



Bangladesh – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 29 October 2015

Client is from Bangladesh and claims that he fears reprisals from the fundamentalist Islamic group Jamaat-UI Mujahideen Bangladesh who he refused to join.

Information on the consequences for refusing to join Jamaat-UI Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) was not found among sources available to the Research and Information Unit.

A report published by the International Crisis Group, in a section headed “One Man’s Recruitment”, refers to the recruitment practices of JMB as follows:

“JMB recruiters not only played up the political appeal of the organisation at a time of widespread disenchantment with BNP-Jamaat government; they also stressed membership as a path to both economic success and religious salvation. The case of Abul Kalam Azad alias Ahmad, the former head of JMB’s Chittagong district, illustrates the use of its Ahle Hadith network, jihadi rhetoric and financial promises to economically vulnerable young men in its recruitment process. Raised in Khulna division, Ahmad went to state schools and universities. However, as a result of his religious upbringing and the influence of his brother-in-law, he began following Ahle Hadith. Ahmad joined ICS in late 1999 while at university, but left the organisation within a few months over a dispute about Islamic dress codes. In March 2000, he met Masududdin Ishak, a homeopathic doctor and JMB recruiter in Khulna. After sounding Ahmad out over his political past, Ishak invited him to his dispensary where he spoke of the government’s oppression of the *ulema* (Islamic scholars) and the importance of strictly adhering to the Quran and hadith in the face of Jamaat’s betrayal of Islam. These arguments however were insufficient to convince the cash-strapped student more concerned with passing exams than joining a jihad. When he expressed these concerns, Ishak and other JMB recruiters replied, ‘What’s the use of studying? A diploma will not get you into heaven. You have to take part in jihad – you have to become a *shaheed* (martyr)’.” (International Crisis Group (1 March 2010) *The Threat from Jamaat-UI Mujahideen Bangladesh*, p.6)

This section of the report also states:

“Ahmad’s recruiters eventually agreed to cover his expenses. He was then taken together with 30 other young recruits to a mosque where they all received JMB code names. Over three days, the men listened to Salafist preaching and lectures on the persecution of Muslims in Bangladesh and abroad. The group was then given basic arms and martial arts training. Afterwards, a JMB recruiter in his mid-30s named Hazari pressed Ahmad for a month to become a full-time member, reminding him of his duty to remain true to Islam. Once assured of longer-term financial assistance by local JMB followers, Ahmad signed on and was sent to Rajshahi where he became an

ehsar after undergoing further religious training. Between late 2001 and July 2002 he was JMB's top operative in Chittagong district, but was removed for being ineffective at convincing locals to abandon their traditional Islamic beliefs for the much stricter Ahle Hadith teachings." (ibid, p.6)

In a section headed "Training" this report states:

"As recruitment peaked in 2003 and early 2004, these classes grew as large as 300. They would take place in mosques, madrasa compounds, wetland shoals called *chars* and open fields in remote areas. Trainees were given code names that were either numbers or Muslim names. The trainers, usually well-spoken senior leaders who could rouse the group with jihadi rhetoric, would put the men through a mix of religious, physical and military exercises. Religious training included classes on Quranic recitation, lessons on *aqida* (faith) and *ikhlas* (integrity), discussions on Islamic politics and its application to Bangladeshi society, and the need to protect the faith through jihad. Trainees were often shown videos of the war in Afghanistan and fighting in Palestine. To ensure discipline and loyalty the organisation, they were told to be 'ideal children' and to consider the oppression of Muslims globally as tantamount to the torture of their mothers and sisters." (ibid, p.7)

This section also states:

"Hardship training was compulsory as a means to toughen up recruits and enable them to endure harsh living conditions while hiding for long periods. The men would be sent to various districts to stay with a group of other operatives, working during the day as rickshaw drivers or street hawkers and training during the night. The core objectives, according to Abdur Rahman, were to strip them of pride, establish conformity, and develop their minds and bodies to survive under adverse conditions." (ibid, p.7)

See also section of this report headed "Recruitment" which states:

