers used sticks and rifle butts to beat them. They were also kicked and trampled on. He alleged that electric shocks were also applied on all three of them. The torturing by the BSF Officers continued till 12.00 that night. At one point, Sultan lost consciousness. When he regained his senses he found himself in a hospital bed at the Shatkhira Sadar Hospital. Sultan stated that there were burn wounds on his back, along with grievous wounds on his head and neck. . There was also a four inch deep wound on his hand and wounds on his feet. He showed those wounds to Odhikar's fact-finders.

On May 28, 2009, Sultan told Odhikar that he was still in pain and vomiting. He regularly suffered from spasms in his hands and leg. This prevented him from doing any sort of heavy manual labour.

**Nechar Ali Dhabok (45), Father of Sultan Dhabok**

Nechar Ali Dhabok told Odhikar that on March 21, 2009, he was engaged in contractual labour on agricultural land near his home. His son had gone to cut grass with Bokul and neighbour Alamgir. At around 12.00, he heard from the residents of his locality that BSF Officers had taken away Sultan, Bokul and Alamgir from the field while they were cutting grass. Nechar returned home to inform his wife of the incident and went off to the Khoitola field. After waiting for his son near the zero point of the border till evening, Nechar returned home. At 1.15 am on March 22, 2009, he came to know that Bokul and Sultan had been rescued in an injured state and Sultan was found lying on the ground. On hearing this, Nechar went off to a place near Khoitola at the border, taking along with him his neighbour Md. Abdur Rakib Dhabok (42). Upon his arrival there, he saw Sultan lying on the ground, unconscious on the Bangladesh side of zero point. Seeing the numerous, grievous wounds on Sultan's body, Nechar began to cry fearing that his son was no longer alive. At 2.35 am on March 22, 2009, Sultan was admitted to the Shatkhira Sadar Hospital, with the assistance of Abdur Rakib.

**Abdur Rakib Dhabok (42), witness**

Abdur Rakib Dhabok (42) told Odhikar that at midday on March 21, 2009, he heard that Sultan, Bokul and Alamgir had been kidnapped by BSF Officers. He assumed that the BSF Officers had killed the three. At 1.00 am on March 22, 2009, Sultan's father, Nechar Ali, came to his house. Nechar woke him up to tell him that he had heard the news that the injured Sultan was lying in the field near the Khoitola border. Rakib and Nechar immediately left for the place. Upon their arrival, Rakib saw Sultan lying on the ground, unconscious. Rakib saw numerous, grievous wounds on Sultan's body. He then quickly arranged for Sultan's transport and admission to the Shatkhira Sadar Hospital at 2.35 am.

**Bokul Hossain Dhabok (19), victim of torture**

Bokul Hossain Dhabok told Odhikar that at 8.00 am on March 21, 2009, he along with Sultan and Alamgir took their daily trip to the marshy field at the Khoitola border to cut grass. At 11.00 am, 7-8 BSF Officers arrived from the Dubli Camp in India and abducted them at gun point. Later on, the BSF Officers beat them with ropes at the Dubli Camp. At

one point, their hands and legs were tied up and they were beaten with canes and rifle butts. Afterwards they were taken to another room in the Camp where they were given electric shocks, which burnt various parts of their bodies. From noon to almost 12.00 at night the BSF Officers used their canes and rifle butts to beat Sultan, Bokul and Alamgir. From time to time, they were given electric shocks too. Bokul claimed that he and his two companions were left lying at the Bangladesh side of zero point by the BSF Officers late at night. At 1.15 am, on March 22, 2009, when Bokul regained his senses, he saw that he and Sultan were lying near an enclosed dam near the border. Bokul was badly injured but managed to limp home. He then arranged for his father to convey the news of Sultan's condition to Sultan's father. Bokul stated that his father admitted him to the Shatkhira Sadar Hospital. On May 28, 2009, Bokul told Odhikar that he suffered from aches quite often and was still undergoing treatment.

