

MILES TO GO..... FIGHT FOR RIGHTS.....

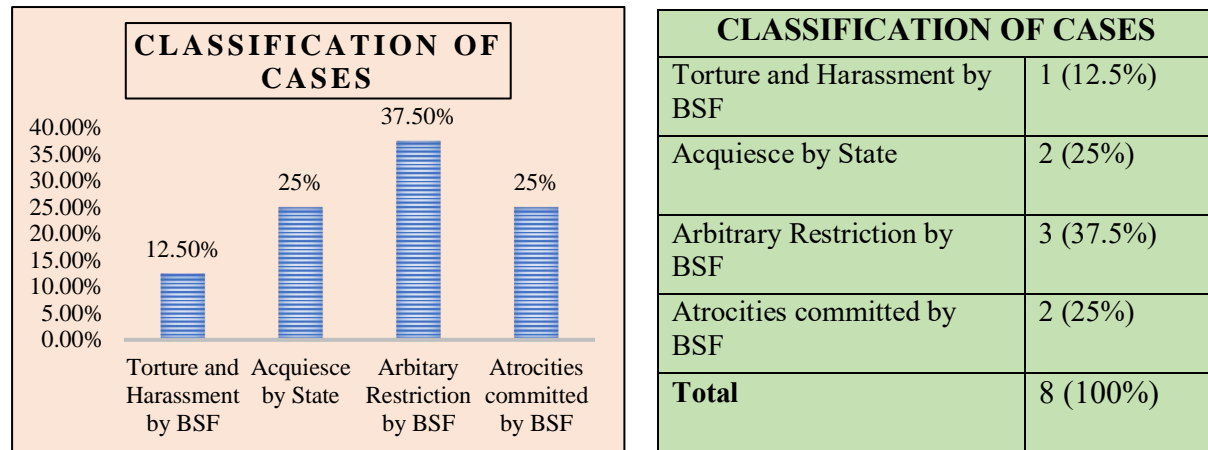
MONTHLY REPORT SEPTEMBER, 2024



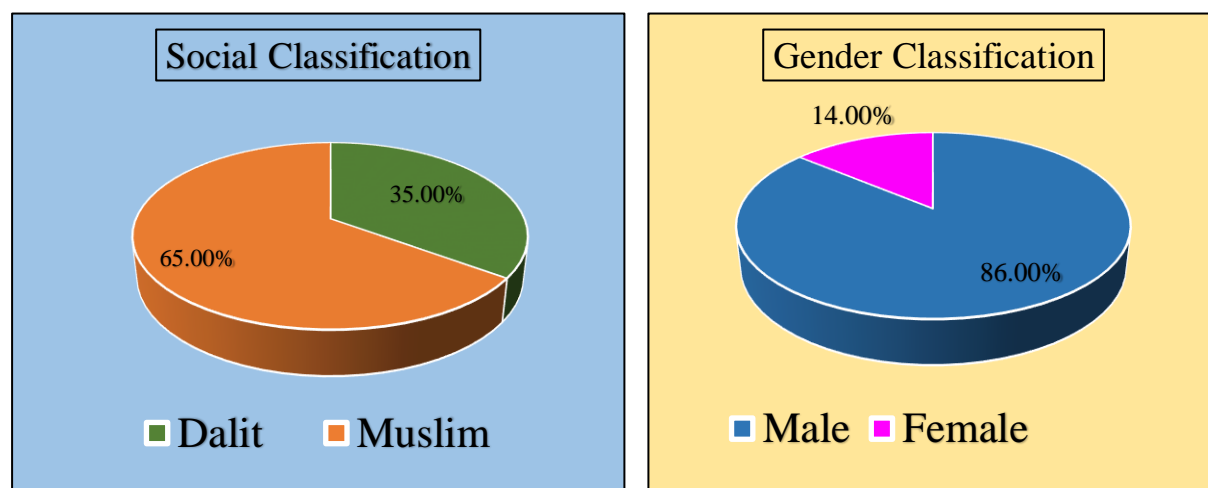
Banglar Manabadhikar Suraksha
Mancha (MASUM)
www.masum.org.in

Banglar Manabadhikar Suraksha Mancha (MASUM) lodged eight complaints during the month of September 2024 on incidents of grave human rights violation before the human rights institutions; especially National Human Rights Commission, different state authorities and international human rights agencies.

Out of eight complaints, one on torture and harassment committed by BSF personnel, two allegations were lodged against acquiesce by State. Three cases on arbitrary restriction by BSF and two cases on atrocities committed by BSF were lodged through MASUM.



In case of arbitrary restriction at India Bangladesh bordering area, total number of victims are 373 villagers. One of Complaints was lodged on torture and harassment committed by Border Security Force personnel. Victims of atrocities committed by BSF and police are three people and total sixty seven victims complained against acquiesce by State.



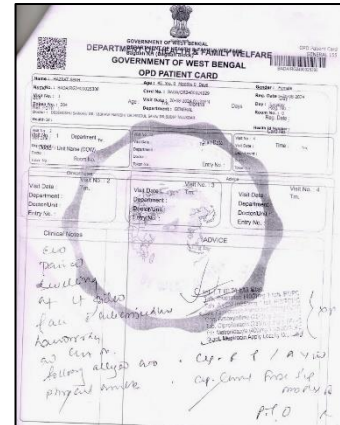
Banglar Manabadhikar Suraksha Mancha (MASUM) lodged eight complaints to provide justice to total 744 victims. Among them 86% are male victims and 14% are female victims.

