

March 15, 2010

## Statement

### **Odhikar condemns BSF firing at Bangladeshi citizens in Jointapur, Sylhet**

On March 14, 2010, the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) opened fire at the Jointapur frontier in Sylhet District which left 15 Bangladeshi citizens injured. The people at the border area had bound to leave their villages due to the sudden attack by the BSF. A tense situation exists all around the border area. Odhikar expresses its deep concern over this aggressive attitude, illegal trespass and continuous firing on Bangladeshi citizens by the BSF since March 13, 2010.

BSF has been conducting inhuman activities, violating the joint agreement between the Prime Ministers of the two countries relating to the cessation of violence at the border and also the commitment made at the Director General level conference of BSF and BDR, held on March 7-11, 2010. These inhuman activities of BSF prove that the commitment made by the Indian counterpart was false and frivolous.

The Director General of BSF Raman Srivastab said in a joint statement on March 11, 2010, that they have no right to kill ‘innocent’ people at the border. However, the definition of ‘innocent Bangladeshi’ was not clarified and the BSF extra-judicially kill Bangladeshi people if they are not ‘innocent’. After this statement, about 50 BSF members entered into Bangladesh territory at the Protappur border under Goainghat Upazila, made 14 bunkers and took position with heavy artillery. Despite a serious protest by the BDR, the BSF continued digging bunkers which is, indeed, a grave violation of international law and aggressive trend to grab territory from a small state.

Killing and torture by the BSF continues at the border areas. According to Odhikar documentation, a total of 843 Bangladeshi people have been killed by BSF between 01 January 2000 and 28 February 2010, of which 15 people were killed in last two months. The process of surrounding Bangladesh with fences has been added to the acts of killing, torture and abduction of Bangladeshis.

There is no scope to see this incident of aggression as an isolated matter. After this incident took place, Major General Moinul Hossain, Director General of the BDR said, “We have to keep patience.” Odhikar condemns this statement made by the BDR DG. There are BSF bunkers on Bangladeshi territory now. Without taking immediate steps to protect Bangladeshi sovereignty and people, it is not acceptable to give license to kill more Bangladeshis by keeping patient. Odhikar urges the Foreign Ministry to call on the Indian High Commissioner to lodge a stern protest against these incidents and to take effective measure to stop repetition of such incidents once and for all.

This is a grave violation of human rights as well as of international law. There have been violations to an independent and sovereign state and firing at its citizens without any provocation by another state. Odhikar urges the Bangladesh Government to take effective steps to stop illegal intrusion and killing by the BSF and also to ensure the security of its citizens, who live at the border areas. Odhikar demands a proper investigation of the incidents, punishment of those guilty under international law and compensation for the victims.

Odhikar also calls upon the UN bodies to take a position and condemn such violations of international law and human rights.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "DR. C R Abrar".

DR. C R Abrar  
President

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Adilur Rahman Khan".

Adilur Rahman Khan  
Secretary