"Recruitment patterns have undergone some major changes since the crackdown. There is now less emphasis on open da'wah sessions for fear of infiltration and more attention to JMB's four training madrasas in Khulna, Jamalpur, Naogaon and Dhaka. These madrasas run on the principle that 'Ten competent operatives are more effective than a hundred incompetent ones'. Some analysts point to JMB's current focus on elite schools and universities as evidence of a shift in recruitment patterns. In fact, JMB had targeted such schools for the past decade and many of its senior leaders attended universities after graduating from madrasas. In the past the aim was to recruit young men already initiated into Islamic politics chiefly through ICS; now it may be looking more broadly. The June 2009 arrest of a senior operative and the group's information technology expert, Emranul Haque alias Rajiv, seemed to confirm suspicions that JMB is recruiting in elite institutions. Rajiv was a research associate and a civil engineering graduate at a prestigious university – the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET). Aside from recruiting at BUET, Rajiv told the RAB that his responsibilities for the JMB included downloading 'information on explosives from internet, translating it into Bengali and sending it to [Boma] Mizan through Bashar', the son of Saidur Rahman. Family networks also remain important. JMB leaders realise that loose bonds and weak ideological attachments made its network highly vulnerable to penetration from

intelligence agencies, leading to the high rate of arrests. Unmarried *ehsars* are being ordered to marry sisters, daughters or nieces of established and trustworthy JMB members. Family and marriage connections are now prerequisites for moving up the JMB ranks whereas before they were useful but not necessary.” (ibid, p.17)

This section of the report refers to the killing of former JMB members as follows:

“JMB has also begun killing former operatives turned informants to limit further defections and harm to the organisation. On 1 February 2010, Rashidul Islam, a former *ehsar* who defected from the JMB over a year ago, was stabbed to death in Dhaka by his former jihadi colleagues. Rashidul, who was the imam of Karaihati Jama Masjid in Gazipur at the time, was apparently killed in response to a sermon he gave in 2009 against the JMB. The police say they have identified the three alleged murderers – Akash, Al Amin and Nadim – with Mizan’s help. The incident has prompted other former JMB cadres to seek police protection – including Akramuzzaman, the former head of the Bangladesh branch of RIHS and formerly one of JMB’s funders. After breaking with JMB in 2008, Akramuzzaman wrote a book that reportedly inspired Rashidul to quit JMB.” (ibid, p.18)

An entry in the University of Maryland’s Global Terrorism Database states:

“On Monday morning at 0930, in Uttara, Dhaka, Bangladesh, three suspected Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) militants stabbed a former suspected JMB operative to death. The victim was identified as Rashidul Islam of Panchagarh who was connected and convicted of the August 17, 2005 serial bomb blasts across Bangladesh. Islam was traveling on the Eidgah at Uttara sector-6 on his bicycle when he was hit by an assailant on the head with a pistol and stabbed repeatedly in the chest and abdomen. Islam died at the local hospital due to seven fatal stab wounds. As the assailants fled, they threw homemade bombs at the people who had gathered around the incident. No group claimed responsibility. No motive was reported in the attack; however, according to Deputy Commissioner of Utara zone, Kazi Nisharul Arif, stated in public that the JMB was on the wrong track and practicing anti-Islamic activities and was on his way to Abdullahpur to present evidence to the people. Police believe that Rashidul was killed for leaving the JMB.” (Global Terrorism Database (1 February 2010) *Incident Summary*)

An article from the English-language Bangladeshi newspaper the Daily Star states:

“At least 12 more former members of Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh -- hiding in Uttara and Gazipur -- are suspected to have been on the hit list of the banned Islamist outfit. Rashidul Islam, a JMB *ehsar* (full-timer member) and student of Darul Ihsan University, was the first to fall victim as an ex-JMB operative on Monday. This was revealed by Jamal, a former JMB *ehsar* now under police custody, as he was speaking to reporters at Uttara Police Station yesterday. Jamal said he sought shelter from the police the same day as he fears he might face the same fate of Rashidul. He claims he defected from JMB in 2003 and said around 12 others, who reside in Uttara and Gazipur and deserted the outfit, had links with Rashidul. He added he had decided to defect as he understood that Islam does not support killings of innocent

people. Apart from Jamal, police have picked up for interrogation three of Rashidul's friends -- Mizanur Rahman, Mokammel and Dulal. The police say they have identified three JMB operatives -- Akash, Al Amin and Nadim -- who killed Rashidul for delivering a speech against the outfit." (Daily Star (3 February 2010) *12 more deserters on JMB hit list*)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research and Information Unit 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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