Case Brief September-2024:

1. Torture and Harassment by BSF:

One Muslim man tortured by BSF, then threatened:

In the morning of August 20, 2024, Mr. Hajrat Sheikh, a farmer and worker at local land registration office, from Panchberia village and clerk of Bagdah B.L & L.R.O, was brutally tortured by BSF personnel near the Indo-Bangladesh border, behind Panchberia BSF camp in Boira Panchayat, while tending to his agricultural land. The BSF, led by a drunk Post Commander Mr. Jyatharam of the 107 BN, accused Mr. Hajrat of facilitating illegal border crossings. During the incident, Mr. Hajrat was verbally abused, physically assaulted with batons, punched in the eyes and ears (causing eardrum damage), and kicked, resulting in broken ribs and severe injuries. He sought medical treatment on the same day and consulted specialists for his injuries over the following days. Despite his condition, Bagdah police visited his house on August 22 at midnight and threatened him. No female police officers were present during the late-night raid on his house while his wife was present at the moment which was violation of the law. Though Mr. Hajrat filed a formal complaint with the Bongaon District Police and other authorities, no action has been taken. BSF continues to threaten him to withdraw his complaint, and the local Gram Panchayat, led by Pradhan Mr. Asit Mondal and Upa-Pradhan Mr. Misail Hossain, supports the BSF, further pressuring him by imposing a curfew on the vital IBBR road, affecting villagers' daily activities and inciting anger within the community.



2. Arbitrary Restrictions by BSF:

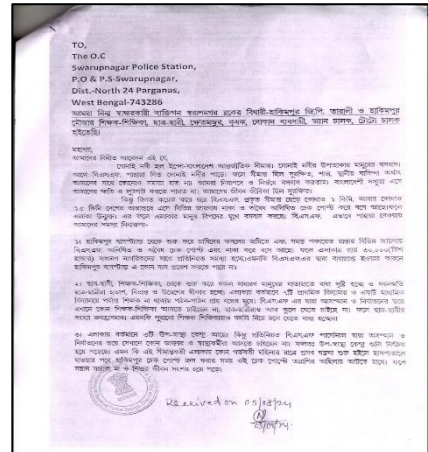
In Dinhata, Indian citizens are living in captive since independence:

The villagers of Seuti-II in Shukarukuti GP, Cooch Behar district, are facing severe hardships due to restrictions on the opening times of fencing gate no. 17, which is controlled by the BSF at Kushahat B.O.P. of C-Company, 90 Battalion. This gate, once open all day, is now limited to three hours daily, severely disrupting the lives of 43 minority Muslim families who rely on it to access their agricultural fields, schools, markets, and health centres. The restrictions have reduced the villagers' ability to cultivate 380 bighas of farmland, affecting their primary livelihoods in agriculture. Lengthy registration processes during the gate's limited opening hours often prevent villagers from crossing in time, leading to school dropouts and denying pregnant women and the ill access to health care. Despite filing formal complaints with local authorities and the BSF in July 2024, the villagers faced intimidation instead of relief, with BSF personnel threatening them with false charges if they did not withdraw their grievances. These restrictions not only harm the socio-economic conditions of the villagers but also violate their fundamental rights, leaving them isolated and vulnerable.



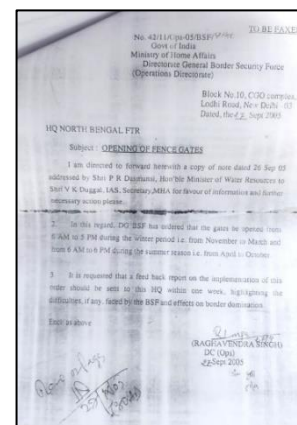
Free movement of villagers is being controlled by BSF personnel:

The villages of Tarali and Hakimpur, situated near the Indo-Bangladesh border along the Sonai River under Swarupnagar police station in North 24 Parganas, are home to 2,322 and 699 families, respectively, mostly comprising Hindu Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe communities. Historically reliant on agriculture, bidi binding, stitching, and rakhi making, the livelihoods of these villagers have been severely disrupted due to increasing interference by BSF personnel, who have restricted activities like fishing in the Sonai River despite many residents holding Fisherman Cards. Originally stationed along the border to protect against external threats, the BSF has shifted its operations inward, establishing unregistered check posts within village boundaries. This intrusion has led to harassment of villagers, particularly farmers, who are frequently barred from accessing their own agricultural land, as well as schoolchildren and teachers, resulting in rising school dropout rates. Even access to healthcare has been impeded, with sick villagers and pregnant women often being questioned or mistreated while trying to reach medical facilities. Women in these communities live in constant fear of harassment, and incidents of unjustified detainment are common. Despite repeated petitions to local authorities and an attempt at dialogue with BSF Commander Shumohon Ghosh, who dismissed their concerns and threatened them, the situation remains unchanged. Frustrated, the villagers, along with the “Amra Simantabasi” committee and the local Panchayat, continue to seek justice but face ongoing resistance from both the BSF and local political interests that support them.



