Persecution over Blasphemy Allegations in Bangladesh: A Human Rights Report 2025



SPECTRUM RIGHTS OBSERVATORY

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"Rooted in Secularism, Standing for Rights"

Spectrum Rights Observatory (SRO) is a non-profit and non-governmental organization committed to promoting, protecting, and advancing the rights of minority communities within the culturally rich and religiously pluralistic society of Bangladesh. We amplify the voices of marginalized individuals and communities who face discrimination, social isolation, and grave safety risks simply for standing up for secularism, democracy, freedom of thought, and freedom of belief.

As Bangladesh is home to at least *54* ethnic groups and over *40* languages, secularism has been one of the key foundational principles of the country to allow its diverse cultural, linguistic, and religious communities to coexist under a single national identity. Alongside the majority Bengali population, various indigenous and religious communities contribute significantly to the nation's cultural and linguistic heritage. Protecting minority rights and promoting mutual respect remain essential for strengthening social stability, democracy, and inclusive development in Bangladesh.

Our mission is to work towards building a rational and pluralistic Bangladesh by defending secularism, documenting human rights abuses through rigorous research, supporting victims of religious persecution, and mobilizing communities and institutions for long-lasting change.

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Introduction

In 2025, Bangladesh witnessed a series of violent attacks, targeted mob violence, arrests, and forms of extrajudicial persecution linked to allegations of “hurting religious sentiments” and “religious defamation.” Most of these allegations were reportedly triggered by posts and comments on social media platforms, or alleged verbal statements perceived as offensive to religious beliefs.

This report documents *28* selected incidents drawn from several dozen cases that were published and verified in national print and electronic news media outlets. These documented cases provide an overview of a broader pattern of incidents that occurred throughout the year.

However, human rights observers note that the actual number of such incidents is likely higher. Many cases remained confined to local communities and were not reported to police or national media due to victims’ fears for safety, concerns about retaliation, or social pressure within their communities.

A notable pattern observed in 2025 was the sequence of events in most of these cases. Allegations were almost always weaponized and spread by a few individuals on social media to spark public outrage, which was swiftly followed by threats, public protests, or mob attacks targeting the victims. Police intervention occurred way too late, and their role was frequently insufficient to protect the victims, instead resulting primarily in the detention or arrest. In some cases, severe violence and even loss of life occurred before any formal legal process or protective measure was ever initiated.

Major Incidents Reported in National Media (2025)



January 2025

1

Name: Pranta Talukdar
Incident Location: Khulshi, Chattogram
Type of incident: Mob violence
Media report: Prothom Alo, 1 January 2025

Headline:
"*চট্টগ্রামে বাসা থেকে এক যুবককে ধরে নেয় একদল ব্যক্তি, আহত অবস্থায় উদ্ধার করেছে পুলিশ*"
(A group of people kidnapped a young man from his home in Chittagong, rescued by police in an injured condition)

Brief description:
A group of people forcibly abducted and assaulted a young man named Pranta Talukdar from his residence in the Lalkhan Bazar area under Khulshi Police Station in Chattogram. Police later rescued him in an injured condition and admitted him to Chattogram Medical College Hospital. Police stated that the incident may have been linked to allegations of derogatory remarks on Facebook and that the matter was under investigation. During the rescue, Patenga Police Station OC Shafiqul Islam took him into police custody while he was injured.

February 2025

2

Name: Muaz Muhammad Arefin Talukdar
Incident Location: Bangladesh University of Textiles (BUTEX)
Type of incident: Assault, detention, and expulsion
Media report: Ittefaq, 2 February 2025

Headline:
"*মহানবীকে নিয়ে কটূক্তির অভিযোগে উত্তাল বুটেক্স হল*"
(Butex is in turmoil over allegations of insulting the Prophet)

Brief description:

Following the spread of allegations on social media accusing Arefin Talukdar of making derogatory remarks about Prophet Muhammad and hurting religious sentiment, tension erupted on the BUTEX campus. A group of extremist students attacked him while chanting "Allahu Akbar" (Allah is the greatest). Subsequently, the university administration expelled him, and police detained and arrested him.

This incident is a clear example of mob violence and administrative punishment on a *university campus* based on religious allegations.

