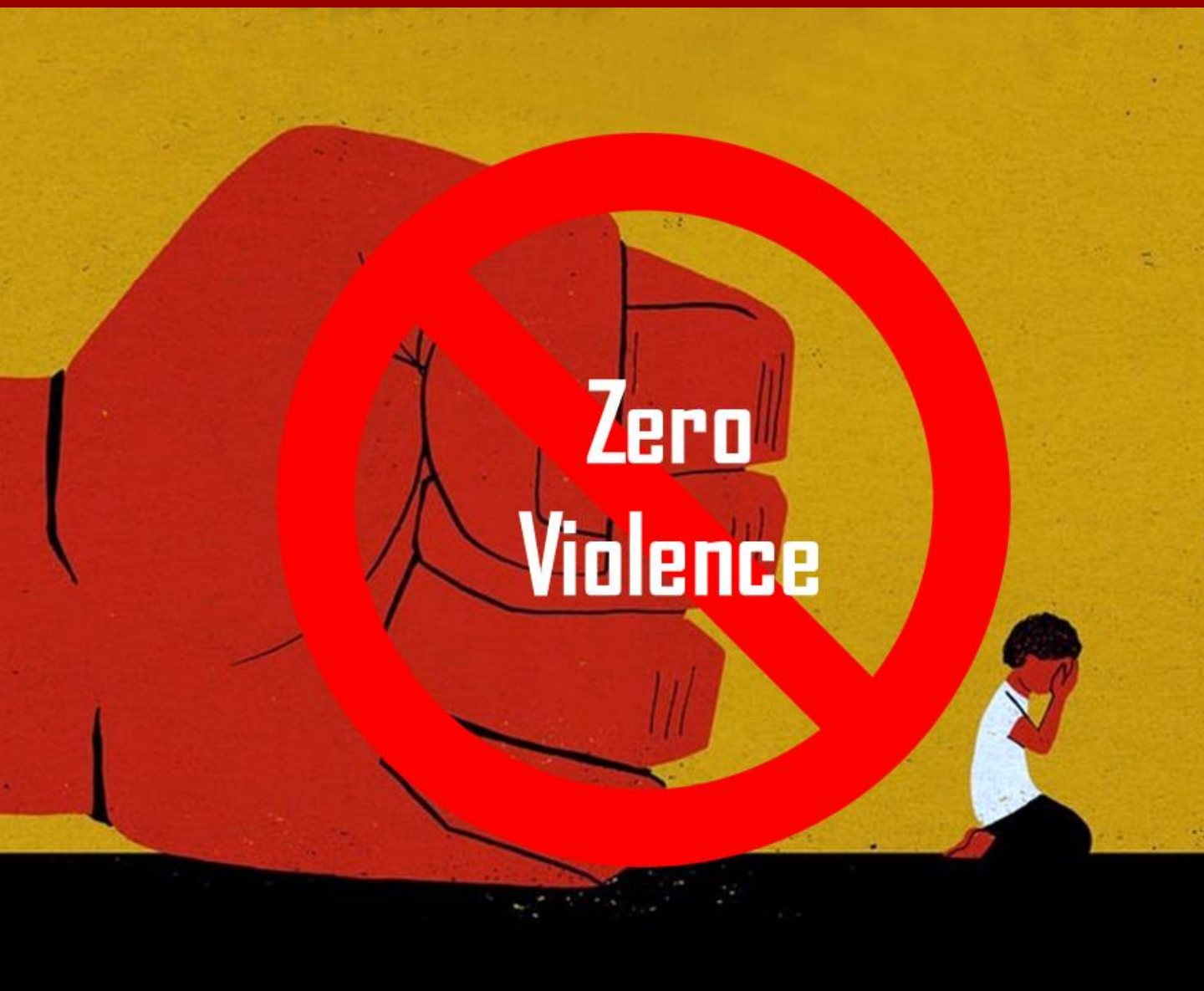


CGS PEACE REPORT

an initiative of BPO



Volume 5, Issue 5
September-October 2021



**Crime and Violence in
Bangladesh:
An Analysis from BPO**

**The State of Zero
Violence in Bangladesh**

CGS PEACE REPORT
an initiative of
BPO- Bangladesh Peace Observatory



Volume 5, Issue 5
September-October 2021

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Contents

From the Editor's Desk.....	1
Crime and Violence in Bangladesh: An Analysis from BPO	2
The State of Zero Violence in Bangladesh (2014-2021).....	9
Annex	27

Figures:

1: Monthly segregation of Violent and Non-violent incidents.....	2
2: Divisional monthly comparison of incidents of clashes.....	5
3: Motives of Fight Incidents	6
4: Divisional distribution of incidents and consequences	7
5: Consequences of Violent incidents related to GBV	14
6: Major Motives of GBV.....	14

Tables:

