

le tear for the killers in

Bangladesh

Sunita Paul
March 19, 2009

Human Rights Watch (HRW), a New York City based non-governmental organization, which sent a letter to Bangladeshi Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina Wajed only few weeks back with the plea of dismantling Forces Intelligences of Bangladesh Armed Forces, has issued a fresh statement on the February Massacre, which took place inside Bangladesh Rifles (border security guards) headquarters in Dhaka, killing large number of Army officers, thus leaving numerous wounded and abused.

According to international news media, United States based Human Rights Watch urged Bangladesh's new democratically elected government on March 19, 2009 to end human rights abuses, saying there was widespread torture and intimidation in the country.

"The human rights situation in Bangladesh is poor. There is widespread torture and security agencies get away with murders, tortures and intimidations ... there is a culture of impunity that must be ended," Brad Adams, Asia director for Human Rights Watch, told a news conference.

"We expect the new government to keep its promises to address all these problems and this is what Bangladeshi voters expect."

Hasina told parliament recently that "Suggestions and opinions of the rights organizations will be duly incorporated in the government policy to uphold human rights."

Earlier on the day, Bangladesh government announced that it will hold court martial for paramilitary border guards involved in a mutiny last month in which more than 80 people were brutally murdered.

Nearly 200 members of the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) have been detained for the revolt over wages that began on Feb. 25 at the headquarters of the paramilitary force in Dhaka and then spread to a dozen other towns.

"We have decided to try the mutineers under court martial, as the BDR is commanded and managed by the army regulations," Shafique Ahmed, minister for Law, Justice and parliamentary affairs told reporters.

"It will be ensure justice," he said.

The revolt, which lasted 33 hours and ended after the rebels laid down their arms, stoked

Minister Sheikh Hasina's two-month-old civilian

Meanwhile, already controversial minister in the present government, who earlier said that militants have penetrated into Bangladesh's law enforcing agencies and disciplined forces, told reporters on March 19, 2009 that the trial procedure of the BDR mutiny case will be the "speediest one possible".

Before I discuss the untold mystery of the sudden enthusiasm of Human Rights Watch, let me give here one more important fact.

Bangladeshi government has asked a team of the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) working in its capital Dhaka to help uncover any foreign links to last month's border guards mutiny. Guess who made such request! Yes, absolutely, it is none but the same Lt. Col. Faruk Khan. Experts opining on this specific request from the Bangladeshi authorities said, does the government want FBI to investigate foreign links or discover foreign link? Some even believe that, government must be inclined in using FBI in painting an imaginary foreign link story. It is even learnt from valid sources that, Bangladeshi authorities have requested FBI and other foreign investigators in identifying possible militant link to this sordid Massacre.

7-member FBI team is now in Dhaka, while a team of the Scotland Yard of the United Kingdom also came to Bangladesh to help probe into the last month's BDR carnage.



Again, let us get back to the HRW issue. Prior to sending their representative to Bangladesh only a couple of days back, this group had series of meetings with a number of important players in the ruling party in United States, including the son of the present Prime Minister. It was reported that Sajib Wajed Joy, who lives in United States for years, proclaims to be the advisor to his mother, Prime Minister Hasina Wajed.

Sajib had been extremely vocal against Bangladesh Armed Forces and he was interviewed or quoted in a number of influential medias in the worlds. Joy has close ties with several think-tanks in United States and reportedly hired one of such think-tank cum lobbyist group in continuing massive propaganda and persuasion against DGFI (Directorate General of Forces Intelligence), Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), Bangladesh Army and army's involvement in politics. Since the February Massacre in Dhaka in February, 2009, Sajib Wajed Joy repeatedly said that, the murders and mutiny inside the Bangladesh Rifles headquarters took place due to corruption of BDR officers (army officers on deputation), pressure upon BDR soldiers by the army men and huge difference of facilities and other benefits of Bangladesh Army and the Bangladesh Rifles.

As part of Joy's anti-army propaganda, a number of international groups were hired to intervene into the February Massacre issue. HRW's latest statement might have certain links to such efforts of Joy. Moreover, many of the front-ranking Awami League leaders

behind the BDR Mutiny. Meanwhile, two of the most
came at the front right after the mutiny, Jahangir Kabir
Nanak (present a state minister for local government ministry) and Mirza Azam (ruling
party's whip in the parliament), have suddenly disappeared from the media. It is even
reported that, both were ready to flee the country, once the investigation reports were
already done. Investigators so far have identified more than 15 Awami League and 8 BNP
men held responsible for patronizing or instigating or funding the mutiny. Another city
leader of the ruling party named Torab Ali Akhand (who earlier served in BDR) is already
being grilled by investigation agencies after arrest. Akhand already mentioned names of a
few influential Awami League leaders, including a close relative of the Prime Minister as
his patron in the bloody mutiny. He also told interrogators that a few dozens of arms and
thousands of round of ammunitions as well as 'some' Arges grenades were taken from him
by some leaders of Bangladesh Chatra League (Student's front of the ruling party) and
Jubo League (youth front of the ruling party). Torab was the custodian of looted arms,
ammunitions and explosives from BDR headquarters after the mutiny. He also, at the
instruction of an influential Awami League leader brought out possession in favor of the
mutiny to give encouragement to the mutineers.

What happened in Dhaka during February 25-26 is unimaginable and intolerable. But,
what is happening now is even worse. An elected government in Dhaka is rather active in
salvaging the killers and their patrons instead of ensuring proper investigation and trial. On
the other hand, it is also learnt that, investigations are unnecessarily delayed and
interfered by the influential members of the government.

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Sunita Paul was born in 1952 in an affluent family in Kochin, India. She obtained her twice
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