**Shahidul Islam Dhabok (45), Father of the injured Bokul Hossain Dhabok**

Shahidul Islam Dhabok told Odhikar that his son Bokul would often go to the border marsh and fields to collect fodder for the cattle. On March 21, 2009, Bokul went to cut grass with his neighbours Alamgir and Sultan. Towards noon, Shahidul came to know that BSF Officers had kidnapped Bokul, Sultan and Alamgir from the border area. He assumed that the BSF Officers had killed his son, and was elated when Bokul returned home at 1.15 am on March 22, 2009, in an injured state. He said that there was a three inch long wound on Bokul's left arm. Bokul's left wrist was broken and the nails of his left hand were missing. There were also grievous wounds on his feet and neck along with burn wounds on his back and thighs. Bokul was admitted to the Shatkhira Sadar Hospital at 2.35 am.

**Morjina Khatun (35), mother of Alamgir Hossain Dhabok**

Morjina Khatun told Odhikar that on the morning of March 21, 2009, her son Alamgir Hossain had gone to the Khoitola field at the border to cut grass, along with his neighbours Sultan and Bokul. Towards noon, she learned that the BSF Officers of India had kidnapped her son and others and taken them to the Dubli Camp. Finally at 1.15 am on March 22, 2009, Sultan and Bokul were found at the border. However, Alamgir was not found. She forwarded a written application in this regard to the local Boikari BDR Camp, but her son Alamgir was not rescued.

On May 28, 2009, Morjina Khatun told the fact-finding officer of Odhikar that no news of Alamgir had arrived. She sent Bojlu Hossain from the village of Kushkhali, husband of Alamgir's Aunt, to India in search of Alamgir. Bojlu returned from the Indian border to inform that he had searched for Alamgir in several regions. The BSF Officers of the Dubli Camp did not even tell him whether Alamgir was alive or dead.

**Doctor Hafizullah, Medical Officer, Shatkhira Sadar Hospital, Shatkhira**

Doctor Hafizullah told Odhikar that Sultan and Bokul from the village of Choyghoriya, after being grievously injured by BSF officers had been admitted to the hospital by him at 2.35 am on March 22, 2009. After initial treatment at the Emergency Ward, both men were transferred to the Men's Number 1 Ward. The grievous wounds that both the men suffered were documented during this period of time. The injured Sultan bore grievous

wounds on all over his back and neck. There was also a three inch long grievous wound on his arm. There were also many wounds on Sultans heels and thighs. As for the injured Bokul, there were injuries on his left arm, while his wrist was broken. The nails of his left hand were also missing. There were several wounds on Bokul's neck and feet along with numerous grievous wounds on his thighs.

**Abu Sufian, Police Superintendent, Shatkhira**

Abu Sufian told Odhikar that he had come to know of the abduction and torture of three Bangladeshi men from the Boikari border by BSF Officers from newspaper reports. However, no one had filed a case regarding the incident. He also claimed that incidents relating to border issues were usually investigated by the BDR<sup>2</sup> authorities.

**Subedar Ohidujjaman, Nayek, Boikari BOP, 41 Rifles Battalion, Shatkhira**

Subedar Ohidujjaman told Odhikar that the BSF Officers had abducted Sultan, Bokul and Alamgir of the Choyghoriya village from the Khoitola field at the border, at 11.00 am on March 21, 2009, and tortured them. He personally came to know of the incident two days after it happened. The BDR authorities had sent two letters of dissent to the BSF authorities in this regard. In response, the BSF authorities claimed that all three of the Bangladeshi men were secretly returned to Bangladeshi territory on the night of the incident. The contradiction here was that, although Sultan and Bokul were found in an injured state, Alamgir was still missing.

**Major Habib-e- Khoda, Commanding Officer, 41 Rifles Battalion, Shatkhira**

Major Habib-e- Khoda told Odhikar that at 11.00 am on March 21, 2009, he had heard of the incident where the BSF Officers had abducted three Bangladeshi men from the Khoitola field of the Boikari border. The BSF Officers had informed him that all three of the Bangladeshi men had been returned to the border on the night the incident had taken place. However, only two of the three men had been rescued. Alamgir had not been found.

**-The End-**

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<sup>2</sup> BDR: Bangladesh Rifles – The Bangladesh border security authority.