1: Comparison of major violence types	3
2: Comparison of the changes of consequences	3
3: Divisional segregation of incidents and consequences in terms of population: September-October 2021	8
4: Overview of incidents and consequences in 2014-21	12
5: Overview of Incidents Related to GBV.....	13
6: Year-wise Segregation of Female Death in Domestic Violence.....	15
7: Yearly trend of incidents and consequences in Sexual Assault.....	16
8: Yearly Trend of Suicide Incidents	17
9: Top 10 District in terms of Death (GBV).....	18
10: Bottom 10 District in terms of Death (GBV)	18
11: Top Ten District of Red Zone (with death rate between 6.00 and 10+)	19
12: top ten Districts of Yellow Zone (having death rate between 3.00 and 6.00)	19
13: District of Green Zones (having death rates between 0 and 3.00)	20
14: Yearly Trend of VAM.....	21
15: Divisional Distribution of VAM Related Incidents	21
16: Districts in Red, Yellow and Green Zone in VAM related incidents	22
17: Yearly Trend of Violence against Children	23
18: Top ten Districts in terms of Death (VAC).....	24
19: Bottom 10 Districts in terms of Death (VAC).....	24
20: Districts in the Red Zone in terms of Death Rate	25
21: Top Ten Districts of Yellow Zone	25
22: Bottom Ten Districts of Green Zone	26

From the Editor's Desk

The idea of zero has always fascinated humans. Although it had its roots in South Asia as *sunya* some 2000 years back, zero became universal after the Arabs included it in their numeracy and called it *sifr* or cipher, meaning a secret or disguised way of writing. It was not until the 15th century that the Westerners felt the urgency of having the zero fully accepted in their calculations. However, in contemporary times, zero got prominence not only for calculation but also for indicating precise objectives. These could be goals for reaching zero hunger, zero poverty, zero illiteracy, zero crime, zero-tolerance against drugs and violent extremism, even zero Covid death! But what about zero violence or, more precisely, zero death from violence? Can humans attain zero death from violence on earth? Or, what Dag Hammarskjold once called “preventing Hell on Earth”? Human history is full of examples of “Hell on Earth,” particularly to the individual facing it. This often could be in the form of war, slavery, ethnic cleansing, mass slaughter, genocide, extreme deprivation, violence against women and children, forced conversion, and the list can go on and on. Yet, there is hope that humans are now learning to live together reasonably peacefully more than ever. Recorded data on human violence does suggest that. For instance, 66 million people were killed in World War II in six years. That is, 11 million every year. However, in 2012, human violence killed 520,000 people, out of which 500,000 died from crime-related violence, and war killed 120,000. This is a marked improvement in taming violence.

Given that every death is painful, particularly to the near ones, can death from violence or what amounts to unnatural death be brought down to zero? An affirmative answer would be looked at with suspicion, but a close inspection of the violence data reveals that there are places and times with zero violence. Indeed, this may not be true at the macro (national or global) level, but it is undoubtedly the case at the micro (local) level. There are more localities now than ever, with zero death from violence globally. And there lies our hope!

Imtiaz Ahmed

Professor of International Relations &
Director, Centre for Genocide Studies,
University of Dhaka

Crime and Violence Update in Bangladesh: An Analysis from BPO

Violence Update (September-October 2021)

The Bangladesh Peace Observatory (BPO) brings together different streams of publicly available data on violence using news reports from prominent national and regional dailies. From September-October 2021, BPO has recorded a total of 1188 violent¹ and 1269 non-violent² incidents. Figure 1 shows the monthly segregation of the violent and non-violent incidents of July-August 2021 and September-October 2021. Drawing a comparison between

these two timelines, it is noticeable that non-violent incidents gradually increased until the sharp decline in October. On the other hand, the violent incidents gradually decreased from July-August 2021 to September-October 2021 except for the nominal rise in October. According to BPO data, the overall number of incidents decreased by 11.68% in September-October 2021 than the previous two months.

Figure 1: Monthly segregation of Violent and Non-violent incidents

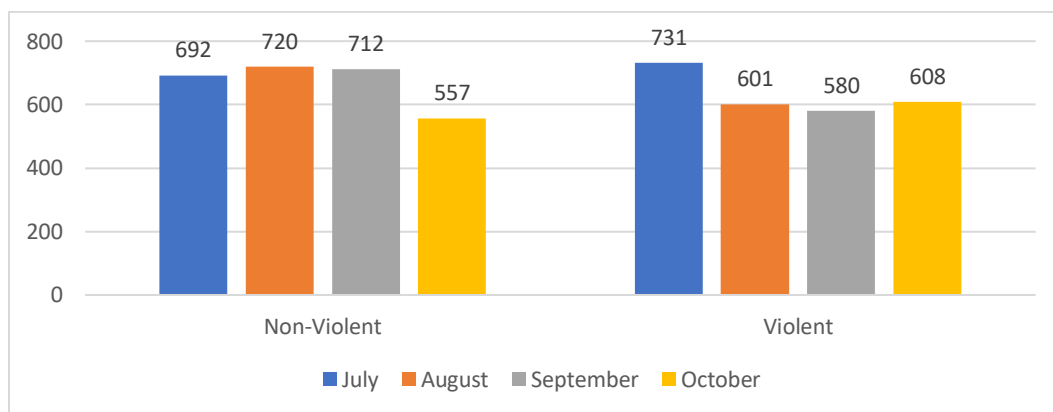


Table I summarises the updates on major violence types that constitute most violent

incidents. A brief description of each category is available in the Annex. The

¹ Violent Incident: According to BPO Codebook: The reported incident involved the intentional use of physical force by an individual or group against another individual or group, in a manner that resulted or could have resulted in death, injury or any other form of physical harm to persons or property

² Non-violent Incident: According to BPO Codebook: The reported incident did not involve the intentional use of physical force by an individual or group against another individual or group, in a manner that resulted or could have resulted in death, injury or any other form of physical harm to persons or property, e.g. Arrest, Peaceful Protest, Rescue and Recovery.

table depicts that incidents under some of the categories like Sexual Assault, Fight, Gunfight, Abduction, Assault, and Violent Demonstration have decreased, and in other categories like Clash, Destruction of property, Mob Violence have increased.