Indian land, Indian Territory, and owner don't have access to go, having drinking water, toilets, irrigation:

In East Sahebganj village, around 30% of the population belong to the Hindu Dalit community, another 30% are from the Muslim General category, and the rest are from the Hindu General category. About 50-60 families here, comprising 5-8 members each, own approximately 430 bighas of agricultural land situated within the barbed wire fencing at the Indo-Bangladesh border, under Gate No. 8 of Sahebganj BOP 129 Battalion. These families primarily depend on farming, growing essential crops like paddy, jute, maize, and vegetables. However, they face severe challenges due to restricted access to their farmlands. The Border Security Force (BSF) only opens the gate three times a day for



one-hour sessions, during which farmers must sign in and out, often delaying or denying their entry. Inside the fenced area, there are no resting places, drinking water, or proper irrigation facilities. The farmers rely on costly and difficult-to-transport diesel pumps for irrigation, which is becoming unsustainable. The harsh working conditions, lack of basic necessities, and absence of shelter during storms or heavy rains have led to tragic deaths. With no other options, these families are being forced to consider migration as their livelihoods come under threat, as they are left without access to food, water, or protection when the gate is closed.

3. Atrocities committed by BSF:

Lands of Muslim peasants grabbed at the gunpoint by BSF:

Mr. Abdur Rauf Gayen, son of Mr. Abul Hosen Gayen, and Mr. Saharab Sardar, son of the late Mr. Mahasin, are farmers from Swarupdaha and Hakimpur villages, respectively, under Hakimpur Post Office and Swarupnagar police station in North 24 Parganas. They rely on agriculture on their 56-decimal land, located 1.5 km from Hakimpur bus stand, as their primary source of income. Both villages lie near the Indo-Bangladesh border along the Sonai River bed, where the BSF was originally stationed but has recently moved closer to Hakimpur bus stand, away from the actual border. On 03.10.2023, Mr. Abdur and Mr. Saharab lodged a complaint at Swarupnagar police station against 112 BN BSF, NAGA Company of Tarali BOP, for attempting to seize their land to set up a tent and illegal check post, and threatening them when they tried to erect a boundary wall. A writ petition (Reg. No.: 24840/2023) against the Indian Union has been pending in the High Court since 12.10.2023. Despite this, on 17.07.2024, the 143 No. BN BSF Company Commander again attempted to take over the same land to build a temporary check post without the landowners' consent. The BSF continues to harass Mr. Abdur and Mr. Saharab over this land, which is their sole means of livelihood. They filed another complaint with the Swarupnagar police on 19.07.2024 and sent formal complaints to senior BSF officials on 11.08.2024, but no action has been taken to address the illegal encroachment on their private land.

Land of one Muslim farmer forcefully occupied by BSF:

Bablu Seikh, a peace-loving and law-abiding resident of Khamarpara village in Raninagar, Murshidabad, owns approximately 58 kathas of agricultural land in Mouza-Sarandajpur, which has been his family's primary source of livelihood for years. However, on the night of 15th-16th June 2024, BSF officials from BOP Kaharpara, 73 Battalion, 'E' Company, unlawfully entered his land without any authorization, ransacking crops and forcefully erecting makeshift structures made of straw and bamboo. This unauthorized action caused Mr. Seikh a financial loss of over one lakh rupees, carried out without his consent or knowledge. When

Mr. Sheikh approached the BSF to request the removal of the illegal structures, he was met with threats of false criminal charges, endangering his reputation in the community. On 25th June 2024, he filed formal complaints with the Block Land & Land Reforms Officer (BL & LRO) and the Block Development Officer (BDO) of Raninagar-II Block, Murshidabad. However, during a follow-up on 5th July 2024, the BLRO informed him that the State Government planned to acquire his land for a road construction project, and he would be compensated, though no formal notice or details had been provided to Mr. Sheikh at that time.

4. State Acquiesce:

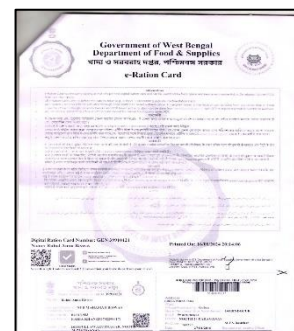
Dalit children of Boaldah village are deprived of pre-school education and healthy complementary food in ICDS centre:

Boaldah, an Indo-Bangladesh border village in North 24 Parganas surrounded by deep swamps and lakes, is home to landless fishermen of the Bagdi community who once earned their livelihood through fishing. However, due to harassment and unjustified beatings by the BSF, fishing has become increasingly difficult, forcing many to migrate. As a result, education for the children in this impoverished area, where most families live below the poverty line, relies heavily on ICDS and government free schooling, with many children attending ICDS centres for meals. An ICDS centre was established in 2003, but for 17 years, it remained in a dangerous and dilapidated condition until it was partially repaired in 2022 following complaints by villagers through MASUM. Despite the repairs, the centre lacks a separate kitchen, forcing food to be prepared in an open space, which leads to contamination by insects or toxic substances, and during the monsoon, cooking becomes nearly impossible due to rain and thunderstorms. Despite repeated complaints to the Ghat Bour Gram Panchayat, no action has been taken, and even recent formal complaints to the SDO and BDO of Bongaon on 29.08.2024 have gone unanswered, leaving the villagers awaiting a resolution to their longstanding issue.



