



Three young men killed after their arrest by alleged law enforcement officers

Fact finding Report

Odhikar

At around 9:00 am on 31 July 2011, three men named Rajib Ullah Sorder (23), Jewel Ullah Sorder (18) and Mizanur Hossain (18) were taken away by a few people claiming to be members of law enforcement agencies, from the gate of the 'Boro Bari' at 44 Shorotgupta road, adjacent to the Doagonj turn in Dhaka city. After five days, on 5 August, the bodies of the men were found, tied and shot, in Pubail at Gazipur and Sirajdikhan in Munshiganj.

Odhikar conducted a fact-finding mission into the matter. During this mission, Odhikar interviewed the following:

- Relatives of the deceased
- Eye-witnesses and
- Law enforcement agencies



Photo: Jewel Ullah Sorder and Mizanur Hossain

To find out facts Odhikar's fact-finding officer went to the home of one of the victims of this incident, Rajib. However, his family were reluctant and refused to meet the reporter. Salamullah Shorder, the father of Jewel Ullah Sorder and the uncle of Rajib said that the family of Rajib were not ready to talk about the incident and would not give a statement.

Momtaj Begum (36), Jewel's mother

Momtaj Begum informed Odhikar that at around 9:00 am on 31 July 2011 she was informed via mobile phone that Jewel had been beaten by the Detective Branch (DB) police and his head had been injured. After DB Police took him away, she searched for Jewel in many places. Then after 5 days, her son was found dead at Gazipur. She told Odhikar that when he was a child, Jewel had been in a motorcycle accident and had injured his brain. The doctor had advised not to pressurize him. According to his advice, when Jewel refused to go to school after class 8, instead of forcing him to return he should be allowed to learn how to repair air conditioners and refrigerators and was taking preparations to go abroad. She said that he had gone to Savar to fix an AC, and she never imagined that he would never

return. She told Odhikar that her son did not have any enemies and that he was favoured by the people in the area. She alleged that police had brutally beat her son on his neck, leg and hand and had stuffed a towel in his mouth. She prayed for justice to the Prime Minister and nation so that no more sons become a victim of this kind of brutal death. She demanded proper investigation, justice, and punishment.

Salamullah Sorder (42), Jewel's father

Salamullah told Odhikar that at around 9:00 am on 31 July 2011, Shompa (13), his younger daughter informed him that Jewel had been arrested by Police from the crossroads at Doagonj, Gendaria in the old part of Dhaka city. He and a few local people quickly reached the place but did not find Jewel there. He came to know from eyewitnesses that the DB police beat Jewel, handcuffed him and took him away in a white microbus with tinted windows. Among the witnesses, some people recognized Jewel and Rajib and came forward to request the men to stop beating them, but they were told that this was DB police duty and everyone should step back. Jewel was bleeding from a head wound, crying out that he was innocent and praying for the men to stop beating him. Salamullah learnt that Jewel was given first aid at the Jahangirnagar Hospital (situated near Doagonj) and then taken away in the microbus. After returning home, he informed his wife Momtaj Begum and relatives about what had happened to Jewel. He started searching for his son at Gendaria Police Station, the Detective Branch office, the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) office; and the offices of RAB-10, RAB-3, and RAB-1. Everyone he talked to denied that a man called Jewel was bought there or had been arrested. From Gendaria Police Station, he was told that two microbuses were out on duty and on their return to the station it would be seen whether anyone named Jewel had been arrested or not. He said that Gendaria Police Station had refused to register a general diary (GD) of the abduction of Jewel. Moreover, the police consoled him that if there were no cases filed against Jewel, then after investigation he would be set free. Salamullah claimed that there was not even a case filed against his son.

On 7 August 2011, Jewel's body was brought home from Gazipur Central Hospital after identification. After the completion of Jewel's burial at around 4pm on August 10, 2011, Kaosar, SI of Gendaria police station came to talk to the family of Rajib. Then Roniullah, elder brother of Rajib came to inform Salamullah that the SI Kaosar wanted to meet him. He told Roniullah about one human rights activist who came to meet him and told SI Kaosar to wait. After Roniullah informed about the statement of Salamullah Sorder, Jewel's father SI Kaosar left in the heavy rain. On the same day at 10:00 pm, SI Kaosar again went to their home to ask that whether they had filed or would file any case regarding the death of Jewel and Rajib. Salamullah suspected that Gendaria Police Station was involved with the abduction and murder of Jewel and Rajib and said that claiming to be law enforcement agencies it was those people that had abducted Jewel-that was why they had refused to register the GD and even after registering the GD nobody had come from the police station to learn about Jewel. He said with grievance that Police from Gazipur came to his home, even Police from Sirajdikhan came to their home to know details and collect information from them but from the nearest police station to their house nobody thought it necessary to inquire whether Jewel and Rajib was found or not. Why after such long time did police now show interest especially when the burial was completed five/six days before. Will the police continue killing people in this way? Where will the general people find security then?