Table 2 illustrates the comparison of the consequences. The total number of deaths, abductions, sexually assaulted, arrested and injuries have decreased from July-August 2021 to September-October 2021.

Table 1: Comparison of Major Violence Types

Major Violence Types	July	August	September	October
Abduction/hostage	19	21	17	10
Assault	425	325	329	382
Clash	54	31	44	66
Coup	1	0	0	0
Destruction of property	13	12	13	59
Fight	13	6	6	11
Gunfight	6	4	4	2
Mob violence (large group assault)	9	1	7	5
Other	67	66	61	3
Sexual assault	130	138	102	69
Unclear	2	0	1	25
Unspecified	0	0	1	0
Violence against civilians	0	0	3	0
Violent demonstration	1	3	1	0

Table 2: Comparison of the changes in consequences

Consequences	Total Killed	Total Injured	Total Abducted	Total Sexually Assaulted	Total Arrested
July-August'21	716	2047	55	283	10656
September-October'21	705	1988	29	185	6879
Changes in Percentage	-1.60%	-2.97%	-89.66%	-52.97%	-54.91%

Understanding the Low Number of Assaults

BPO enlists the inter-personal attacks carried out by different parties against one person/persons by another person/persons for various motives under the assault category. BPO recorded a total of 711 cases of assault in September-October 2021. The motives include domestic violence, dowry-related, land and other enmities related to economic factors, social-personal rivalry, attacks with criminal intent, suicide attempts, etc. Under the assault category, 242 suicide and attempted suicide cases were reported, and in those cases, 249 people were killed, including 135 women. Besides, the recovery of unidentified dead bodies is also enlisted under this category.

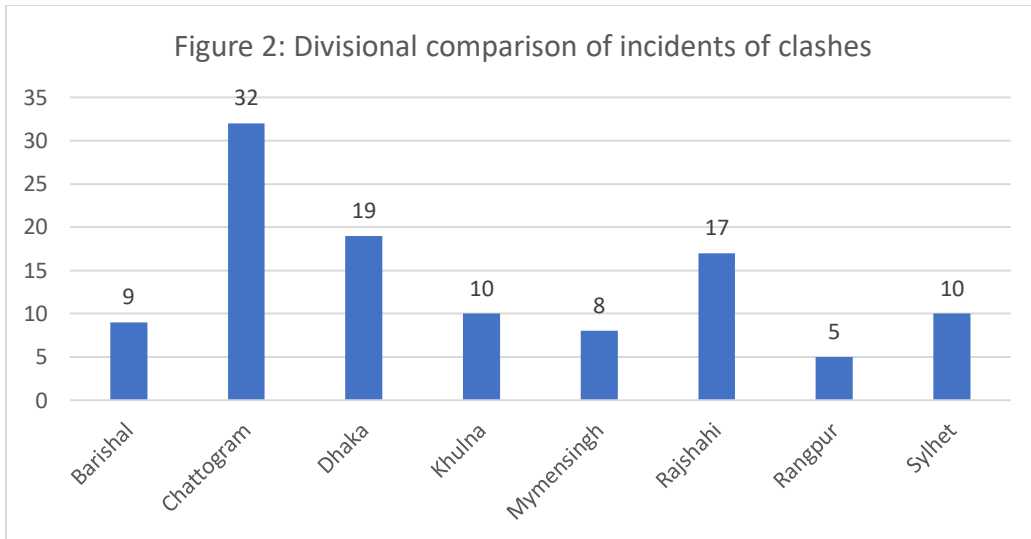
Increase in Number of Clashes

The total number of clashes increased in September-October 2021 than July-August 2021. More clashes took place in October than September (see Table 1).110 clashes were reported in

September-October 2021 in which 1135 people were injured, including 45 women. There are 20 reports of clashes with injuries of 20 people. The main motives of these clashes are election-related violence, political tension between groups, social rivalry, control over land or natural resource, economic and business-related feuds, social and personal petty issues etc. In nine reported cases of clashes, minorities were targeted. 21 reported cases were the results of post-election violence after the 161 Union Parishad elections, which were postponed and rescheduled to 20 September 2021 across the country.³ Figure 2 depicts the divisional distribution of the clash incidents. It shows that Dhaka, Chattagram, Dhaka and Rajshahi have higher incident numbers than the rest. Quite a few municipalities and Union Parishad in these divisions were expecting elections.⁴ Most of the election-related clashes took place in the Chattogram and Dhaka divisions, and at least five people were reportedly killed, and 80 were injured in these divisions in election-related clashes.

³ 'Postponed Elections to 161 Union Parishad Scheduled for Sept 20' The Daily Star, 2 September 2021, Cited in <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/politics/news/postponed-elections-161-union-parishads-scheduled-sept-20-2167046> , Accessed on- 2 January 2022

⁴ 'Elections to 161 UPs, 9 municipalities on Sept 20' The Business Standard, 2 September 2021, Cited in <https://www.tbsnews.net/bangladesh/elections-161-ups-9-municipalities-sept-20-296983> , Accessed on- 2 January 2022



Decrease in Sexual Assault

Reported incidents of sexual assault have decreased in September-October 2021 than July-August 2021. Out of 164 reported cases of sexual assaults, there were 31 gang rapes. In some cases, rape by teens and teen gangs were also notable. The perpetrators of these offences were men of different ages, including a few minor boys, teasers, local miscreants, teachers, family members, relatives, neighbours and so on. However, the majority of the victims are girls, and in three cases, boys were victims of sexual assaults.

