

2.4. Accountability efforts and arrests

The interim government has taken steps to investigate alleged human rights abuses committed by the former administration,[133](#) including:

- Inviting UN OHCHR to investigate human rights violations in connection to the student protests. UN OHCHR published its fact-finding report on 12 February 2025.[134](#)
- Forming an inquiry commission to investigate enforced disappearance committed by state authorities under the former government (1 January 2010–5 August 2024).[135](#) By 31 October 2024, the commission had received more than 1 678 complaints.[136](#) More information is available in [3.1. Law enforcement under the previous government](#).
- Forming a commission to investigate the army's crackdown on thousands of soldiers involved in a mutiny in 2009. This operation left 74 dead, including 57 army officials, and the court-martial for hundreds of soldiers, with some being punished by death.[137](#)

The interim government has moreover brought criminal cases before the domestic war crimes tribunal, International Crimes Tribunal of Bangladesh (ICT-BD),[138](#) and has amended the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act of 1973, which the court's jurisdiction is based on.[139](#) The ICT-BD was established in 2009 to prosecute international crimes committed during the 1971 war of independence.[140](#) It has previously been criticised for violating fair trial standards.[141](#) The amendments of the ICT Act have inter alia brought the definitions of 'crimes against humanity', 'genocide' and 'command responsibility' in line with international law. They also allow foreign counsel and international observers attending its trials,[142](#) and require the tribunal to ensure the safety, security and well-being of witnesses. The death penalty was, however, retained.[143](#) The interim government has also reconstituted prosecutors and judges at the tribunal,[144](#) and appointed Muhammad Tajul Islam as chief prosecutor.[145](#) Islam served as defence lawyer for Jamaat-e-Islami during previous trials at the tribunal, which has caused concerns about his objectivity.[146](#) There were also some reported concerns of the judges' political affiliations.[147](#)

The ICT-BD Prosecutor's Office has reportedly received 278 complaints, and filed 18 criminal cases accusing 199 people in total for crimes committed under the former government.[148](#) Most of the accused are presumed to have fled the country, but 39 have been detained, including the former minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs,[149](#) the former director general of the National Telecommunication Monitoring Centre,[150](#) and the former head of the National Security Intelligence Agency.[151](#) The ICT-BD has issued arrest warrants for 46 former ministers and senior Awami league officials, including Hasina and members of her family, senior Awami League leaders and members, and former ministers and advisers,[152](#) as well as 17 law enforcement officials.[153](#) The defendants are accused of alleged 'crimes against humanity'[154](#) for their involvement in enforced disappearances under the former government¹⁵⁵ and also 'genocide' during the protests in July–August 2024.[156](#) Before the amendments of the ICT Act on 24 November 2024, the tribunal's definitions of 'crimes against humanity' and 'genocide' differed from international law, e.g. 'genocide' could also be applied to acts with the intent to destroy political groups.[157](#) The ICT-BD has moreover requested India to extradite Hasina.[158](#)

Trials against former officials involved in the crackdown on protesters, are ongoing,¹⁵⁹ including former ministers, bureaucrats, a judge,¹⁶⁰ and senior security officials.¹⁶¹ A former RAB commander, accused of enforced disappearance, rape and torture, was also brought before the tribunal.¹⁶² The chief prosecutor communicated to media that multiple cases of key figures of the former government would be concluded by December 2025.¹⁶³ According to UN OHCHR, ICT-BD prosecutors faced ‘pressure to move complex cases forward quickly to respond to public demands for justice, while lacking the capacity and resources to investigate, gather evidence, protect witnesses and conduct fair prosecutions through to judgment.’¹⁶⁴

The police have received mass criminal complaints after the fall of the former government.¹⁶⁵ Most cases have been filed as murder cases relating to the student protests. According to police data, 1 474 cases were filed in the period 6 August–25 September 2024, naming 92 486 defendants. Out of these, 1 174 cases were filed against 390 former ministers, members of parliament, and other Awami League officials.¹⁶⁶ According to UN OHCHR, reporting in February 2024, 1 181 investigations had been initiated with 98 137 accused, including 25 033 naming political party leaders.¹⁶⁷ Bangladeshi authorities have not published any numbers on arrests in relation to criminal complaints connected to the student protests, but hundreds have reportedly been arrested without any prior investigations of their cases. The Police Headquarters issued instructions in September 2024 for the police to ‘withdraw’ names of accused persons if preliminary investigations indicated that they were not involved.¹⁶⁸