Ranu (20), Jewel's elder sister

Ranu informed Odhikar that at around 8:00 am on 31 July 2011 Jewel asked her to feed him rice. After eating, Jewel went to Savar, to the house of his employer, Jony, to fix an air conditioner. Jony was the owner of a local AC/refrigerator repair shop. Jony's mother sent Jewel to buy sugar and tea. Near the

City Tehari food shop, Rajib saw Jewel and called him. When Jewel approached Rajib, the officers of the DB caught him. Jewel wanted to know why he had been arrested. He demanded that he be set free and he had work to do in Savar. This infuriated the officers and they began to slap him. He protested saying that he is not a criminal. Local people came forward to try and stop the beating and as a result, they become more furious. They threatened the local people by showing their guns, said that they were DB police and told them to step back. They beat Jewel until he was half dead. The eyewitnesses informed Ranu that Jewel was bleeding from a head injury. She said that a car of army officers stopped when they beheld the scene but drove off when the men beating Jewel and Rajib said that they were DB police and showed them their IDs. She demanded justice of her brother's murder.

Jitendronath Biswas, Register of Jahangirnagar Hospital, 34/1 Monir Hossain Lane, Shamibagh

Jitendronath Biswas informed Odhikar that between 9-9.30 am on 31 July 2011 some people brought a young man to the hospital for first aid. The head injury was bandaged. He could not remember the name of the duty doctor. He also informed that no other treatment was given to the man, nor was his name registered in the hospital records. The men left the hospital very quickly taking the injured man with them. He said that he could not imagine where the boy was from and why he was there. He also informed Odhikar that many people with such injuries came for treatment to the hospital.

Mohammed Hanif (55), an eyewitness

Mohammed Hanif alias Honu informed Odhikar that at around 8:30-9:00 am on 31 July 2011 he was sitting in a shop that ground and milled rice and lentils at Shorotgupta road. He saw some people bring out a young man from a house under construction next to house number 44. He said that the men were in civilian clothes and 7/8 in number. At first, he did not realize that the young man was a local. He saw a crowd in front of the gate of the house known as 'Boro Bari' situated opposite the mill shop at No. 44 Narinda road. After that, he saw the men beating the two boys. When people gathered there, they asked the people to stay back. He saw that one of the boys was protesting the beating and was hit hard on the head with the butt of a pistol. His head started to bleed freely. In order to save himself from further injury the boy begged them to leave him alone. At the same time Hanif saw some people holding onto a boy by his midriff in front of Taheri food shop.

Some local people recognised the boys and stepped forward to say that the boys were good. The men beating them identified themselves as DB police. Many local people passing there saw this incident. He saw that the boys were beaten and dragged from Shorotgupto road to Doagonj road. Then they took the injured boy towards Jahangirnagar hospital.

Rina Begum (40), Mother of deceased Mizanur Hossain

Rina Begum told Odhikar that at around 7.15 am on 31 July 2011 she left for work at the Fashion Garments factory at Kanchpur. Before moving to their present residence, 36/3 South Jatrabari, they lived at Koratitola for a long time. His two sons were brought up there. His elder son, Mizanur Hossain was named in a false case 4/5 years ago and later released. Nobody in the area could say a bad word about the two boys. The two brothers were working in welding workshop. She claimed her son was innocent and said that if Mizanur was a criminal then why did the DB not hand him over to the Police Station after arrest? She demanded justice and punishment for those responsible for the murder of her son.

Monir Hossain (21), Elder brother of deceased Mizanur Hossain

Monir Hossain informed Odhikar that at around 8.30-9:00 am on 31 July 2011 Mizanur woke up and answered a phone call from Rajib. Monir Hossain asked him who was ringing this early and Mizanur replied that it was Rajib of Shorderpotti, Doagonj. Then he took the phone from Mizanur's hand and asked Rajib why he had called. Rajib replied that he needed to talk to Mizanur. Monir told Mizanur to turn his phone off but he did not. A little while later Rajib called Mizanur again. Mizanur went outside to talk to Rajib. After finishing his conversation he got dressed and prepared to go outside. Mizanur left, telling Monir that he would come back quickly. He saw Rajib with Mizanur sometimes at Jatrabari but did not talk that much. He did not know Rajib's cousin Jewel. One day he tried to find out the relation between Rajib and Mizanur by asking Mizanur. Mizanur avoided his question. He informed Odhikar that Rajib used to come to Jatrabari frequently.

