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peace for the twenty-first century”

Statement submitted by Human Rights Congress for Bangladesh Minorities (HRCBM), a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being
circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council
resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

The Human Rights Congress for Bangladesh Minorities (HRCBM) submits this statement to the 69th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women to highlight the genocidal sexual violence, gang rapes, kidnappings, and forced conversions targeting minority women and girls in Bangladesh. Since the political transition in August 2024, between 2010 attacks took place over a span of 16 days (August 4 to August 20), primarily targeting Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, and Indigenous communities, according to Bangladesh Hindu Buddha Christian Unity Council. These attacks involved the destruction of homes, businesses, and religious sites, alongside widespread sexual violence against women and girls, including gang rapes, kidnappings, abductions, and forced conversions. Such waves of violence have persisted for the last three decades, occurring almost every few years.

The Justice Sahabuddin Commission Report, established by the Government of Bangladesh in response to Writ No. 749 of 2009 filed at the Bangladesh Supreme Court, presents a grave account. The Commission received 5,571 officially filed complaints and detailed thousands of brutal rape cases, murders, arson, and looting against minority communities between January 10, 2001, and December 31, 2002. The report documented mass gang rapes in villages like Annadaprasad under Lalmohan Thana, leading to the eradication of the Hindu population in these areas. Despite the scale of these atrocities, there has been no accountability for the perpetrators of this ongoing genocidal campaign.

In 2006 and 2013, Human Rights Congress for Bangladesh Minorities filed litigation relating to these mass gang rapes and genocidal violence, submitting hundreds of accounts of gang rapes targeting minority women. Over the past two decades, there have been numerous cases of genocidal gang rapes, forced conversions, and kidnappings of minority women and girls. Despite this, the Bangladeshi government and media have remained largely silent [5]. Social taboos, coupled with law enforcement's reluctance to register complaints, have left many cases of gang rape and kidnapping unreported, further emboldening perpetrators.

Genocidal Sexual Violence, Gang Rapes, and Kidnappings: The Justice Sahabuddin Commission Report documented thousands of rape cases and mass gang rapes between 2001 and 2002, including atrocities in Annadaprasad village under Lalmohan Thana, where entire Hindu populations were wiped out. Despite these findings, successive Bangladeshi governments, both past and present, have done little to address the ongoing systemic genocidal violence against minority women and girls.

In its 2006 and 2013 litigation, Human Rights Congress for Bangladesh Minorities submitted evidence of hundreds of gang rapes across the country, illustrating the state's complicity in the violence. Since then, there have been numerous cases of genocidal violence, including gang rapes, forced conversions, and kidnappings. Many of these victims have been forcibly converted to Islam after being coerced into marriage.

These atrocities align with the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), which defines genocide as acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group. The systematic gang rapes, kidnappings, and forced conversions against minority women meet the threshold for genocide investigations under international protocols.

Forced Disappearances and State Complicity: Hundreds of minority women and girls who have been kidnapped remain missing, their fate unknown. These forced disappearances reflect a pattern of state complicity and inaction. Families who attempt to register complaints with law enforcement often face refusal or hostility. In

cases where families do manage to file complaints, police action is delayed, leading to further trauma and disappearances of the victims.

The Sahabuddin Commission Report documented the state's failure to prevent or investigate forced disappearances. Instead of protecting vulnerable populations, the state has allowed perpetrators to continue these genocidal acts with impunity. The U.S. State Department's 2023 report highlighted the state's denial and misinformation regarding the scale of violence against minority women.

State Denial, Misinformation, and Impunity: Despite Bangladesh's obligations under various UN treaties, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the U.S. State Department [5], Amnesty International [16], and Human Rights Watch [6] confirm that the state systematically denies the genocidal nature of these crimes. The state engages in misinformation campaigns to downplay the systemic gang rapes, kidnappings, and forced conversions targeting minority women. Notably, the current interim government is also following the path of its predecessors by denying the ongoing violence against minority women and girls and their disappearances in the country.

The Sahabuddin Commission Report and HRCBM's 2023 litigation illustrate how the state shields perpetrators, providing them with impunity while obstructing investigations. The lack of accountability has allowed this genocidal campaign to continue.

Recommendations: Given the gravity of the crimes, HRCBM calls for immediate international action to halt the ongoing genocide against minority women in Bangladesh:

1. **International Genocide Investigation:** Commission on the Status of Women must call for an independent international genocide investigation into the gang rapes, kidnappings, and forced conversions targeting minority women and girls in Bangladesh. The evidence from the Sahabuddin Commission Report, HRCBM's litigations and ICC submission for prosecutor investigation underscores the urgency for justice.
2. **Creation of an International Tribunal:** An international tribunal must be established to prosecute those responsible for the genocidal crimes against minority women, including state actors and political leaders. The Bangladesh National Party (BNP) and Jamaat-e-Islami leaders must be held accountable for their roles in the atrocities between 2001 and 2006, as must the leaders of the Awami League and Interim government for ongoing violence.
3. **Special Rapporteur for Minority Women's Rights:** A Special Rapporteur should be appointed to monitor the ongoing genocidal sexual violence, disappearances, and forced conversions faced by minority women in Bangladesh.
4. **Prosecution of State and Political Leaders:** Bangladesh's political and state leaders must face accountability for enabling these genocidal acts. The BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami, Awami League and Interim government leaders should be investigated for their complicity in these crimes.
5. **Safe Spaces and Rehabilitation:** The UN must ensure that safe spaces are established for minority women who have been victims of genocidal gang rapes, kidnappings, and forced conversions. Survivors must have access to healthcare, psychological support, and legal assistance.