A sharp rise in Destruction of Property

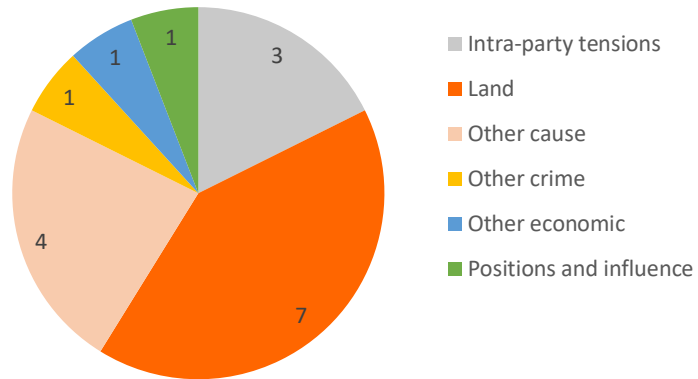
There are 72 more reported cases of destruction of property in September-

October 2021. A sharp rise of incidents was noticeable in these two months prior to July-August 2021. In addition, most of the reported cases were related to electoral violence, which was 22.22% of all the total incidents. In some instances, local Hindu temples were attacked, and idols of Hindu deities were vandalised. Besides, organised crime and land-related issues also led to vandalism.

Decrease in Fight

The number of incidents of fights decreased in September-October 2021 than in July-August 2021. The significant motives of these violent incidents are land-related disputes, various crimes, financial, social and personal feuds, political tensions, etc. (see Figure 3)

Figure 3: Motives of Fight Incidents



A Low Number of Gunfight Persists

The number of gunfights has gone down since August 2020, and since then the number has exceeded two digits only once. In September-October 2021, six gunfights took place, which is fewer than in July-August 2021. In August 2020, a retired Major of the Bangladesh Army was killed in a reported gunfight. This event might have influenced the sudden decline in Gunfight in August and onwards.

Violence-Population Nexus

Figure 4 provides a spatial glimpse through the divisional distribution of the recorded incidents and their consequences. The graph illustrates that Chattogram, Rajshahi and Dhaka are the first, second, and third

respectively in terms of incidents and are second, third, and first respectively in terms of the death count. In addition, these three divisions are the most populous in Bangladesh.

But if the population ratio⁵ is applied to understand the incident prevalence and its consequences, then a different picture emerges. In that case, the Barishal division has the third-highest incident rate, female death rate and highest death rate and injury rate. The Rajshahi division ranks 1st in terms of incident and death rates. Chattogram occupies the highest injury rate and second-highest incident and death rate. Sylhet possesses the highest position in case of female death. Dhaka and Rangpur have lower rates than other divisions (see Table 3).

⁵ The population data is based on the Population & Housing Census 2011, Bangladesh by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics. Cited in:

<http://www.bbs.gov.bd/site/page/47856ad0-7e1c-4aab-bd78-892733bc06eb/Population-and-Housing-Census> , Accessed on- 02 January 2022

Figure 4: Divisional distribution of incidents and consequences

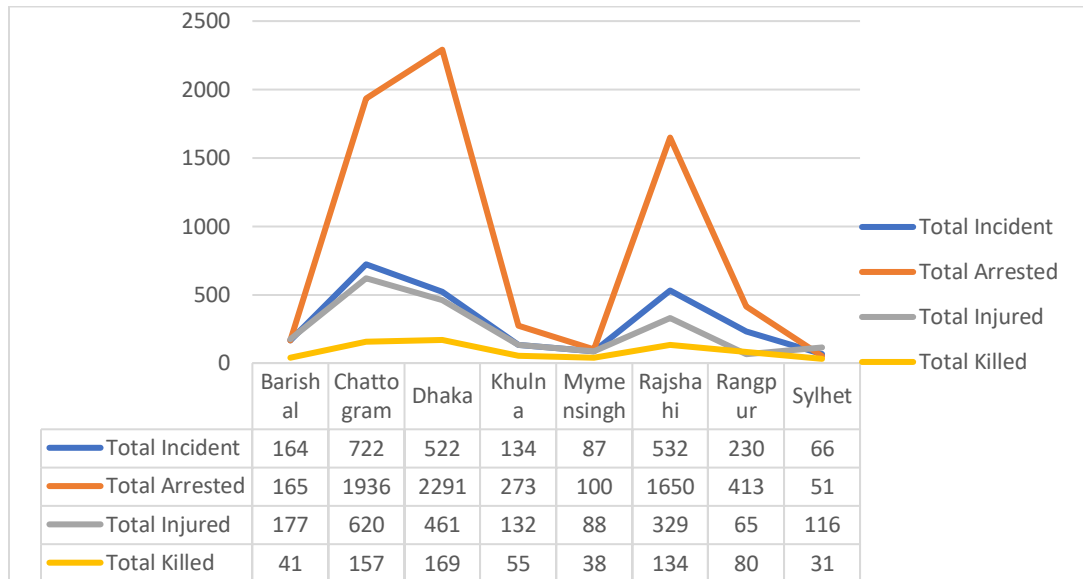


Table 3: Divisional segregation of incidents and consequences in terms of population: September-October 2021

