

# Amnesty UK South Asia

**August 2025**



## South Asia Coordinator Team

You have been sent this Newsletter because you or your local group opted in to receive Actions, Campaigns and Updates on South Asia. You can opt out at any time by contacting one of us.

Please let us know if you have taken any actions or need further information.

Thank you for your support.

Cherry, Jerry & Irfan

## BANGLADESH

### Bawm Prisoners Individual at Risk Case

The Bawm Prisoner IAR Case needs your support. Since April 2024, 126 Indigenous Bawm people, including 30 women and children, have been arbitrarily arrested as part of an ongoing military operation in the Chittagong Hill Tracts in southeastern Bangladesh. They have been in prison for more than a year on trumped-up charges. The entire Bawm nation is being blamed for the actions of an armed group. Amnesty International has been calling for the immediate release of all civilians who have been arbitrarily arrested and an end to the crackdown against the Bawm community. Three of the Bawm prisoners have died in jail. [155 eminent citizens have demanded that a judicial inquiry be conducted into the deaths of the three Bawm men.](#)



Please help to raise awareness of these prisoners by writing to your MP. Suggested text is attached with a summary description. For further information contact [jerry.allen@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:jerry.allen@amnesty.org.uk)

## Tripura indigenous girl raped

Students from the Chittagong Hill Tracts held a protest rally at Dhaka University, condemning recent incidents of army violence and demanding justice for a rape victim. The protest was sparked by the rape of a Tripura teenage girl. Read the report [here](#).

## Human Rights Watch Report: Challenges Abound

[Human Rights Watch raise major concerns in their 30<sup>th</sup> July report](#). Here are some quotes:

"The interim Bangladesh government of Mohammed Yunus is falling short in implementing its challenging human rights agenda."

"The interim government has used arbitrary detention to target perceived political opponents and has yet to deliver systemic reforms to protect human rights."

"The government is facing enormous challenges including an alarming surge in mob violence, political violence, and harassment of journalists by political parties and other non-state groups, such as religious hardliners hostile to women's rights and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people. On July 26 and 27, a mob damaged at least 14 homes belonging to members of the Hindu ..., and there are [continuing violations](#) against minority communities in the Chittagong Hill Tracts."

"On July 16, violence involving security forces and supporters of Hasina's now banned Awami League killed five people in the town of Gopalganj"

## A disturbing pattern of politically motivated prosecutions

Since the previous Awami League government was overthrown on 5 August 2024, the unelected interim government has overseen a wave of prosecutions targeting individuals linked, or perceived to be linked, to the previous government. In many cases, families of those killed during the 2024 uprising filed murder complaints naming dozens or even hundreds of people without clear individual evidence. These cases have resulted in arrests of former government officials, legal professionals, civil society members, and cultural figures, including those with no formal political affiliations. Courts have routinely denied bail, and key figures have been detained based on vague or politically charged allegations. With an election imminent these politically motivated arrests will increase as will the mob violence.

The interim government seem unwilling or unable to act on this. Adilur Rahman Khan is a member of the interim cabinet and was formerly head of one of Bangladesh's most respected human rights organisations, Odhikar. He was detained by the previous government on two occasions. Alam now says "*the ongoing issue of arbitrary and illegal detentions in Bangladesh is deeply troubling and cannot be justified under any circumstances*" and "***thousands of innocent people have been targeted with false accusations, misusing the legal system to torment opponents.***" In other words, the interim government is powerless.

## The cases of Shahriar Kabir and Khairul Haque

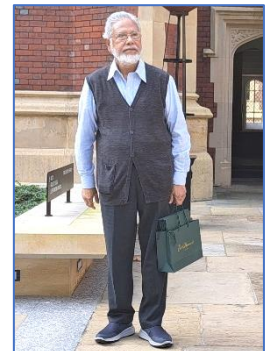
These two emblematic cases illustrate the misuse of the legal system for political purposes.



**Shahriar Kabir**, a journalist and human rights defender was arrested last September on charges that appear fabricated, likely stemming from his critical writings about political parties, including Jamaat-e-Islami. He has a long history of facing legal persecution for expressing critical views. Amnesty International declared Kabir a "prisoner of conscience" in 2001 after his initial detention for writing articles and documenting human rights violations. A press conference in London last December drew attention to disturbing reports of mob

violence during Kabir's court appearance. It presented a four-point recommendation to the Interim Government of Bangladesh: provide urgent medical attention to Kabir; bring those responsible for the mob attack to justice; drop the fabricated charges; and ensure a fair legal process by consolidating multiple charges. Shahriar Kabir is now 75 years old and seriously ill. Read the report of the conference [here](#).