3

Name: Poet Sohel Hasan Galib
Incident Location: Dhaka
Type of incident: Arrest
Media report: bdnews24 & New Age, 15–16 February 2025

Headline:
"*Poet Sohel Hasan Galib sent to jail for 'hurting religious sentiment'*"
"*Poet Sohel Hasan Galib on two-day remand*"

Brief description:

A poet was arrested through digital surveillance based on allegations of religious defamation related to his writings and statements.

March 2025

4

Name: Nabi Nur Islam
Incident Location: Mirzapur, Tangail
Type of incident: Arrest
Media report: Somoyer Konthosor, 11 March 2025

Headline:
"*মহানবীকে (সা.) নিয়ে কটূক্তির অভিযোগে যুবক গ্রেপ্তার*"
(Youth arrested for insulting the Prophet (PBUH))

Brief description:

A group of fundamentalists detained and assaulted a 38-year-old man named Nabi Nur Islam over allegations of making derogatory comments about the Prophet of Islam on Facebook. Police later filed a case against him and formally arrested him.

5

Name: Hasan Swaccha
Incident Location: Natore
Type of incident: Police arrest
Media report: Ittefaq, 17 March 2025

Headline:
"*মহানবীকে নিয়ে কটূক্তি, যুবক গ্রেপ্তার*"
(Young man arrested for insulting the Prophet)

Brief description:

Police arrested Sakibul Hasan Swaccha from his home over allegations of making derogatory remarks about Prophet Muhammad in a Facebook post. Prior to the arrest, local residents staged protests in front of the police station demanding strict punishment.

April 2025

6

Name: Akhil Chandra Mondal
Incident Location: Tangail
Type of incident: Mob attack
Media report: Naya Diganta, 5 April 2025

Headline:
"*টাঙ্গাইলের দেলদুয়ারে নবীকে নিয়ে কটূক্তি: যুবক আটক*"
(Young man arrested for insulting the Prophet in Delduar, Tangail)

Brief description:

Following allegations of derogatory remarks about the Prophet of Islam in writing, a mob assaulted Akhil Chandra Mondal. Police then arrested Akhil Mondal instead of the attackers and filed a case against him.

7

Name: Unnamed Hindu youth and one teacher
Incident Location: Dinajpur
Type of incident: Case filing, arrest, protest/blockade, forced displacement
Media report: Prothom Alo, 6 April 2025

Headline:
"*দিনাজপুরে মহানবীকে (সা.) নিয়ে কটূক্তির অভিযোগ, যুবাকে গ্রেপ্তারের দাবিতে মহাসড়ক অবরোধ*"
(Allegations of insulting the Prophet (PBUH) in Dinajpur, highway blockade demanding arrest of youth)

Brief description:

In Mohanpur, Dinajpur, locals blocked a highway and staged protests demanding the arrest of a young man accused of making derogatory remarks about the Prophet on social media. To save his life, the youth and his family were forced to flee the area. When the youth could not be found, a teacher associated with a Facebook group linked to him was detained.

8

Name: Sagar Saha

Incident Location: Bulanpur, Rajshahi
Type of incident: Arrest
Media report: New Age, 22 April 2025

Headline:
"*Man arrested for derogatory remark on Prophet Muhammad*"

Brief description:
Police arrested Sagar Saha over allegations of hurting religious sentiments through statements posted on social media.

9

Name: Bidhan Babu
Incident Location: Tejgaon
Type of incident: Police detention
Media report: TBS, 22 April 2025

Headline:
"*Police take Kohinoor Chemicals official into custody over 'derogatory remarks' about prophet*"
"*Blaspheming the Prophet: Supervisor of Kohinoor factory in Tejgaon beaten up, detained*"

Brief description:
Following allegations of derogatory remarks about the Prophet of Islam, enraged workers carried out a mob attack on Kohinoor Chemicals supervisor Bidhan Babu and police detained him afterward. Additional law enforcement and army personnel were deployed to control the situation.