One Muslim man, rickshaw puller denied food whimsically:

Mr. Ruhul Amin Biswas, a landless agricultural labourer from Gobra village under Swarupnagar police station in North 24 Parganas, belongs to the minority Muslim community residing near the Indo-Bangladesh border. Dependent on agricultural work for his livelihood, Mr. Ruhul's income is precarious due to limited opportunities in the village and the cessation of MGNREGA employment. His family relied on the SPHH Ration Card under the NFSA scheme, which provided 20 kilos of rice and flour free of cost. However, in July 2024,



their four SPHH Ration Cards were unexpectedly replaced with e-General Ration Cards, which are not covered under the NFSA scheme, leaving them ineligible to receive food grains. Despite informing the Gobindapur Gram Panchayat and the Department of Food & Supplies, Government of West Bengal, Mr. Ruhul received no resolution. He further submitted a formal complaint to the BDO of Swarupnagar Block on 22.08.2024, but no action has been taken to address his situation, leaving his family without a reliable source of food assistance.

MEDICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSISTANCE of UNVFVT-September, 2024

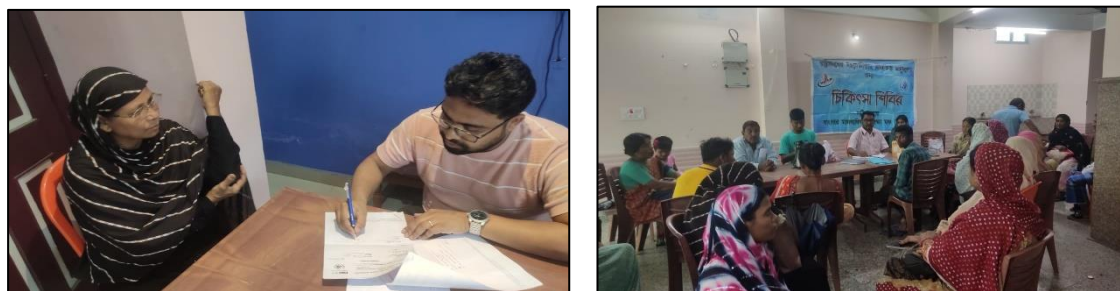
In this month of September 2024, MASUM organised 4 medical and psychological camps in the districts of 24 Parganas (North) and Cooch Behar. In both the districts, 1 camp was for physical wellbeing and 1 for psychological treatment. The medical camps were organised on the aegis of United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture and meant for victims of torture and family members of extra judicial execution and enforced disappearance victims.

At 24 Parganas (North) both the camps were held at Noor Medical Hall, Swarupnagar on 09th & 11th September for psychological treatment and physical wellbeing respectively. Dr. Debshankar Mukhopaddhaya provided psychological treatment to 6 persons while Dr. Anusuyak Roy treated 34 patients for physical wellbeing.



North 24 Parganas Medical Camp

In Cooch Behar district, Dr. Shuakat Ali attended 41 patients for physical wellbeing on 26th September at Dinhata and Dr. Bahiman Sarkar examined 6 patients for psychological treatment on 27th August at Dinhata. Expenses for medicines, travel and pathological tests were borne by the programme. All these medical camps were followed by victims' meetings to formulate future course of actions and legal course, where respective District Human Rights Monitors of MASUM, staff lawyer and MASUM volunteers discussed the issues related with the victims and their family members.



Medical Camp at Dinhata, Cooch Behar

ACTIVITIES:

- **Murshidabad:**

On 03rd September Amra Simantabasi held with Char Shibnagar Gram Committee. Amra Simantabasi to undertake a mass program involving all the villagers. Various issues related to Indo-Bangladesh border were discussed with the members of that organization. BSF guarding the villages instead of guarding the border. Due to this petition, submitted to Block development officer and District Magistrate.



Char Shibnagar

On 10th September Pramila Bahini held with South Majhar Diyar Gram Committee. Various issues related to Indo-Bangladesh border were discussed with the members of that organization. BSF guarding the villages instead of guarding the border. Due to this petition, submitted to Block development officer and District Magistrate.



South Majhar Diyar

- **North 24 Parganas**

On 20th September Amra Simantabasi held with Barnaberia Gram Committee, Gaighata. Amra Simantabasi to undertake a mass program involving all the villagers. Meeting discussed on BSF restriction in jute cultivation and fishing in Ichamati River. Nearly 35 villagers attended the meeting.



Barnaberia Gram Committee

On 20th & 21st September a meeting held with Kaliyani Gram, Bongaon. Various issues related to Indo-Bangladesh border were discussed with the members of that organization. The gram committee will file a complaint demanding the new opening of the fencing border. Livelihoods and fisherman workers will be surveyed.



Villagers of Kaliyani, Bongaon

On 21st September a meeting held with Panchberia Gram, Bagdah. Various issues such as the opening of the fencing gates from 6 AM to 6 PM. Meeting discussed on BSF restriction in jute cultivation and fishing in Ichamati River. Nearly 45 villagers attended the meeting.



Villagers of Panchberia, Bagdah

- **Cooch Behar**

On 02nd September a meeting held with Korola Simantabasi Nayarhat Gram Panchayat, Dinhata Block II. The fencing gate should be kept open from 6 am to 6 pm because there are various problems in their cultivation, crops are getting lost. So they decided to submit a petition to BDO office regarding this issue and they decide to start a monthly collection of membership donations, which can be used for some kind of development work in their area.



