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5.2. Enforced disappearance and extrajudicial killings

As reported in the 2024 EUAA COI Report: Bangladesh – Country Focus, Bangladesh has 'a long, dark history of enforced disappearance', and before the power-shift it had not ratified the Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (CED).371 Sources accused the previous government of using enforced disappearance as a method to supress dissent and spread fear372 and undermining the political opposition.373 There were reports of law enforcement carrying out extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances on the order, or with tacit approval,374 of the highest offices of the state.375 Victims of enforced disappearance included opposition party leaders and supporters, alleged militants, and seemingly ordinary people. They were abducted by men in plainclothes claiming to represent law enforcement agencies.376 Meanwhile, family members of victims were put under surveillance,377 or were threatened and harassed for seeking justice.378 More information on enforced disappearances under the former government, and involved actors, is available in sections 1.The student protests, 3. Impact on law enforcement and in the 2024 EUAA COI Report: Bangladesh – Country Focus.

Soon after its installation, the interim government 'made commitments to pursue accountability for torture, extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances, and ensure human rights protections', as reported by Human Rights Watch.379 On 27 August 2024, the interim government set up an inquiry commission on enforced disappearance 'to identify and find the people who were forcibly disappeared by various intelligence and law enforcement agencies' under the former government.380 More information is available 2.4. Accountability efforts and arrests and 3.1. Law enforcement under the previous government.

On 30 August 2024 Bangladesh ratified the CED.381 However, enforced disappearance is not a recognised crime in domestic law.382 Local human rights organisations Odhikar and ASK did not record cases of enforced disappearance under the interim government.383 In the period 9 August 2024–March 2025, however, Odhikar recorded 20 cases of extrajudicial killings by law enforcement agencies. These cases include nine people being tortured to death, seven shot to death, three beaten to death.384 In the period September 2024–May 2025, ASK recorded 25 extrajudicial killings, also including several cases of death by physical torture.385 Both organisation attributed most killings to the joint forces and the police, but also recorded cases involving the DB, the RAB, the navy, the Department of Narcotics Control, the coast guard, and

the air force.386

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