May 2025

10

Name: Bikash Dhar Dipto
Incident Location: Moulvibazar, Bangladesh
Type of incident: Arrest
News published: HRCBM, 1 December 2025

Headline:

"Blasphemy Allegations and Rising Persecution: HRCBM Warns of a Deepening Human Rights Crisis in Bangladesh"

Brief description:

A student of Economics at the Shahjalal University of Science and Technology, 23-year-old Bikash Dhar was arrested by the police on allegations of hurting religious sentiment. He was accused of making objectionable remarks and derogatory statements about Prophet Muhammad in a Facebook post shared on May 11, 2025.

11

Name: Shahidul Islam
Incident Location: Debhata, Satkhira
Type of incident: Arrest
News published: Janakantha, 16 May 2025

Headline:
"মহানবী (স.) সম্পর্কে কটূক্তি করায় সাতক্ষীরায় গ্রেফতার ১"
(1 arrested in Satkhira for insulting the Prophet (PBUH))

Brief description:

A 73-year-old elderly freedom fighter was attacked and arrested in Satkhira on allegations of making derogatory remarks about the Prophet Muhammad of Islam, as well as about deceased preacher Delwar Hossain Sayeedi and speaker Mizanur Rahman Azhari.

June 2025

12

Name: Shakil Ahmed
Incident Location: Singair, Manikganj
Type of incident: Suicide under threat
Date / Source: bdnews24, 10 June 2025

Headline:
"*মহানবীকে 'কটূক্তির' পুরনো মন্তব্য সামনে এনে হুমকি, ঢাবি শিক্ষার্থীর 'আত্মহত্যা'*"
(Du student commits 'suicide' after old comments 'insulting' Prophet Muhammad are brought to light)

Brief description:
Allegations of hurting religious sentiments were raised based on an old Facebook comment. Due to severe social pressure, threats, and extreme psychological distress, Shakil ultimately took his own life.

13

Name: Sohag Das
Incident Location: Parbatipur, Dinajpur
Type of incident: Mob attack and detention
News published: The Voice, 20 December 2025

Headline:
"When Rumor Kills: Blasphemy Allegations in Bangladesh"

Brief description:
A mob of fundamentalists attacked Sohag Das over allegations of hurting religious sentiment, for merely 'liking' an alleged anti-Islam post. He was later detained, handed over to law enforcement, charged in a case, and sent to jail.

14

Name: Paresh Chandra Shil and Bishnu Chandra Shil
Incident Location: Lalmonirhat
Type of incident: Mob attack and arrest

News published: Janakantha, 21–22 June 2025

Headline:
"*লালমনিরহাটে ধর্ম নিয়ে কটূক্তির অভিযোগে বাবা-ছেলে আটক*"
(Father and son arrested for insulting religion in Lalmonirhat)

Brief description:
An enraged mob of fundamentalists attacked barber Paresh Chandra Shil (69) and his son Bishnu Chandra Shil (35) over allegations of making derogatory remarks about Islam. Police later arrived and arrested both of them.

July 2025

15

Name: Ranjan Chandra Roy
Incident Location: Gangachara, Rangpur
Type of incident: Arrest and communal violence
News published: BBC Bangla, Deutsche Welle & Jamuna TV, 26–27 July 2025

Headlines:
"*রংপুরের গঙ্গাচড়ার সংখ্যালঘুরা এখনো আতঙ্কে*"
(Minorities in Gangachara, Rangpur are still in fear)

"*রংপুরের গংগাচড়ায় ধর্ম অবমাননার অভিযোগ তুলে হিন্দুদের বাড়িঘরে হামলা, কী জানা যাচ্ছে*"
(Attacks on Hindu homes in Rangpur's Gangachara following allegations of blasphemy: What is known?)

https://youtu.be/kmZgU4igU0w?si=zXTz4ApsX17dFQ2P

Brief description:
After allegations of religious insult were brought against 17-year-old Ranjan Chandra Roy, he was arrested by police. Using the same allegation as justification, houses of the Hindu minority community were vandalized and

looted by a frenzied mob of fundamentalists. No action has been taken against the extremists for targeted attacks on minority properties.