Division	Incident	Rate by pop *	Death	Rate by pop *	Female Death	Rate by pop *	Injury	Rate by pop *	Sexual Assault	Rate by pop *
Barishal	164	1.97 (3 rd)	41	0.49	18	0.22 (3 rd)	177	2.13 (1 st)	30	0.36 (1 st)
Chattogram	722	2.48 (2 nd)	157	0.54 (2 nd)	51	0.17	620	2.13 (1 st)	25	0.10
Dhaka	522	1.43	169	0.46	68	0.19	461	1.27 (3 rd)	52	0.14 (2 nd)
Khulna	134	0.85	55	0.35	17	0.11	132	0.84	15	0.10
Mymensingh	87	0.77	38	0.33	20	0.18	88	0.77	14	0.12 (3 rd)
Rajshahi	532	2.88 (1 st)	134	0.72 (1 st)	54	0.29 (2 nd)	329	1.78 (2 nd)	23	0.12 (3 rd)
Rangpur	230	1.46	80	0.51 (3 rd)	35	0.22 (3 rd)	65	0.41	12	0.10
Sylhet	66	0.67	31	0.32	37	0.38 (1 st)	116	1.18	14	0.14 (2 nd)

The State of Zero Violence in Bangladesh (2014-2021)

Faizah Sultana
Humaun Kabir

According to the Global Peace Index 2021, the world has become slightly less peaceful in 2021.⁶ Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) recorded 56 active conflicts in 2020, and projected protracted conflicts in some countries with the help of their VIEWS conflict early-warning system.⁷ Global Study on Homicide by UN office of Drugs and Crimes revealed that 464000 people were victims of intentional homicide in 2017.⁸ Historically, there are many examples of violence that took a heavy toll on human lives. From time to time, violence is used as means to various ends. Violence erupts for myriad reasons. To control, oppress, silence, protest and ensure rights, retaliate, and sometimes it is intended for so called greater good. Violence has several classificational features. But there is no denying that it is not desired.

Definition/Measurement of Zero-violence

To define the term violence, it is necessary to discuss the term peace. In the first and third issues of the peace report published by BPO, the definitions of peace and violence were discussed in detail.^{9 10} Recalling that discussion, peace is classified into two types; positive peace and negative peace. Negative peace is the absence of violence and positive peace is the presence of an environment that sustains peaceful societies. Violence is classified into three types; Direct violence, Structural violence and Cultural violence. This classification of peace and violence is borrowed from the famous sociologist J. Gultang's work.^{11 12} Positive Peace Index calculates the level of positive peace on the basis of eight pillars; 1) Well-functioning Government, 2) Sound

⁶ Global Peace Index 2021, Institute for Economic and Peace, Cited in- <https://www.visionofhumanity.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/GPI-2021-web-1.pdf>

⁷ Strand, Håvard & Håvard Hegre (2021) Trends in Armed Conflict, 1946–2020, Conflict Trends, 3. Oslo: PRIO, Cited in- <https://www.prio.org/download/publicationfile/2350/Strand%20&%20Hegre%20-%20Trends%20in%20Armed%20Conflict,%201946-2020%20-%20Conflict%20Trends%203-2021.pdf>

⁸ Global Study in Homicide, UNODC, Cited in- [https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-](https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/global-study-on-homicide.html)

[analysis/global-study-on-homicide.html](https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/global-study-on-homicide.html) , last accessed on- 15 February 2022.

⁹ CGS Peace Report, Volume 1, Issue 1, pg- 3, Cited in- <http://peaceobservatory-cgs.org/#!/peace-report-viewer>

¹⁰ CGS Peace Report, Volume 1, Issue 3, pg- 10, Cited in- <http://peaceobservatory-cgs.org/#!/peace-report-viewer>

¹¹ CGS Peace Report, Volume 1, Issue 1, Cited in- <http://peaceobservatory-cgs.org/#!/peace-report-viewer>

¹² CGS Peace Report, Volume 1, Issue 3, Cited in- <http://peaceobservatory-cgs.org/#!/peace-report-viewer>

Business Environment, 3) Equitable distribution of resources, 4) Acceptance of the right of others, 5) good relations with neighbours, 6) free flow of information, 7) High levels of human capitals, 8) low level of corruptions.¹³ This is one way to identify the level of peace in a country. Another way of measuring the level of peace in a country is to measure violence. This idea is the central point in this write-up.

The term non-violence was popularised by the pioneer of this notion, Mahatma Gandhi, who led India to independence from colonialism. UN has adopted 2 October as the day to commemorate this ideal.¹⁴ Compared to Non-violence, the idea of zero violence is a recent one. While the former implies that a person has a choice to act violently or not, the latter suggests that violence should be eradicated. Zero violence is mainly inspired by goal 16 of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), more specifically by the target 16.1. This Target aims to 'significantly reduce all forms of violence everywhere'. Due to the negative impact of violence in the development process of a country, violence has been identified as a critical issue to work on and set a guideline for the countries.¹⁵ The

term zero-violence was coined to describe the pinnacle of the journey towards fulfilling the goal 16. To some scholars, this seemed like a utopian idea, but worthy of following.¹⁶ To attain this target, measuring the progress is important. ¹⁷ As zero denotes a point, a level in the scale of violence, the existence of violence can be measured by the level of presence of violence in the community. It is like measuring peace in terms of the level of violence. The closer a society or nation is to the zero point, the more peaceful they are.