**Justice Khairul Haque**, one of Bangladesh's most prominent jurists, was arrested on 24 July 2025 and brought before a Dhaka court. He was charged in connection with the killing of a teenage BNP activist during the July 2024 uprising. (The BNP are the political party that was the main opposition to the previous, Awami League, government.) In court, a lawyer aligned with the BNP made a statement which showed the arrest to be overtly political and not based on the facts of the murder case. It was nevertheless allowed to stand in court. It forms the primary basis for the case against Justice Haque, despite containing no legal substance or criminal allegations. The court ordered that Justice Haque be sent to jail. He is 80 years old and has had a long and distinguished career.



## Further reading on the arbitrary detentions, government hypocrisy and “precarious trials”

Read [here](#) about arbitrary detention and hypocrisy within the government, as “thousands of innocent people have been targeted with false accusations”.

And [here](#) for an article highlighting criminal cases filed by victims or their families alleging that hundreds of people, mostly Awami League politicians and supporters, are guilty of murder or attempted murder.

# INDIA

## BK16 update

As of 5 August, six BK16 activists remain in jail (Surendra Gadling, Mahesh Raut, Hany Babu, Ramesh Gaichor, Sagar Gorkhe and Jyoti Jagtap), with their bail applications repeatedly denied. When Rona Wilson and Sudhir Dhawale were granted bail in January this year, the Bombay High Court said this was because “there is no possibility of the trial to conclude in the near future” and they had been in jail since 2018. Gautam Navlakha, who is on bail but forced to live in Mumbai, sought permission from the National Investigation Agency to move to his home in Delhi on the grounds that it is difficult for him to live in Mumbai, but this was denied.



Hany Babu's initial bail application was rejected by the local trial court Bombay High Court in 2022, following which he appealed to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court has now said he is free to approach either the local trial court or the Bombay High Court to apply for bail, which means he has come full circle, with his legal team recognising that the Supreme Court will not grant bail, so they have withdrawn this application and are going back to the lower courts to start all over again.

For more detail read The Wire article [here](#).

**Action:** There is an online petition from the global academic community (led by InSAF) to the Chief Justice of India calling for the release of Professor Hany Babu, which you can find [here](#). At the time of writing, it had been signed by over 400 people. Please support this by signing in your own capacity as an individual and not as a member of Amnesty, as Amnesty is banned in India.

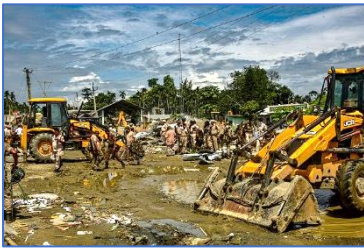
## Umar Khalid

The latest news is that the court reserved its orders regarding Umar Khalid's bail application in July and has not yet announced a date for delivering its verdict. He has now been held since September 2020 in a maximum-security jail due to his part in the "Delhi riots" protesting against the controversial Citizenship Amendment Act. Further accusations under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act charge him with terrorism, criminal conspiracy, engaging in unlawful activities and rioting. The police described him as a "remote supervisor" and "mastermind" behind the riots, relying on unsubstantiated evidence such as statements made by unnamed witnesses, his membership of WhatsApp groups, phone calls to him by other accused when the riots began and his presence at various demonstrations. They also say that unnamed witnesses have told them he supported the overthrow of the Narendra Modi government. In denying him bail, the Delhi high court said that he had called for a revolution, which may not "necessarily" be bloodless. Umar Khalid has consistently denied making any provocative speeches or instigating violence.



Read the BBC report [here](#).

## Forced evictions in Assam



A Reuters report describes hundreds of Muslim men, women and children sheltering under a sea of blue tarpaulin in Assam, after being evicted from their homes in the latest crackdown in Assam ahead of state elections. They are among thousands of families whose houses have been bulldozed in the past few weeks by authorities, the most intense such action in decades, who accuse them of illegally staying on government land. Key points to note are that:

- Evictions are targeting Bengali Muslims, linked to anti-immigrant sentiment
- The opposition sees actions as politically motivated ahead of elections in Assam
- Human rights groups criticise the evictions, expulsions as discriminatory against Muslims

Read the Reuters report [here](#).

An Amnesty member in UK, who has family in Assam says

*"Since 2021, the Assam state government, led by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, has carried out a series of eviction drives across districts such as Darrang, Hojai, Nagaon, and Lakhimpur. Entire settlements have been razed to the ground, often with little to no prior notice, leaving families, children, the elderly and women homeless overnight. These residents, most of whom belong to economically backward Muslim communities of Bengali origin, are now forced to live in makeshift shelters without food, clean water, healthcare or sanitation. What is particularly alarming is the pattern of systemic targeting based on ethnicity and religion. Human rights observers and civil society groups have repeatedly raised concerns that these actions are part of a larger discriminatory agenda, further marginalising communities already struggling to survive. The government has failed to present fair legal processes, resettlement plans, or any meaningful consultation with the affected people. The evictions are carried out by police and paramilitary forces in the presence of bulldozers, creating an atmosphere of fear and intimidation."*



## Enforced disappearance and torture of activists in Delhi

A joint Statement by 29 agencies, led by InSAF and South Asia Solidarity group, highlights the enforced disappearance and custodial torture of student and youth activists by police in Delhi related to activism on human rights violations in the Adivasi region of Bastar, Chhattisgarh. It notes the implications of the enforced disappearances and increasing systematic exclusion of Muslims as citizens of India.



Read the statement [here](#).

## Chinese authorities threaten Tibetan religious practices as Dalai Lama announces succession plan



Ahead of his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, the Dalai Lama has announced the process for selection of his successor, saying that he will have a successor after his death and only the Gaden Phodrang Trust, which he founded, has the authority to recognise his future reincarnation. However, the Chinese authorities continue to oppose this, saying they will control the selection of the next Dalai Lama.

Amnesty International's China Director Sarah Brooks said:

"The Chinese authorities' ongoing efforts to control the selection of the next Dalai Lama are a direct assault on the right to freedom of religion or belief. Tibetan Buddhists, like all faith communities, must be able to choose their spiritual leaders without coercion or interference by the authorities.

The Chinese authorities have a long history of systematically suppressing religious freedom and tightening control over Tibetan Buddhism. For example, in 1995 the authorities forcibly disappeared Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, the boy recognised by the Dalai Lama as the Panchen Lama; Beijing has yet to properly explain his fate and whereabouts."

Read the full statement [here](#).

## KASHMIR

In a post on X/ Twitter, Amnesty International said that six years after Jammu & Kashmir was deprived of its special status as India's only Muslim state, on 5 August 2019, journalists, lawyers and activists continue to face arbitrary detention under the abusive Public Safety Act (PSA) and Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).

In June, a Civicus report said that the 4-day conflict between India and Pakistan has led to a deterioration in the human rights situation, with India's Hindu nationalist government systematically repressing the rights of the Muslim-majority population. The conflict triggered a spike in censorship and the suppression of dissenting voices across the region as both sides sought to control the narrative. The report called on the international community to work towards an inclusive peace that ends human rights violations.



Read the Civicus report "Human rights the hidden casualty in Kashmir conflict" [here](#).

## Activism in Perth



The Amnesty Perth group is working with a local NGO, the Perth Minorities Association, to raise awareness of the situation in Kashmir, including both the Indian and Pakistan administered areas. This will start with a low-key event at the local “International Café”, to showcase and share information about food, culture and language.

Read the report of their jointly organised communal iftar held in March [here](#).

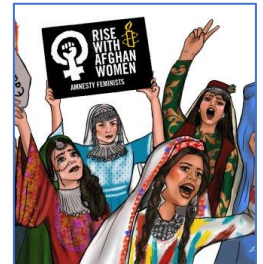
If you would like to know more about this initiative, and how to make contact and work with Kashmiri people in your local area, contact [cherry.bird@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:cherry.bird@amnesty.org.uk). You can also contact Cherry to join the supporter group for our Activist Led Campaign on Kashmir to receive updates.

## AFGHANISTAN

In this anniversary month of the Taliban’s return to power in August 2021, Amnesty Feminists are organising two events for local groups, one in person and the other online. See below for details and how to register.

The first is an evening of reflection, expression and solidarity on 15 August, from 6.30 to 9.00 pm, at 2 Arundel Street, Temple, London WC2R 3DA. The evening will include:

- **Screening of *Yellow*** – a powerful short film by an Afghan filmmaker, followed by a Q&A with the director
- **Spoken Word Performances** by Afghan artists
- **Reflections and Discussion** with Afghan activists and creatives
- **Community Space** for conversation, and connection



**Capacity is limited-** please RSVP to secure your place **via Eventbrite** [here](#).

The second is a Webinar for local groups on 20 August at 6.00 pm about the Rise with Afghan Women campaign and how you can get involved. The session will include:

1. **Who are the Amnesty Feminists?** Our purpose and current campaigns
2. **What has happened to women's rights in Afghanistan?** The history of women's rights, impact of the Taliban's restrictions and the response from the international community
3. **What you can do?** Learn about our current campaign actions in the new action

Sign up [here](#).

# PAKISTAN

## Discrimination and stigmatisation of sanitation workers in Pakistan



Sanitation work in Pakistan is disproportionately assigned to non-Muslims who belong to so-called “lower castes” and often have no real choice in the matter. A new report by Amnesty International “*Cut us open and see that we bleed like them*”, explores how existing discrimination against communities in Pakistan that are marginalised due to their caste and religious identities is compounded in the sanitation sector. It calls on Pakistani authorities to abide by international human rights law and standards and extend dignified rights to sanitation workers without discrimination, through specific legislative action to address caste-based discrimination, treating sewage work as hazardous and ensuring effective implementation of

labour laws to sanitation work.

## 14 million refugees need refugee registration renewal

Amnesty International US says that since the Illegal Foreigners’ Repatriation Plan was announced by Pakistan’s government in October 2023, at least 1,080,312 Afghan refugees and asylum seekers have been forced to return to Afghanistan, to high-risk situations and in violation of international law, namely the principle of non-refoulement. The plan, divided into three phases, seeks to deport unregistered refugees, Afghan Citizen Card holders and Proof of Registration (PoR) card holders. The UN Refugee Agency issued PoR cards to at least 1.4 million Afghans, which expired on 30 June 2025. On 31 July the Pakistan government announced it will begin further repatriations from 1 September. The UN has called on them to halt this plan immediately (see action below). Read the UN statement [here](#).



Amnesty International says Pakistan must uphold the rights of refugees, immediately stop all deportations and renew the PoR cards. Women and girls are at particularly high risk.

**Take action** on the USA request before 15 September [here](#).

## Release all Baloch activists

Again, a request from AIUS, an urgent action to write to the Pakistani government officials on behalf of the Baloch activists who have been targeted for their activism and are being held in arbitrary detention, violating international and national laws. Their detention is part of a larger crackdown in Balochistan province on peaceful protests and the right to freedom of expression, through the weaponization of anti-terrorism and public order laws.

**Take action** before 30 December [here](#).

## 108 members of ex-Prime Minister Imran Khan's party imprisoned

On 31 July, the Pakistani authorities handed jail sentences to 108 members of Imran Khan’s political party, allegedly for their part in violent protests against the military when Imran Khan was arrested in 2023. This is a major blow to Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party, effectively destroying it. Opposition figures have denounced the rulings by the anti-terrorism court, which also disqualified six PTI lawmakers from their seats. "For the first time in Pakistan's judicial history, such a sad and shameful incident occurred that the leaders of the opposition in both houses [of

parliament] were punished solely on the basis that they were loyal allies of Imran Khan's political narrative, public representation, and constitutional struggle," PTI wrote on X. The party says it will challenge the verdict.

Read the BBC report [here](#).

## Honour killing sparks national outrage



On 4 June Bano Bibi and Ehsan Ullah were shot to death on the orders of a tribal council. They were accused of having an immoral relationship (in fact a love marriage). Such so-called honour killings are illegal, but only after a video of their gruesome killing went viral, sparking national outrage, did the authorities arrest 13 people involved in the case. An Al Jazeera report asks what this reveals about what it takes for victims to get justice.

Read the Al Jazeera reports [here](#) and [here](#).

# SRI LANKA

## Submission to the UN Committee on Enforced Disappearances

Amnesty International submitted a document ahead of the review of UN Committee on Enforced Disappearances. According to the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, Sri Lanka has the second largest number of unresolved enforced disappearance cases in the world. Amnesty International estimates that there have been at least 60,000, and as many as 100,000 cases of enforced disappearance in Sri Lanka since the 1980s.

The recommendations include:

- Ensure that the continuing harassment faced by victims' families, lawyers, journalists and activists while pursuing justice stops immediately. In this respect, the Ministry of Justice should coordinate with the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Public Security with the view of issuing clear instructions to relevant agencies and investigate all threats against lawyers, activists, victims seeking justice for human rights violations.
- Desist from penalising families of the forcibly disappeared who are exercising their right to peaceful protest and memorialise their loved ones. Law enforcement authorities must be sent strict instructions to avoid approaching the judiciary seeking pre-emptive court orders restricting public gatherings, and protests.
- Urgently take account of the demands of families of the disappeared demanding answers for decades. The state authorities must prioritise, respect and facilitate the victims' rights to truth, justice and reparations.

Read the report [here](#).



# NEPAL

## Failures over right to housing leaves marginalised groups facing forced evictions and homelessness



A new report by Amnesty International [\*\*\*Nowhere to go': Forced evictions in Nepal\*\*\*](#) highlights the Nepalese government's failure to establish a regulatory framework for the Right to Housing Act, which, coupled with local authorities' blatant disregard for the law, has resulted in forced evictions that have left hundreds homeless. The impact has been devastating for already marginalised communities,

including Dalits and Indigenous Peoples, who are disproportionately affected by the forced evictions. The authorities have failed to uphold legal safeguards and address gaps in regulations needed to implement provisions in the Constitution and the 2018 Right to Housing Act that are aimed at preventing forced eviction. "There is an ever-widening gap between the legal protections promised in Nepal's constitution and the reality for marginalised communities in the country, who continue to live in fear of being evicted with no due process, no regard for their precarious circumstances and no hope of compensation to help rebuild their lives elsewhere," said Nirajan Thapaliya, Director at Amnesty International Nepal.

Read the statement [here](#).