August 2025

16

Name: Bijoy Debnath
Incident Location: Sitakunda
Type of incident: Mob assault and arrest
News published: FFRF & Minority Watch, 9–10 August 2025

Headlines:
"*FFRF denounces violent arrest in Bangladesh over birthday wish to atheist blogger*"

"*সীতাকুণ্ডে আসাদ নূরকে জন্মদিনের শুভেচ্ছা জানানোয় ধর্ম অবমাননার অভিযোগে যুবক থানায়*"
(Youth at police station on charges of blasphemy for wishing Asad Noor happy birthday in Sitakunda)

Brief description:
Twenty-five-year-old Bijoy Debnath wished expatriate atheist blogger Asad Noor a happy birthday on Facebook. Interpreting his post as "blasphemy" and an "insult to Islam", a group identifying themselves as 'tawhidi janata' (monotheistic mass) along with an NCP leader publicly assaulted him in broad daylight. Following the assault, he was handed over to police. Instead of ensuring medical treatment, police filed a case against Bijoy for hurting religious sentiment and arrested him.

17

Name: Mehdi Hasan
Incident Location: Matlab Dakshin, Chandpur
Type of incident: Attack, arson, and legal case
News published: Prothom Alo, 20 August 2025

Headline:
"*চাঁদপুরে মহানবীকে (সা.) কটূক্তির অভিযোগে প্রবাসীর বাড়িতে হামলা, পরে মামলা দায়ের*"
(Expatriate's house attacked in Chandpur for insulting Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), a case filed later)

Brief description:
An angry mob of fundamentalists attacked and set fire to the house of Belgium-based expatriate Mehdi Hasan in the evening of 19 August, following allegations that he made derogatory remarks about Islam and Prophet Muhammad on Facebook. On 20 August, a local Jamaat-e-Islami leader filed a case against him.

September 2025

18

Name: Russel Molla
Incidnet Location: Goalanda, Rajbari
Type of incident: Mob Killing
News published: Prothom Alo & The Daily Star, 5 September 2025

Headline:
"*নূরুল পাগলার দরবারে হামলা, একজন নিহত, কবর থেকে মরদেহ তুলে আগুন*"
(One Killed in Attack on Nural Pagla's Shrine; Body Exhumed and Burned)

Brief description:
A video of an old statement made by Nural Pagla, a local spiritual leader, circulated on social media, triggering outrage and protests among Islamist groups. Following the controversy, a mob of fundamentalists attacked his shrine in Goalanda, Rajbari. During the violence, Nural Pagla's body was exhumed from his grave and set on fire. One of his followers, Russel Molla, was brutally beaten by the mob and later died while receiving treatment at a hospital.

19

Name: Bemja Mohsin
Incidnet Location: Cumilla
Type of incident: Attack, arson, and arrest
News published: TBS, 18–20 September 2025

Headline:
"*কুমিল্লায় ধর্ম নিয়ে কটূক্তির অভিযোগে চার মাজারে হামলা, অগ্নিসংযোগ*"
(Four Mazars faced attacks, set on fire in Comilla over alleged insults to religion)

Brief description:

On 18 September 2025, tensions erupted in Asadpur village of Homna upazila, Cumilla, over allegations of hurting religious sentiments on social media. According to local sources, a Facebook account named "Bemja Mohsin" allegedly posted derogatory comments targeting Prophet Muhammad, triggering outrage. A mob of several hundreds attacked, vandalized, and set fire to four shrines and also burned nearby homes. Police and the army intervened to bring the situation under control and arrested Mohsin.

October 2025

20

Name: Pintu Debnath
Incident Location: Patiya, Chittagong
Type of incident: Arrest and attempted mob handover at police station
News published: BBC Bangla, 1 October 2025

Headline:
"*চট্টগ্রামের পটিয়াতে ধর্মীয় কটূক্তির অভিযোগে ঠিক কী ঘটেছে?*"
(What exactly happened in the alleged religious blasphemy in Patiya, Chittagong?)

Brief description:

Partha Biswas Pintu was accused of making derogatory remarks about the Prophet Muhammad on Facebook. A case was filed, and police arrested him. After news of his arrest spread, students from local madrasas and worshipers gathered in front of the police station demanding that he should be handed over to them. When police refused, the crowd vandalized the police station and attacked an army vehicle. According to Bangladeshi media, one army personnel was injured during the incident.