Methodology

This study is based on the BPO data from 2014 to 2021 (till November). The data is collected from secondary sources, in this case, the reports of violent incidents from the newspapers. Currently, BPO records news of violent and non-violent incidents from 18 national and regional dailies, some online news portals under 26 categories. Each category denotes a specific type of violence, social, personal, communal, political, sexual, state/non-state violence, etc. In this section, GBV, VAM and VAC will be highlighted and discussed in detail. Also, a significant aspect of this write-up will focus on district-wise segregation, colour-coding/zoning of the districts in

¹³ Positive Peace Report, 2022, Institute for Economic and Peace, Cited in- <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/PPR-2022-web-1.pdf>

¹⁴ United Nations, International Day of Non-violence, Cited in- <https://www.un.org/en/observances/non-violence-day>

¹⁵ Positive Peace Report, 2022, Institute for Economic and Peace, Cited in-

<https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/PPR-2022-web-1.pdf>

¹⁶ Sylvia Walby, 'Towards Zero Violence?' 22 March 2018, Cited in- <https://globaldialogue.isa-sociology.org/articles/towards-zero-violence>

¹⁷ Measuring Goal 16, Identifying the priority indicators based on key statistical and normative criteria, September 2014, IEP, Cited in- <https://www.economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Measuring-Goal-16.pdf>

terms of the number of deaths, and the frequency of the incidents. The zoning of the GBV and VAC categories will be done in terms of death counts and death rates and the VAM will be done in terms of frequency of incident. Different approaches to identify the risk zones is needed due to the distinct features of the violence under these categories. In the case of GBV and VAC, violent incidents are more person-to-person, therefore, resulting in deaths and injuries. On the other hand, incidents related to violence against minorities are mostly attacks inflicted on public places like temples, vandalism of religious idols resulting in property damage and large-scale vandalism. However, there are occurrences of very impactful incidents resulting in death and significant injury counts.

To identify a district's zone, two different ways are followed. As discussed in the previous section, for GBV and VAC, deaths per population and, for VAM related incidents, the number of incidents will be considered for the ranking and zoning. The details of the measurement are explained in Box 1. The rationale for this is that the population of Bangladesh is largely centred in urban areas and megacities, mostly in Dhaka and Chattogram. Therefore, in terms of incident numbers and consequences, the megacities like Dhaka and Chattogram almost every time occupy the top positions. But, the application of the population ratio (death per million population) always changes the scenario significantly.

Box 1: Identifying red, yellow and green zones

GBV:

- Calculating death rate: (average number of deaths per year of a district/Population of the district) *100000
- Measuring class difference: $0 \leq \text{green zone} \leq 3.00$; $3.00 < \text{yellow} \leq 6.00$; $6.00 < \text{red} \leq 10$ and over

VAM:

- Total incident number in 8 years
- Measuring class difference: $0 < \text{green zone} \leq 9$; $10 \leq \text{yellow zone} \leq 19$; $20 \leq \text{red zone} \leq 30$ and over

VAC:

- Calculating death rate: (average number of deaths per year of a district/Population of the district) *100000
- Measuring class difference: $0 \leq \text{green zone} < 2$; $2 \leq \text{yellow} < 4$; $4 \leq \text{red} \leq 6$ and over

At first, let us see the overview of the violence that has taken place from 2014 to 2021(November) (See Table 4).

Table 4: Overview of incidents and consequences in 2014-21						
Year	Incident	Death	Injury	Sexual Assaulted	Abducted	Arrested
2014	13996	4795	27257	444	1578	30448
2015	12715	4121	18803	547	750	34627
2016	11891	4141	20861	432	619	26342
2017	12149	3734	16592	774	766	31513
2018	13367	3903	17701	576	412	37438
2019	17842	5184	16702	1454	472	39238
2020	16876	4935	15332	1448	377	31348
2021	13946	3905	15741	1166	271	33669
Grand Total	112782	34718	148989	6841	5245	264623

Gender-Based Violence

Gender, being a social construct imposed on human beings from an early age, regulates the course of their life. Gender-based violence incorporates not only the violence perpetrated on women and men it also takes into account the violence against different sexual orientations. As women are highly affected by this social phenomenon, gender-based violence is used mostly to address the violence and discrimination against women.¹⁸

¹⁸ Gender Based Violence, UNFPA, Cited in-
<https://www.unfpa.org/gender-based-violence>

¹⁹ 12 Critical Areas, UNWomen, Cited in-
<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/csw59/feature-stories>

Violence against Women

Violence against women is one of the 12 critical areas of concern in 1995 Beijing Platform for action to ensure equality and opportunities for men and women.¹⁹ Women face serious threats to attain life opportunities due to the occurrence of violence in their lifespan. According to WHO, one woman out of three experienced physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner globally in 2021.²⁰

Table 5 depicts an overview of the incidents of eight years in Bangladesh related to Gender-based violence. The data shows that the number of violent and

²⁰Violence Against Women, WHO, Cited in-
<https://www.who.int/news-room/factsheets/detail/violence-against-women>

non-violent incidents increased significantly from 2019 to 2021 (till November). The percentage of violent and non-violent incidents indicates that arrests/detention in connection with GBV is growing, which can also be a sign of

increased attention from law enforcement agencies, as well as the vigilance and advocacy of media, women's rights organisations, changes in social and cultural factors like economic and education level, etc.