Hundreds of people connected to the former government have been arrested in criminal cases,¹⁶⁹ including at least 74 top Awami League leaders.¹⁷⁰ There were reports of security forces arbitrarily arresting Awami League affiliates,¹⁷¹ including journalists.¹⁷² Some misused the situation to file baseless cases¹⁷³ against political opponents,¹⁷⁴ and against perceived supporters of the former government.¹⁷⁵ As a result, some have been arrested without a relevant connection to the crime.¹⁷⁶ Some cases have listed hundreds of defendants, including ‘unnamed’ defendants.¹⁷⁷ Since the police may arrest people without a warrant for serious offences,¹⁷⁸ the practice of unnamed defendants opens up for them to arrest ‘almost anyone’ and repeatedly re-arrest them, which is ‘a common abusive practice’, as reported by Human Rights Watch.¹⁷⁹ In some cases the plaintiffs were unaware of who they named as defendants, and only ‘signed the papers’ on recommendations of the police or local politicians.¹⁸⁰ In a case recorded by Human Rights Watch, a woman signed a prewritten report with 50 accused, whom she did not know, including ministers, lawmakers, Awami League student activists, a teacher and two doctors, and 200–300 unnamed persons.¹⁸¹ In November 2024, a legal expert told International Crisis Group about a general fear of being arrested at ‘any minute’.¹⁸²

Senior officials have been brought before courts for alleged murder amid the protests.¹⁸³ There were, however, concerns of the accountability of police staff,¹⁸⁴ given the lack of an independent mechanism investigating criminal complaints against security personnel,¹⁸⁵ and as investigators may have been involved in the protest crackdowns, or may refrain from duly investigating colleagues.¹⁸⁶ Local human rights organisation Odhikar reported on a case in which investigators had removed their former superior’s name from the list of accused.¹⁸⁷

For a timeline of the protests in July–August 2024, and information on violence of actors of the former government, see [Annex 1: Timeline of the protests in July–August 2024](#).

[133](#)

TIB, ‘New Bangladesh’, Tracking the First 100 Days after the Fall of the Authoritarian Regime, 18 November 2024, [url](#), p. 14

[134](#)

UN OHCHR, Human Rights Violations and Abuses Related to the Protests of July and August 2024 in Bangladesh, 12 February 2025, [url](#)

[135](#)

Daily Star (The), Enforced disappearance: Govt sets up inquiry commission, 28 August 2024, [url](#)

[136](#)

Business Standard (The), Disbanding RAB: Can a 'death squad' be transformed by changing its uniform?, 21 February 2025, [url](#)

[137](#)

Al Jazeera, Bangladesh to investigate 2009 paramilitary mutiny massacre, 26 December 2024, [url](#)

[138](#)

UN OHCHR, Human Rights Violations and Abuses Related to the Protests of July and August 2024 in Bangladesh, 12 February 2025, [url](#), para. 252

[139](#)

UN OHCHR, Human Rights Violations and Abuses Related to the Protests of July and August 2024 in Bangladesh, 12 February 2025, [url](#), para. 253

[140](#)

UN OHCHR, Human Rights Violations and Abuses Related to the Protests of July and August 2024 in Bangladesh, 12 February 2025, [url](#), para. 252

[141](#)

HRW, Bangladesh: Arrest Warrant for Sheikh Hasina, 22 October 2024, [url](#)

[142](#)

Prothom Alo, New ordinance brings ICT closer to int'l standards, more changes required, 7 December 2024, [url](#); HRW, Letter to the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Regarding Reforming the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act, 21 October 2024, [url](#)

[143](#)

Prothom Alo, New ordinance brings ICT closer to int'l standards, more changes required, 7 December 2024, [url](#)