21

Name: Sohag Hossain
Incident Location: Debhata, Satkhira
Type of incident: Mob assault, legal case, and arrest
News published: Khoborer Kagoj, 6 October 2025

Headline:
"*ইসলাম ধর্ম ও কুরআন নিয়ে কটূক্তির অভিযোগে যুবককে গণপিটুনি*"
(Young man beaten up for insulting Islam and the Quran)

Brief description:

An extremist group identifying themselves as 'tawhidi janata' (monotheistic mass) dragged 26-year-old Sohag Hossain from his home and brutally assaulted him over allegations that his Facebook posts criticized Islam, Allah, and the Quran. Police later arrived at the scene and arrested him.

22

Name: Shamim Ashraf
Incidnet Location: Mymensingh
Type of incident: Arrest by Detective Branch
News published: Prothom Alo English, 7 October 2025

Headline:
"*Cultural activist Shamim placed on one-day remand over 'defamation of religion'*"

Brief description:

Cultural activist Shamim Ashraf was arrested by the Detective Branch based on his digital activities on Facebook, following allegations of criticizing Islam and hurting religious sentiments. After his arrest, he was subjected to custodial torture under the guise of remand and subsequently sent to jail.

23

Name: Apurba Rad (formerly known as, Apurba Pal)
Type of incident: Mob assault and arrest
News published: The Daily Campus, 5 October 2025

Headline:
"*অপূর্ব মানসিকভাবে স্থিতিশীল নয়-জানালেন সাবেক শিক্ষক ও বাড়ির মালিক*"
(Apurba is not mentally stable-says former teacher and landlord)

Brief description:

According to his former teacher and landlord, North South University student Apurba Pal (a convert to Islam) had been suffering from mental instability for a long time. Amid protests by student groups and religious fundamentalists over allegations of desecration of the Quran on campus, police detained Apurba Pal. He was arrested from the Bashundhara Residential Area in Dhaka and permanently expelled by the university.

November 2025

24

Name: Trisha Das
Incident Location: Cumilla
Type of incident: Legal case and arrest
News published: Amader Shomoy, 11 November 2025

Headline:
"*কুমিল্লায় ফেসবুকে ইসলাম ধর্ম নিয়ে কটূক্তির অভিযোগে নারী আটক*"
(Woman arrested in Comilla for insulting Islam on Facebook)

Brief description:

Allegations that Trisha Das made derogatory remarks about Islam and the Prophet on Facebook triggered widespread anger and unrest among Muslims. In response, police arrested her and filed a case against her.

25

Name: Abul Sarkar
Incident Location: Manikganj
Type of incident: Arrest and subsequent violence
News published: The Daily Star, 19–23 November 2025

Headline:
“Baul singer Abul Sarkar sent to jail in case over ‘hurting religious sentiments”

Brief description:

Following the arrest of Abul Sarkar on allegations of hurting religious sentiments, tension escalated in the area and incidents of violence erupted. The situation remained unstable for several days after his arrest. Widespread attacks and mass arrests were carried out against his followers from the Baul community.

26

Name: Sohag Ali
Incident Location: Sherpur
Type of incident: Legal case and arrest
News published: bd24live.com, 24 November 2025

Headline:
“*শেরপুরে মহানবীকে (সা.) কটূক্তি করে ফেসবুকে স্ট্যাস্টাস, যুবক আটক*”
(Youth arrested for Facebook status insulting Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in Sherpur)

Brief description:

Sohag Ali's Facebook posts critical of Islamic prophet, the Quran and Hadiths spread on social media, sparking outrage among religious fundamentalists. On 23 November, Mufti Md. Zahid Mia of Purbo Kharia area filed a case against Sohag at Sreebardi Police Station. Police arrested him later that same night.

27

Name: Sagar Mondol
Incidednt Location: Nagarkanda, Faridpur
Type of incident: Legal case and arrest
News published: Prothom Alo, 25 November 2025

Headline:
"*ফরিদপুরে ধর্ম অবমাননার অভিযোগে তরুণ অবরুদ্ধ, পরে সাইবার সুরক্ষা আইনে মামলা*"
(Youth detained in Faridpur for blasphemy, later sued under Cyber Security Act)

Brief description:

A mob gathered and confined Sagar over allegations of blasphemy. The incident occurred on Monday evening at Gorail Bazar. Police later rescued him and took him to the police station. Meanwhile, another group attacked and vandalized the young man's nearby home. They also set fire to a pile of jute straw in front of the house.