Korola Simantabasi, Cooch Behar

On 05th September villagers of Erstwhile Enclave, Dinhata Block II submitted a deputation by marching from a distance of half kilometre to the BDO office for their demands of ration card, unemployed allowance, old age allowance.



Villagers of Erstwhile Enclave, Dinhata

On 10th September Char & South Jhaukti Amra Simantabasi Committee with Pramila Bahini Tufanganj I Block held a meeting. The fencing gate should be kept open from 6 am to 6 pm because there are various problems in their cultivation, crops are getting lost. So they decided to submit a petition to BDO office regarding this issue and they decide to start a monthly collection of membership donations, which can be used for some kind of development work in their area.



Char & South Jhaukti

On 11th September a meeting held with Amra Simantabasi East & West Sahebganj Dinhata Block II. The meeting decided to make demand for opening of the fencing gates from 6 AM to 6 PM and various problems of people living in the border areas and their solutions are discussed in the meeting. Another meeting held with Durganagar II, Kalmati Vekrapool Amra Simantabasi Gram Committee, Kalmati Begunbari & Kalmati Kalirpat Gram committee, Dinhata Block II.

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East & West Sahebganj Cooch Behar

LEGAL ACTIVITY:

- **North 24 Parganas. (Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate Court at Basirhat)**

1. GR.- 5126/13 - State Vs. Ziad Gazi & Ors.
2. GR - 84/16- State (RANJIT DAS) Vs. BSF Personnel.
3. GR 1290/22- Taslima Bibi(State) Vs. BSF
4. SC 282/18 - STATE VS Ajanur Gayen.
5. CRR 08/24- Jharna Dhabok Vs. Ataur Rahaman Dhabok.
6. GR 279/20- State Vs. Mina Biswas.
7. GR 4076/22- State Vs. Alamgir Gazi.
8. GR 4258/20 - State (MINTU GAZI) VS B.S.F Personnel.
9. GR 2121/19- State Vs. Alamgir Gazi.
10. Ex 194/23 - Jharna Dhabok Vs. Ataur Rahaman Dhabok.
11. SC 217/19 - State Vs. Amarnath Sarkar.
12. ST 05(12)19-state (JAMAT ALI SANA) VS Sahid Gazi & Others.
13. GR 3033/23- State Vs. Saheb Ali.
14. GR 2223/16- State vs Alamgir Gazi.
15. GR 987/15 -State vs Sarifun Sana.
16. M.EX. Case- Jharna Dhabok- New Filling.

17. GR 5079/15- State (Mohar Ali Gazi) VS B.S.F Personnel.
18. GR 25/22 State (PROVAT PATRA) vs. Praloy Patra & others.
19. GR 3256/15 State (MALATI TIKADER) VS B.S.F Personnel.
20. Gr 1290/22- State (Taslima Bibi) Vs. BSF Personne.

- **North 24 Parganas. (Sub-Divisional Judicial Magistrate at Bongaon)**

1. M. Case No- 1002/24 Purnima Dhali Vs. B.S.F Personnel.
2. M. Case No- 1003/24 Laxmi karmakar Vs. B.S.F Personnel.

- **Cooch Behar (Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate Court at Dinhata)**

1. GR. 700/22- Mamata Barman Vs. B.S.F Personnel.

- **Murshidabad (Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate Court at Lalbag)**

1. CR. - 72/18- Saifura Bewa Vs. B.S.F Personnel.
2. CR. - 772/13- Saheb Sekh Vs. B.S.F Personnel.
3. CR. - 865/15- Rubina Bewa Vs. B.S.F Personnel.
4. CR. - 7408/14- Faruk Kamran Sarkar Vs. Police Personnel.
5. G.R. - 127/2013, State Vs Rabiylul Islam.
6. G.R. - 334/2014, State Vs Murshid Jahan.
7. G.R. - 776/2016, State Vs Repon Seikh. & 6 Others.
8. G.R. - 873/2014, State Vs Palash Mondal.
9. G.R. - 1142/2019, State Vs Raghunath Pramanik & 3 others.
10. G.R. - 1150/2014, State Vs 1. Safikul Islam.2. Repon Seikh.
11. G.R. - 1163/2014, State Vs Malati Orao & 3 other.
12. G.R. No- 1227/2014, State Vs Abdus Subham Sk. & 4 others.
13. G.R. No- 1533/2014, State Vs Palash Mondal.
14. G.R. No- 2755/2013, State Vs Palash Mondal.

15. G.R. No- 2926/2014, State Vs 1. Palash Mondal2. Subhankar Mondal.
16. G.R. No- 2949/2014, State Vs Kajol Bibi & 13 Others.
17. G.R. No- 3283/2019, State Vs Raghunath Pramanik and Sandip Mondal.
18. G.R. No- 3566/2013, State Vs Safikul Islam @ Patan.
19. G.R. No- 3646/2014, State Vs Palash Mondal.
20. G.R. No- 3846/2010, State Vs Palash Mondal.
21. G.R. No- 3932/2013, State Vs Safikul Islam.
22. G.R. No- 3963/2014, State Vs Merina Bibi & Kajal Sekh.
23. Special POCSO- 24/17, State Vs. Ajimuddin Sarkar.
24. SS No- 03/15- State Vs. Safikul Islam.