[144](#)

AP, Bangladesh court issues arrest warrant for ex-Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina over deaths of protesters, 17 October 2024, [url](#)

[145](#)

AP, Bangladesh court issues arrest warrant for ex-Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina over deaths of protesters, 17 October 2024, [url](#)

[146](#)

Bergman, D., The Second Life of Bangladesh's International Crimes, Justice Info, 20 February 2025, [url](#)

[147](#)

Prothom Alo, Why the Bangladesh govt needs to appoint international judges to the ICT, 19 October 2024, [url](#)

[148](#)

Dhaka Tribune, Ex-NSI director Monirul on 3-day remand, 10 October 2024, [url](#); Bergman, D., The Second Life of Bangladesh's International Crimes, Justice Info, 20 February 2025, [url](#)

[149](#)

Dhaka Tribune, Salman F Rahman, Anisul Huq arrested in Dhaka, 13 August 2024, [url](#); Bergman, D., The Second Life of Bangladesh's International Crimes, Justice Info, 20 February 2025, [url](#)

[150](#)

Daily Star (The), Sacked army officer Ziaul arrested, 17 August 2024, [url](#); Bergman, D., The Second Life of Bangladesh's International Crimes, Justice Info, 20 February 2025, [url](#)

[151](#)

Dhaka Tribune, Ex-NSI director Monirul on 3-day remand, 10 October 2024, [url](#); Bergman, D., The Second Life of Bangladesh's International Crimes, Justice Info, 20 February 2025, [url](#)

[152](#)

Business Standard (The), Names of all 46 on arrest warrant not disclosed for investigation's sake: ICT chief prosecutor, 17 October 2024, [url](#); Daily Star (The), Crimes against humanity, genocide: Arrest warrants for Hasina, 45 others, 18 October 2024, [url](#)

[153](#)

UN OHCHR, Human Rights Violations and Abuses Related to the Protests of July and August 2024 in Bangladesh, 12 February 2025, [url](#), para. 253

[154](#)

UN OHCHR, Human Rights Violations and Abuses Related to the Protests of July and August 2024 in Bangladesh, 12 February 2025, [url](#), para. 253

[155](#)

Bergman, D., The Second Life of Bangladesh's International Crimes, Justice Info, 20 February 2025, [url](#)

[156](#)

Reuters, UN reports grave rights violations in Bangladesh protest response, 12 February 2025, [url](#); NDTV, Bangladesh Tribunal Begins 'Genocide' Probe Against Sheikh Hasina, 9 Others, 15 August 2024, [url](#)

[157](#)

Hosain, M. M., The International Crimes Tribunals of Bangladesh: Past, Present and Future, Policy Brief Series No. 160, TOAEP, 2024, [url](#), pp. 2–3

[158](#)

HRW, Bangladesh: Arrest Warrant for Sheikh Hasina, 22 October 2024, [url](#)

[159](#)

Al Jazeera, Bangladesh ex-ministers face 'massacre' charges, Hasina probe deadline set, 18 November 2024, [url](#); Dhaka Tribune, ICT Chief Prosecutor: Verdicts will halt Awami League leaders' outbursts, 24 February 2025, [url](#)

[160](#)

Daily Star (The), 16 high-profile individuals produced before ICT, 18 February 2025, [url](#)

[161](#)

Business Standard (The), Proof found of ex-ASP Alep raping enforced disappearance victim's wife during Ramadan: ICT prosecutor, 20 February 2025, [url](#)

[162](#)

Business Standard (The), Disbanding RAB: Can a 'death squad' be transformed by changing its uniform?, 21 February 2025, [url](#)

[163](#)

Dhaka Tribune, ICT Chief Prosecutor: Verdicts will halt Awami League leaders' outbursts, 24 February 2025, [url](#)

[164](#)

UN OHCHR, Human Rights Violations and Abuses Related to the Protests of July and August 2024 in Bangladesh, 12 February 2025, [url](#), para. 254

[165](#)