December 2025

28

Name: Dipu Chandra Das
Incident Location: Bhaluka, Mymensingh
Type of incident: Mob lynching, murder, and arson
News published: BBC Bangla & Prothom Alo, 20 December 2025

Headline:
"*ভালুকায় হিন্দু যুবককে পিটিয়ে পুড়িয়ে হত্যা, কী ঘটেছিল সেখানে*"
(Hindu youth beaten and burned to death in Bhaluka, what happened there)

"*Dipu Das forced to resign and handed over to enraged mob: RAB*"

Brief description:

An extremist group identifying as 'tawhidi janata' (monotheistic mass) lynched a young man named Dipu Chandra Das after accusing him of blasphemy. After killing him, the mob hung his body from a tree and set it on fire. Subsequent police investigations stated that no direct evidence supporting the blasphemy allegations was found.

The incident drew strong public backlash, widespread international attention and condemnation. It became the most discussed and criticized incident of the year 2025.

International Human Rights Concerns

The human rights crisis surrounding blasphemy allegations in Bangladesh in 2025 highlights a new layer of complexity to the country's history with religious persecution. While past years were historically characterized by targeted assassinations of secular bloggers and freethinkers by extremist groups, the period following August 2024 has witnessed the alarming rise and normalization of public mobocracy, where crowds act as digital executioners, vigilantes, and de facto judges. Mob violence has become a structural problem in the country.

An analysis of the *28* documented major incidents reveals a deeply concerning pattern where accusations of ‘hurting religious sentiments’ are systematically weaponized to curtail freedom of expression, target marginalized and minority communities, and fuel extrajudicial violence. The pattern shows these allegations did not just target critics or freethinkers, but disproportionately target vulnerable and minority groups like students, Hindus, Baul singers, and Sufi shrines.

Approximately *57%* of these cases involved direct physical assaults, mob violence, arson, or lynching targeting individuals or their properties before any intervention by the law enforcement. Furthermore, enraged mob routinely escalated their tactics by besieging police stations, vandalizing public property, and demanding custody of the accused.

Under mob pressure, law enforcement agencies frequently failed to protect the targets. In over *75%* of these cases, police arrest statistics overwhelmingly targeted the victims and accused individuals rather than the actual instigators of violence. While victims and accused individuals faced immediate detention, criminal cases, or remand, accountability for the instigators of mob violence, vandalism, and arson remained remarkably low.

The vast majority of these allegations stemmed from social media content, such as Facebook posts, comments, or old statements or alleged verbal remarks claimed to ‘hurt religious sentiments’. Platforms like Facebook or messaging groups were used by the ‘tawhidi janata’ (monotheistic mass) for instantaneous mass mobilization and online media trials.

These documented trends directly contravene Bangladesh's obligations under international human rights instruments, most notably The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

Conclusion

In 2025, allegations of hurting religious sentiments in Bangladesh evolved far beyond a legal or administrative issue into a lethal social weapon. Driven by the dangerous post-August 2024 normalization of public mobocracy, these weaponized claims have transformed digital spaces into trial grounds and turned citizens into targets of extrajudicial vigilantism.

As documented in this report, the violence has not been restricted to political or ideological critics, but has disproportionately swept across vulnerable student populations, religious minorities, Baul musicians, and sacred Sufi shrines. Countless other cases remain unreported due to pervasive fear, social pressure, and acute security risks.

Recommendations

The government must take immediate action across legal, institutional, and societal fronts to effectively dismantle the crisis of mobocracy and the weaponization of blasphemy allegations. Authorities must overhaul vague legal provisions and cyber security laws to prevent their misuse by religious extremists against free expression and minority communities. Law enforcement agencies must adopt a zero-tolerance policy toward vigilantism, prioritizing victim protection over appeasing crowds, vigorously prosecuting the actual instigators of mob violence and arson, and shielding state institutions from extremist coercion. Failing to address this crisis will not only erode the country's cultural pluralism and coexistence, but will actively fracture the foundational principles upon which Bangladesh was built.

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