Table 5: Overview of Incidents Related to GBV

Year	Number of Incidents			Percentage	
	Non-violent ²¹	Violent ²²	Total	Non-violent	Violent
2014	156	1463	1619	9.64	90.36
2015	135	1330	1465	9.22	90.78
2016	146	1439	1585	9.21	90.79
2017	292	1785	2077	14.06	85.94
2018	174	1459	1633	10.66	89.34
2019	676	2472	3148	21.47	78.53
2020	817	2813	3630	22.51	77.49
2021	419	2019	2438	17.19	82.81
Grand Total	2815	14780	17595	16.00	84.00

Figure 5 depicts the number of sexual assaults, deaths, and injuries in the violent incidents within this timeline. It shows that for the last three years, The GBV incidents

has been increasing. Also, the peak was in 2017, following a drop in 2018, the numbers went up in the following years.

²¹ **Non-violent incidents:** The reported incident did not involve the intentional use of physical force by an individual or group against another individual or group, in a way that resulted or could have resulted in death, injury or any other form of physical harm to persons or property.

²² **Violent incidents:** The reported incident involved the intentional use of physical force by an individual or group against another individual or group, in a way that resulted or could have resulted in death, injury or any other form of physical harm to persons or property.

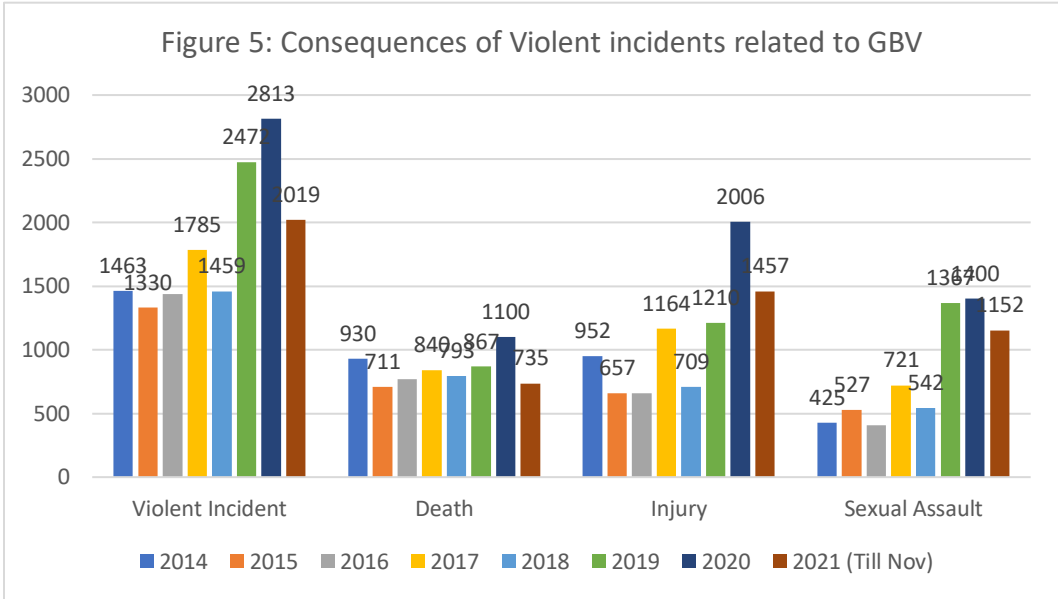
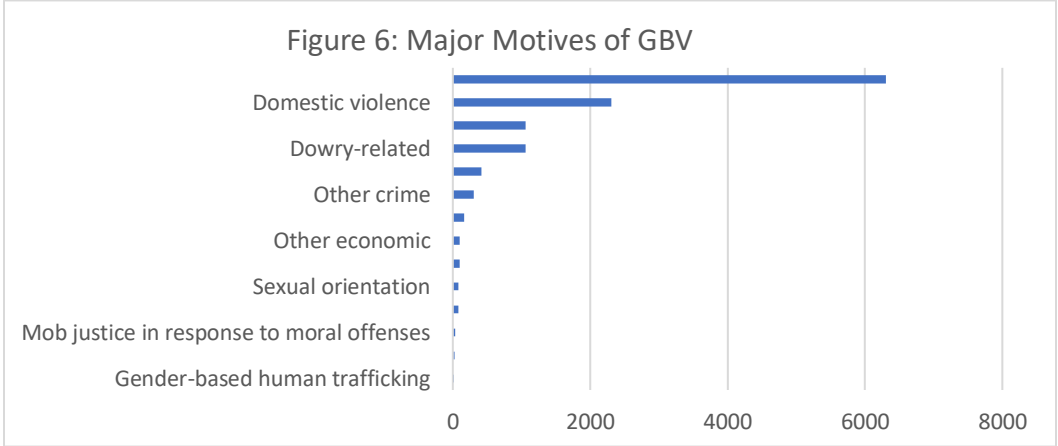


Figure 6 illustrates the significant motives of GBV. It shows that sexual assault and domestic violence are the key motives of GBV.