On 25/09/2024, MASUM attended a hearing at the West Bengal Information Commission regarding a grievance against the office of the District Magistrate, Cooch Behar. The issue stemmed from an RTI application filed by MASUM on 18/09/2021, concerning the current situation of former enclave dwellers, including their land, livelihoods, and citizenship rights. The SPIO, DM, Cooch Behar, did not respond to this application. Following this, we appealed to the APIO, DM, Cooch Behar, but received no response. Consequently, we filed a petition with the West Bengal Information Commission on 25/01/2022. After nearly two years, a hearing was finally scheduled for 25/09/2024.

MASUM is collecting data through primary survey on people trapped inside the barbed wire fencing on the India-Bangladesh border:

Following data reveals the grave reality of people trapped along the India-Bangladesh border within barbed wire fencing, living in isolation and deprived of basic dignity.

Name of Blocks/ Districts/GP	Family	Population	Male	Female	Children
North 24 Pargana (Swarupnagar Block)	3654	15676	8054	7570	1614
North 24 Pargana (Bongaon Block)	255	1678	-	-	-
North 24 Pargana (Bagdah Block)	4813	21643	11027	10505	596
Cooch Behar (Dinhata-II Block, Shukarukuthi GP)	192	921	514	407	174
Cooch Behar (Dinhata-II Block, Sahebganj GP)	32	170	92	78	6

*** In Murshidabad, across areas like Jalangi, Saheb nagar, Ranitala, Raninagar, Bhagabangola, Suti, and others, lacks of people reside on the *CHAR* of the Padma River. Similarly, in Malda, people live along the banks of both the Ganga and Padma rivers. The same story remains in Jalpaiguri, as well as in North and South Dinajpur, where communities continue to endure similar challenges.

*** (*Approximate Number-Collected by our Fact Finding Team and This Data is incomplete as the data collection process is still going on.)

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চতুর পানীয় জল-বিদ্যুৎ-সেতের
ব্যবস্থা করতে হবে।

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সীমান্তের বাসিন্দাদের স্মারকলিপি

নিজস্ব প্রতিনিষি, ক্ষেত্রবিহার: ক্ষেত্রবিহার জেলার একটি বড় অংশ বাংলাদেশ সীমান্তে লাগেয়া। আর এই সীমান্ত লাগেয়া গ্রামগুলিতে কীটাভারের বেড়ার ওপারে সাধারণ মানুষের কৃষি জমি রয়েছে। সীমান্ত লাগেয়া গ্রামগুলিতে বহু মানুষের বসবাস রয়েছে। এই সব জয়গাথ বিএসএফের কড়া নজরদারিতে মানুষকে থাকতে হয়। অনেক সময় গ্রামবাসীকে হেনস্তার শিকার হতে হয়। এসবেরই প্রতিবাদে দীর্ঘদিন ধরে সীমান্তবাসী মানুষের অধিকার রক্ষার জন্য লড়াই চালিয়ে আসছে একটি যোচ্ছেসদেবী সংগঠন। বৃহস্পতিবার ক্ষেত্রবিহার এনে সাংবাদিক সম্মেলন করে ওই যোচ্ছেসদেবী সংগঠনের সদস্যরা। পশাপশি জেলাশাসকের দপ্তরে একটি স্মারকলিপি জমা দেন। সংগঠনের স্পাণকক বিক্রীতি রায় বসেন, সীমান্ত একালায় বহু মানুষ বিভিন্ন সমস্যা় মগে রয়েছে। কীটাভারের বেড়ার ওপারে চাচের জমিতে বেতে ওই মানুষদের খুবই সমস্যা় পড়তে হয়। বিএসএফের নিষ্টি নিয়ম অনুসারে চাচালা করতে হয়। আমরা এসব বিষয় নিয়ে দীর্ঘদিন ধরে কথা বলে আসছি। সীমান্তের মানুষের বিষয়ে প্রশাসনের আবা উচিত।

সংবাদ সোভার - বাংলার
সীমন্ত এলাকায় বর্ডার
সিকিউরিটি ফোর্সের
অভ্যুত্থানের মাজা এখন একটা
বাড়িতে। যাহার বিরুদ্ধে এনিম
কলকাতা প্রেস ক্লাবে এক
সাংবাদিক সম্মেলনে সরল হল
রাষ্ট্রের মানবাধিকার সুরক্ষা
মন্ত্রক সচিবের মামু। এনিম
মামুয়ের কর্ণধার বিশিষ্ট
মানবাধিকার কবী কিতাবী রায়
বলেন, বর্তমান রাজ্যের মা
যাতি মামু স্বাধীন
সীমন্তবন্দীরা বাহিরেই সীমানা
পাহাড় বেতার নামে আর
সেবা জিমে সমর্থিত
জার্মানিতে। যা বর্তমানে পক্ষে
সীমানা এলাকায় কলকাতার

badhikar Suraksha Man
(Mam)

PHSE'S CLUB
KOLKATA

কলকাতা প্রেস ক্লাবে মামুয়ের সাংবাদিক সম্মেলন

মামুয়ের দুর্ভাগ্য আরও বাড়বে। এনিম মানবাধিকার কবী কিতাবী
রায় অভিযোগ করেন বলেন, যাবানকার সাথে এটো পেশোয়ার
খোঁষা ভারত ভাণ্ড কাগ হায়েলি যার দমন বাংলাদেশে অস্বস্ত
করে বিভ্রান্তার পড়তে হয়েছে।