At 5pm, one of his friends informed him that DB police had arrested Mizanur and he was at Jahangirnagar hospital. At first, he did not believe the news and he called Mizanur but found the cell phone switched off. Then after quickly returning home, he saw that Mizanur was not there. After searching more, he found out that DB police arrested him. Once he was sure of this he informed his father about the arrest. Then he went to Shutrapur Police Station and they sent him to the Gendaria Police Station. He was told that no one named Mizanur was brought to the Gendaria Police Station. He went to Jatrabari Police Station where the duty police took him in the jail to look for Mizanur among all the arrested people. But he did not find him there.

From then he looked for Mizanur in many places. After not finding out in possible places, he went to file a GD in Gendaria Police Station on 4 August 2011 but the duty police showed disinterest to record the GD. From there he was asked to search Dhaka Central Jail, the jails of Courts and in the hospital morgues. When he did not find him in the National Hospital, Dhaka Medical College Hospital even in the Dhaka Central Jail, he went to Gendaria Police Station and they recorded the GD. He complained that though he wanted to file GD based on abduction, they recorded it showing Mizanur as missing. He went to the CID office, DB office, RAB-10 and RAB-3 with the copy of GD but did not find him.

Monir told Odhikar that on the night of 5 August 2011 the brother of one of his friends called him and informed that he had information that there were two unidentified bodies in Gazipur Sadar Hospital. He watched different channels and the breaking news until 2.00 am but he did not find any information about Mizanur. On the morning of 6 August 2011, Mizanur's friend, Ratan (18) woke him up and showed the news of Mizanur's death in the daily JaiJaiDin newspaper. He saw the news with a picture of the dead bodies but the faces were not clear so he could not be confirmed. He found some similarities with the description of a checked shirt and black pants and the picture of the dead body, so he went to Gazipur Sadar Hospital on 7 August 2011. At first seeing the decomposed body in the morgue, he could not identify it. Then he asked for the clothes the body had been wearing and was able to identify Mizanur. He said that there had been 19,000 taka in Mizanur's pocket and a new mobile phone - both now missing. To transfer the body to Gazipur Police Station he had to bargain and finally at 5,000 taka the authority handed over the body. Mizanur was buried at Jurain graveyard.

Farooq Ahmed, BPM, Officer-in-charge, Gendaria Police Station

Farooq Ahmed informed Odhikar that on 01 August 2011 the family of Jewel and Rajib filed GD no 23 and 24 in Gendaria Police Station. They informed all the police stations in Bangladesh about the missing persons and they continuously tried to find them, he added.

K M Abul Kashem, Officer-in-charge, Jatrabari Police Station

K M Abul Kashem informed Odhikar that on 5 August 2011 they recorded a GD in the police station, dated 05/08/11 and GD no 287. They were very aware of this issue. He said that Mizanur's family did not file any case.

Masudur Rahman, ADC, DB, Media and Community Service, Dhaka Metropolitan Police

Masudur Rahman informed Odhikar that on the morning of 31 July 2011 none of their team went to Doagonj area. They have no involvement regarding this case. However, he said that he heard about the incidence and the relatives of the victims came to his office and informed about the missing people.

Odhikar's Observation

During the fact-finding mission, Odhikar took the testimonies of the parents and relatives of the deceased and the members of the law enforcement agencies and eyewitness. They found inconsistency between the statements of eyewitness and law enforcement members. According to the statement of eyewitness, DB police with arms beat the men and took them away in a microbus.

After the identification of the dead bodies, their families claimed that the deceased men were innocent and DB police arrested them illegally and then killed them. The families went to the law enforcement agencies but did not get any appropriate answer about the arrest and killing by DB police, only excuses and delays. The dead bodies of three young men were found from Gazipur and Munshiganj five days after their disappearance from Doagonj of Gendaria. The law enforcement agencies did not make the slightest effort to determine the fate of the victims and their families.

Odhikar demands a fair investigation of this incident and that the criminals be brought to justice by the government.

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