UN OHCHR, Human Rights Violations and Abuses Related to the Protests of July and August 2024 in Bangladesh, 12 February 2025, [url](#), para. 257

[166](#)

Daily Star (The), Fall of Hasina regime: Over 92,000 accused, 1,474 cases, 51 days, 10 October 2024, [url](#)

[167](#)

UN OHCHR, Human Rights Violations and Abuses Related to the Protests of July and August 2024 in Bangladesh, 12 February 2025, [url](#), para. 257

[168](#)

Bergman, D., The Second Life of Bangladesh's International Crimes, Justice Info, 20 February 2025, [url](#)

[169](#)

International Crisis Group, A New Era in Bangladesh? The First Hundred Days of Reform, 14 November 2024, [url](#)

[170](#)

TIB, 'New Bangladesh', Tracking the First 100 Days after the Fall of the Authoritarian Regime, 18 November 2024, [url](#), p. 7; Daily Star (The), The indiscriminate arrests and murder charges, 11 October 2024, [url](#)

[171](#)

HRW, After the Monsoon Revolution, 27 January 2025, [url](#); Daily Star (The), Over 12,700 arrested in eight days, 27 April 2025, [url](#)

[172](#)

HRW, After the Monsoon Revolution, 27 January 2025, [url](#); RSF, Bangladesh: RSF condemns the outrageous charges of crimes against humanity brought against at least 25 journalists, 30 August 2024, [url](#)

[173](#)

TIB, 'New Bangladesh', Tracking the First 100 Days after the Fall of the Authoritarian Regime, 18 November 2024, [url](#), p. 7; Daily Star (The), The indiscriminate arrests and murder charges, 11 October 2024, [url](#)

[174](#)

TIB, 'New Bangladesh', Tracking the First 100 Days after the Fall of the Authoritarian Regime, 18 November 2024, [url](#), p. 7; Prothom Alo, Indiscriminate accusations make cases questionable, 3 September 2024, [url](#); Daily Star (The), The indiscriminate arrests and murder charges, 11 October 2024, [url](#)

[175](#)

Bergman, D., Justice vs Justice, Justice Info, 22 April 2025, [url](#)

[176](#)

UN OHCHR, Human Rights Violations and Abuses Related to the Protests of July and August 2024 in Bangladesh, 12 February 2025, [url](#), para. 257; HRW, After the Monsoon Revolution, 27 January 2025, [url](#)

[177](#)

International Crisis Group, A New Era in Bangladesh? The First Hundred Days of Reform, 14 November 2024, [url](#); HRW, After the Monsoon Revolution, 27 January 2025, [url](#)

[178](#)

Bangladesh, The Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898, Part I, Chapter I, 22 March 1898, [url](#), para. 4 (f)

[179](#)

HRW, After the Monsoon Revolution, 27 January 2025, [url](#)

[180](#)

HRW, After the Monsoon Revolution, 27 January 2025, [url](#); Daily Star (The), A curious tale of two cases, 7 October 2024, [url](#)

[181](#)

HRW, After the Monsoon Revolution, 27 January 2025, [url](#)

[182](#)

International Crisis Group, A New Era in Bangladesh? The First Hundred Days of Reform, 14 November 2024, [url](#)

[183](#)

Daily Star (The), A day in court: Of handcuffs and helmets, 27 February 2025, [url](#)

[184](#)

Bergman, D., The Second Life of Bangladesh's International Crimes, Justice Info, 20 February 2025, [url](#)

[185](#)

UN OHCHR, Human Rights Violations and Abuses Related to the Protests of July and August 2024 in Bangladesh, 12 February 2025, [url](#), para. 258

[186](#)

UN OHCHR, Human Rights Violations and Abuses Related to the Protests of July and August 2024 in Bangladesh, 12 February 2025, [url](#), para. 258; Odhikar, Quarterly Human Rights Report, January–March 2025, 14 May 2025, [url](#), para. 36

[187](#)

Odhikar, Quarterly Human Rights Report, January–March 2025, 14 May 2025, [url](#), para. 36

© European Union Agency for Asylum 2025 | Email: info@euaa.europa.eu