১৫ ডিসেম্বর

▶ **এক পাতার পর** তিনি বলেন সীমান্ত এলাকায় বহু মানুষ আছেন যাদের খরবাক্তি এই দেশে কিছু চালাবারদের জমি বাংলাদেশে অবস্থিত অঞ্চলে। ফলে সেই সব মানুষদের প্রতিনিধি ব্যাপক দুর্ভোগের মধ্যে পড়ত হয়। অবিশ্রান্ত ভাবে চল ব্রিঙ্গ এফের চোখ রাখছি নয়তো অত্যাচার। তার কথায় এখানে তিনি বলেন তিনবার গণ্টে খোলা হয় এক খন্টী করে। তার মধ্যে যদি কারো প্রসব যন্ত্রণায় ওঠে তাকেও প্রসব ব্যাথা চেপে রাখত হয়। এমনকি দুই তেল কিনতে গেলেও ব্রিঙ্গ এফের হুমকি মারখারের মধ্যে পড়ত হয়। এদিন মুর্শাদাবাদ, কোবরিহাট, উত্তর ২৪ পরগনার বেশ কিছু ভুক্তভোগী মানুষকে হাজির করানো হয় যারা 'শরীরীয়ে বলবেন সীমান্তরক্ষী বাহিনীর দ্বারা তাদের হেনস্তার কথা। এই দিন উত্তর ২৪ পরগনার 'পরপ নগর থেকে এগেছিলো লক্ষীয়া মন্ডল। তার অভিযোগ তার বই পাইলারের ছেলে মিলন মজলত ব্রিঙ্গ এফে গুমখুন করেছে। যা নিয়ে তিনি প্রতিবাদ করে মানবাধিকার সংগঠনের দারুন ছবি হয়েছেন। এরকম আরও বেশ কিছু ভুক্তভোগী মানুষ সীমান্তরক্ষী বাহিনীর জোয়ানদের বিরুদ্ধে হেনস্থা মারখার এমনকি মাইলদানের দুর্ভোগের অভিযোগও করলেন। যেখানে এই মুহুর্তে ব্রিঙ্গ এফের জন্য আরও জায়গা দেবার অর্থ সীমান্ত এলাকায় মানুষের উপর অত্যাচারে সীলবোহর দেওয়া। এদিন সংবাদ সোচ্চারের এক গ্রুপের উত্তরে বিবিসি তারে বলেন, বিগত ইউপিএ সরকারের আমলে বছরে সড়েখো মানুষ সীমান্তরক্ষীদের কাছে বিভিন্ন কারণে নিহত হত এজন্য যেটা বিবেচনায় আমলে নেত হরয়েছে গুরু দাশে।

land

SAIBAL GUPTA

Calcutta: Deepak Sardar of Raypur village in North Bengal was recently walking through a forest on the other side of the fence across which he had to cross when he was stopped by the BSF. "I was carrying some information," Sardar was alleged to have said, slapped by the soldiers, "that the Indian and his herdsmen."

Some 50,000 families are trapped inside the barbed wire fence, which runs along the border across nine districts in the north-eastern state.

Kirti Roy, who runs the NGO Manas, spoke to the Kolkata Press Club on Saturday about the fence. "The border fence gates open to let people and animals in and out of India and give them a life," he said. "Indian citizens living in Bangladesh can't enter

Raksha Mondal at the Kolkata Press Club on Saturday.

Picture by Saibal Gupta

their own country," Roy said. "The Indian government is determined to prevent smuggling of people and goods across the border fence snakes through paddy fields, forests and across India's porous border with Bangladesh and even across the international boundaries and schools."

Some human rights groups claim the fencing denies people their basic and constitutional rights.

The BSF claimed my son was involved in smuggling and theft of livestock but there is no proof," said villagers. Kirti Roy said the government lied.

"If the BSF go back to the border... I have tried to speak to them but they refuse to speak," Roy said.

Some government authorities refused to comment.

[illegible]

STATEMENT published by MASUM

Statement opposing enactment of new law sanctioning death penalty

West Bengal Government proposed a new anti-rape bill that introduces capital punishment for those convicted of rape if the victim either dies or is left in a vegetative state and The West Bengal Legislative Assembly has passed this Bill yesterday titled 'Aparajita Woman and Child (West Bengal Criminal Laws Amendment) Bill, 2024'. BJP MLAs also supported the bill as major opposition party in West Bengal. This legislation comes after tragic rape and murder of a trainee doctor at Kolkata's RG Kar Medical College and Hospital.

Recent a horrific crime has occurred, deeply rattling the nation's conscience. A 31-year-old doctor was brutally raped and killed in her working place—the RG Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata, a state-run institution, on 9th August, 24. This incident pointed towards the negligence of the State Health department, police investigation, and crippled administration of West Bengal Government. To protest against this heinous crime and corrupted system, every citizen of West Bengal is moving out to the street and raising their voice for justice for about a month. Under this circumstances, West Bengal Government announced this anti-rape Bill to divert the movement.

