2021: A Brief report of continued atrocities against Minorities in Bangladesh

Over the last decades, Bangladesh minorities are subject to many brutal mass attacks against them. One of the leading NGOs in Bangladesh “Ain o Salish Kendra, or ASK” recently reported that nearly 3679 mass attacks took place in recent years [1]. On March 17, 2021, Islamists went on rampage against Hindu community of Shalla, Sunamganj, Bangladesh over a facebook post in which they alleged a Hindu man insulted their leader [2]. Thousands of followers of Hefazat-e-Islam went on rampage for hours destroying hindu houses, temples and looted all belongings of the hindu villagers.
Shalla, Sunamganj (Courtsey: Natun Gati, 2021): A glimpse of what remains of Shalla Hindu villages, 89 houses and 8 temples were destroyed during the attacks [3].

Mass attacks against minority communities in Bangladesh like that of Shalla has become a common occurrence. Islamists find every excuse to go on rampage against country's minorities. On October 13th, 2021, Islamists went on a rampage against the country's Hindu minorities in 34 districts of the 64 districts of Bangladesh. It was an orchestrated attacks in which a copy of Quran, the holy book of Islam was place at a Durga Puja Pandal by Islamists [4]. Later, in coordinated social media posts Islamists alleged that Hindus have desecrated the Quran. The spread of these rumors and lack of protection from law enforcement agencies emboldened Islamists to initiate mass attacks on Hindus in 34 districts of Bangladesh, killing Hindu men, gang raping Hindu women and girls, and pillaging their homes, businesses, and temples. It is alleged that the ruling party cadres and leaders also joined Islamists in the onslaught.
October, 2021: Islamists went on rampage destroying Durga Puja Pandals (UNESCO recognized primary festivals of Hindus), pillaging on Hindu women, homes and temples throughout 50% of all districts of Bangladesh.
Following the attacks, a writ was filed before Bangladesh High Court division of the Supreme Court and a judicial inquiry was ordered on October 28, 2021 [5]. However, despite the high court orders there is no let down of attacks against Hindus and other minorities in different parts of the country. According to investigative reports submitted to HRCBM, in November 2021 alone at least 14 people belonging to Hindu community was killed, 113 wounded, 36 temples and houses are vandalized, 1 women is gang raped and 9 women were sexually assaulted. The Hindu community in Bangladesh is currently under siege and the situation warrants the call for a special session of the UN Human Rights Council to examine ongoing violence against Hindus and other minorities in Bangladesh. The following are accounts of attacks (based on initial investigation) against the country's dwindling Hindu minorities.
**February, 2021 attacks:** Several Hindu temples and villages were attacked in Dinajpur, Gazipur, Nobabpur, Gopalganj and other places in Bangladesh. It is reported that many temples and village of hindu communities were destroyed during the sporadic attacks in different district in Bangladesh.

**March, 2021 attacks:** As stated above, supporters of Hefazat-e-Islami went on rampage over a facebook posts destroying 89 houses and 9 temples belonging to Hindus at Shalla subdistrict of Sunamganj, Bangladesh.

April & May, 2021 Attacks: There is no respite of violence against minorities in Bangladesh, one of the leading NGO SHAREE reported more than 50 attacks in two months which includes land grabbing, destructions of temples and houses. The following pictures provides a glimpse of attacks against country’s minorities in Rajbari, Bagura, Barisal, Noagaon, Chandpur, Lalmonirhat, Sitakunda, Patuakhali, Jhinaidah and Satkira.

**June to August, 2021 Attacks:** Violent attacks took place in various districts of Bangladesh including Noakhali, Norshindi, Takurgaon, Shirajganj. Many hindus were seriously injured during the attacks at different districts of Bangladesh.
October, 2021 attacks: In 1171 coordinated mass attacks at 34 districts of Bangladesh, 15 Hindu men were killed, five women were gang raped and one 11 year-old girl was hospitalized at Anwarkhan Medical at Dhaka with severe gang rape injury. During the attacks at Chandpur town of the Hajiganj district, more than 500 Hindu women and girls were sexually assaulted for several hours at different intersections of the town. These women and girls were returning to their home from local Durga puja festivals. Despite the knowledge of the incident, the law enforcement agencies neither came to rescue nor attempted to block the attacks against Hindu women and girls in the town. The onslaught against Hindus continued for several days since October 13th, 2021 in which 15,739 families were under siege and many of them lost much of their earthly belongings. In the attacks, 308 temples were either vandalized or set on fire, 1036 idols destroyed and 625 people belonging to Hindu community sustained severe injury due to violent attacks against the community. The property damage is more than $3Billions.
October, 2021: A glimpse of destruction of temple, homes and businesses throughout the Bangladesh and protests of minorities in Bangladesh and throughout the world denouncing violent attacks against the community, killing of Hindu men and gang raping of women and girls in Bangladesh.

November, 2021 attacks: There have been 126 attacks in which 14 Hindu people were killed, 5 others received death threats, 25 others were attacked with intention to kill them and 113 Hindus were wounded as a result of the attacks. About 92 families lost everything because of the mass attacks, 1 women gang raped while 9 others sexually assaulted, and another woman was kidnapped whose whereabouts is unknown. In the ongoing attacks, 12,851 families are under siege, 36 temples were set on fire and sustained property damage is more than $2 B.
It is to be noted that attacks such as these against the country's dwindling minorities are not new. In 2006, HRCBM filed a writ before Bangladesh Supreme Court seeking the justice for attacks against Hindus since 1990 to 2006 in which many Hindu men were killed, thousands of Hindu women and girls were subject to sexual attacks, gang rape and forced disappearance [6]. Despite the favorable ruling, the government did not take steps to guarantee security of minority communities in the country nor the offenders were brought to justice. As a result, attacks continued; a Bangladeshi NGO, “Ain o Salish Kendra” (ASK) reported that more than 3600 attacks took place against the country’s minorities since 2013 [1,7].

On December 10, 2021, US Depart of Treasury issued sanctions against the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) of Bangladesh for the widespread allegations that the paramilitary force
perpetrated serious human rights violation in the country through enforced disappearance and arbitrary detention of people [8].

With the review of the situation, HRCBM calls upon world community requesting that the onslaught against minorities in Bangladesh be considered an act of genocide. The organization further extends the call to world authorities seeking a special human rights session at the UN Human Rights Council to examine the ongoing violence against the minorities in Bangladesh.

Reference: