



Bangladesh - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on Tuesday 26 January 2016

Treatment of Jamaat-i-Islamic by the Awami League following the 2009 elections

In June 2012 the *International Crisis Group* states in a report that:

“On 29 December 2008, the Awami League (AL), led by Sheikh Hasina, swept to power in a landslide, winning 229 of 300 seats and putting an end to a two-year military backed caretaker government” (International Crisis Group (13 June 2012) *Bangladesh: Back to the Future*, p.1).

This report also states that:

“The government then began to take more ominous measures. Over the last three years, it has tried to weaken opposition parties by pressing charges against almost all senior BNP leaders and restricting or banning their activities... The BNP’s coalition partner, Jamaat-e-Islami, was in effect decapitated, as its top three leaders were arrested in 2010 and charged with war crimes. The remaining leaders went on the run, and its party headquarters in the two biggest metropolitan centres – Dhaka and Chittagong – were shut down” (ibid, p.5).

A report published by *Odhikar* in 2010 states:

“Bangladesh returned to an elected system of government through the 9th Parliamentary Elections held on 29 December 2008. The Military backed ‘Caretaker’ regime handed power over to the new government, led by Sheikh Hasina, on 06 January 2009... According to Odhikar’s documentation, 17 persons...were reportedly killed and over 500 persons were injured in post-election violence in different places across the country. In most cases, activists and supporters of the Awami League (AL) led Grand Alliance, and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) led Four-Party Alliance were found to be involved in such clashes. In many districts, AL activists attacked the houses and shops of the BNP and Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami supporters and vandalised their property” (Odhikar (2010) *Human rights report 2009 : Odhikar report on Bangladesh*, p.7).

A report issued by *Freedom House* in May 2010 notes that:

“The new government moved quickly to implement its campaign promises and ratify most of the ordinances passed by the CG. Several war crimes suspects were arrested, and in July the government submitted draft legislation regarding the establishment of a tribunal to oversee prosecutions. Another key part of the AL's agenda was to restore the 1972 constitution, nullifying all amendments enacted since then. Among other effects, this would reinstate a ban on religious parties, posing a clear threat to parties like the Jamaat-e-Islami” (Freedom House (3 May 2010) *Freedom in the World 2010 – Bangladesh*).

In February 2009 *Deutsche Presse-Agentur* states in a report that:

“Police have arrested two local leaders of Bangladesh's largest Islamist party on charges of committing war crimes during the country's war of independence 38 years ago, media reports said Saturday. The arrests were the first made by the government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wazed, who took office last month after promising to bring the 1971 war criminals to justice. Daud Hossain, 70, and Nur-anwar, 65, who both belong to Jamaat-e-Islami, were arrested Friday in the north-western district of Rajshahi and accused of killing independence supporters, police said” (Deutsche Presse-Agentur (14 February 2009) *Bangladesh arrests two on war crimes charges* =).

BBC News in July 2010 states that:

“The Bangladeshi government has ordered mosques and libraries across the country to remove all books written by a controversial Islamic scholar. The chief of the government-funded Islamic Foundation told the BBC that the books by Syed Abul Ala Maududi encouraged "militancy and terrorism". Mr Maududi - who died in 1979 - is the founder of the Jamaat-e-Islami party. His works are essential reading for supporters of the Jamaat-e-Islami party in the region” (BBC News (16 July 2010) *Bangladesh bans books written by radical Islamic author*).

This report also states:

“The decision by the Awami League-led government is widely seen as part of its efforts to curb the activities of Jamaat-e-Islami, accused by many Bangladeshis of collaborating with the Pakistani army during the 1971 war of independence” (ibid).

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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

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