The death penalty is not a definitive answer to crime, as it fails to address the root causes and complexities of criminal behaviour. There are no conclusive empirical studies that show the death penalty deters crime. It is unacceptable for a civilized society that killers need to be killed as it perpetuates the cycle of violence. Article 21 of Indian Constitution and Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) both state that everyone has the right to life, liberty, and security of person and death penalty violets both. A total of 112 countries have abolished the death penalty for all crimes, while 9 others have done so for common law offenses. Additionally, 23 nations are in the process of abolishing capital punishment. However, 55 countries, including India, continue to retain the death penalty.

We cannot reject that the struggle for women's emancipation cannot be separated from the struggle against the hierarchical patriarchy in India. It's unfortunate that laws, courts, parliaments, ministries are happy to embrace this flawed system.

In Nirvaya rape and murder case, Justice Verma Committee pointed out that-"in the larger interests of society, and having regard to the current thinking in favour of abolition of the death penalty, and also to avoid the argument of any sentencing arbitrariness, we are not inclined to recommend the death penalty." But, ruling political parties are arguing on encounter, death penalty as result of justice for personal and political gain. Mahatma Gandhi's famous quote "An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind" is a lesson for us that violence cannot be the solution for another violence. The politics of revenge and state-sanctioned killings sustain cycles of violence. True leadership seeks reconciliation, not retribution.

-MASUM

STATEMENT published by MASUM

West Bengal government for whom? BSF or its peoples?

MASUM has been advocating for the Constitutional Rights of the people living along the Indo-Bangladesh border for over two decades. It is our observation that;

- ☐ The BSF has long subjected the people living along the 2,217 km stretch of the Indo-Bangladesh border in West Bengal to continuous torture, oppression, and disruptions to their life and livelihood.
- ☐ The populace living in this area are mostly from Hindu Scheduled Caste (Dalits), Scheduled Tribe and OBC Muslims.
- ☐ Despite numerous complaints from villagers, the State Government's Police and civil administration remain unresponsive, inactive and silent on this issue, failing to take action against the ongoing apathies faced by the people living along the Indo-Bangladesh border.
- ☐ For many years, district administrations under the West Bengal government have routinely imposing Section 144 of the CRPC in Indo-Bangladesh border areas following applications from the BSF. The administration is in quiescence when matters come up from bordering populace.
- ☐ Over 65,000 families are currently trapped within the barbed wire fencing along the Indo-Bangladesh border, enduring severe hardships due to a lack of electricity, proper sanitation, and clean drinking water. They are also deprived of a dignified life.
- ☐ About ten million people are deprived from their basic rights to freely ingress or egress into their own farming land and house as their daily movement is also restricted by BSF in this border villages.
- ☐ In this dire situation, the State Government is actively planning to acquire the lands of farmers from the Indo-Bangladesh border areas, which only adds insult to injury for these already suffering communities.

These communities continue to bear the scars of the Partition of 1947, immense suffering and hardship that has shaped their lives for decades. Ministry of Home Affairs under Central Government undemocratically and one sided issued an additional 50 km stretch along Indo-Bangladesh border on (Date) which was strongly opposed by West Bengal State Government.

On this backdrop we are demanding-

- ☐ It is crucial to prioritize the protection of the freedom and safety of Indian citizens living along the Indo-Bangladesh border over merely catering to the needs of BSF personnel stationed in the area.
- ☐ BSF must be instructed to stay to the actual IBP line where they can monitor and control illegal cross border trafficking, which they are not doing. They should move to actual border IBPs from well inside through IBBR and secure Indian Territory to maintain the life and livelihood of these people.
- ☐ Lands from border to barbed wire fencing which are owned by the cultivators must be lawfully acquired by the Government from the landowners respectively and all the cultivators must be rehabilitated and compensated accordingly.
- ☐ Huge number of application letters / Complaint letters of the people from border villages are pending in different government departments. All of them must be solved with immediate attention.
- ☐ People who suffered from torture, killed and raped by BSF should get justice immediately.
- ☐ Fundamental rights under Indian Constitution and ICCPR should be secured for all the people who live in Indo-Bangladesh border.

-MASUM

ACHIEVEMENT:

Following repeated efforts by MASUM (Banglar Manabadhikar Suraksha Mancha) to address the severe restrictions imposed on the villagers of Jhaukuthi (Tanpara), Toofanganj-I Block, due to border fencing regulations, a formal complaint was submitted to the Chief Secretary of West Bengal. The complaint highlighted the plight of 70-80 families whose access to their agricultural lands has been severely restricted, leading to a lack of irrigation and drinking water facilities. These hardships are a direct result of the Border Security Force (BSF) restrictions.

In response, on September 6, 2024, the Home & Hill Affairs Department of the Government of West Bengal issued an official directive to the District Magistrate of Cooch Behar, instructing them to take necessary actions. The directive specifically addressed the limited operational hours of the border fencing gates controlled by the BSF, which contravened the Ministry of Home Affairs' mandate. It also called for adequate irrigation facilities, as previously requested by the villagers in March 2024.

This official recognition marks a significant achievement in the ongoing efforts to restore the constitutional rights of the affected villagers, as guaranteed under Articles 14, 19 and 21 of the Constitution of India. The response signals a critical step toward resolving the systemic issues that have long impacted their livelihoods. MASUM remains committed to following up with the relevant authorities to ensure timely and effective action.