Domestic Violence

Domestic violence occurred for dowry, family feuds, distribution of family

resources, extra-marital affairs, etc. It is important to note here that BPO acknowledges violence perpetrated among intimate partners and registers

violence among close family members like parents/in-laws or siblings.²³ From 2014 to 2021, 2505 women died due to domestic feuds with intimate partners, in-laws and family members. In 2014, the number was the highest (see table 6). Also, due to the pandemic, the number of domestic

violence rose globally; Bangladesh was no exception. In 2019, the number of incidents was 5.67% higher than in 2018; and in 2020, the number of incidents was 17.11% higher than in 2019. Domestic violence also was a motive for the suicide incidents among women.

Table 6: Year-wise Segregation of Female Death in Domestic Violence

Year	Female death
2014	441
2015	300
2016	260
2017	277
2018	282
2019	298
2020	349
2021	298
Grand Total	2505

Sexual Assault

Sexual assault is the most occurred violence targeted at women. Table 7 shows a surge in sexual assaults from 2018 to 2021. Besides, the majority of rape and attempted rape incidents, sexual harassment, eve-teasing cases are also registered under this category. Almost 70% of the victims of sexual assault are girls (under 18 years), and also some of the victims were boys (1%). Perpetrators are

usually adult men. Not only are girls and women at risk from unknown persons, but they also face threats from their own family members, teachers or faculties, neighbours, relatives, friends, and co-workers, even when using transport. In some of the incidents, the perpetrators are minor boys. The offenders often lure the victims with a promise of marriage or jobs. In other instances, the victims are forced.

²³ **Domestic violence:** Violence between intimate partners and/or members of the same household, regardless of the gender of the victim.

Table 7: Yearly trend of incidents and consequences in Sexual Assault

Year	Incident	Death	Injury	Arrest
2014	405	94	377	252
2015	489	52	334	322
2016	410	37	311	223
2017	711	65	600	451
2018	518	45	346	470
2019	1339	82	751	1169
2020	1477	52	1359	1471
2021	1137	60	1042	1120
Grand Total	6486	487	5120	5478

Suicide

Globally, nearly 800,000 people die committing suicide each year.²⁴ During the pandemic, the number of suicides increased at an alarming rate in Bangladesh. A survey conducted by Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) revealed that the pandemic brought fear and panic out of people and provoked them to commit suicide, even those who did not think about doing it in the first place. The report also stated that women

committed suicide more than men,²⁵ contradicting the global pattern.²⁶ The mental health issue and suicide have been neglected by the people of Bangladesh, which is also being reflected in government policy. In Bangladesh, the suicide rate is higher among youths of different ages. Frustration, depression, the uncertainty of student life, career, relationships, conflicts with parents are major reasons for suicide among youths and adolescents.^{27 28 29 30}

²⁴ 'One person dies by suicide every 40 seconds: new UN health agency report', UN News, 9 September 2019, Cited in- <https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/09/1045892>

²⁵ 'করোনার প্রথম বছরে আত্মহত্যা বেড়েছে ১৭ শতাংশ', Daily Ittefaq, 10 September 2021, cited in-

<https://www.ittefaq.com.bd/274222/%E0%A6%AA%E0%A7%8D%E0%A6%B0%E0%A6%A5%E0%A6%AE>
²⁶ Our world in Data, Suicide, Cited in- <https://ourworldindata.org/suicide#:~:text=can%20be%20prevented.,Summary,in%202017%20were%20from%20suicide.>

²⁷ 'Covid and the rise in suicidal behavior in youths', The Dhaka Tribune, 9 October 2021,

cited in- <https://archive.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/2021/10/09/covid-and-the-rise-in-suicidal-behaviour-in-youths>

²⁸ 'Frustration and suicide rising among youths' The New Age, 20 June 2021, Cited in- <https://www.newagebd.net/article/141238/frustration-and-suicide-rising-among-youths>

²⁹ 'The young show higher tendency of suicide: Survey', The Business Standard, 11 September 2021, Cited in- <https://www.tbsnews.net/bangladesh/health/young-show-higher-tendency-suicide-survey-301138>

³⁰ 'The silent pandemic: Social isolation and loneliness', The Daily Star, 22 April 2021, Cited in-

BPO registers suicide under the assault category. It contributes to a large number of reported incidents in the assault category. In eight years, 6863 people died by committing suicide, according to the BPO data (see Table 8). The majority of

the casualties are women and girls. Also, the rate is higher among the youth. Family disputes, altercations with family members and intimate partners, economic and social frustration, humiliation are the main reasons for suicide.

Table 8: Yearly Trend of Suicide Incidents

Year	Number of Incidents	Total Deaths	Total Injured
2014	847	863	25
2015	502	512	25
2016	542	567	50
2017	646	666	17
2018	564	582	13
2019	1117	1110	41
2020	1327	1338	32
2021	1230	1225	37
Grand Total	6775	6863	240

District-wise ranking in terms of GBV: Identifying Red, yellow and Green Zones in Bangladesh

Table 9 and 10 show the ranking of the districts in terms of the number of deaths. The first one shows the top ten districts having the highest mortality and the second table shows the bottom ten

districts with the lowest mortality. The average shown in the last column to the right is calculated by dividing the total number of deaths by eight years.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/opinion/news/the-silent-pandemic-social-isolation-and-loneliness-2081389>

Table 9: Top 10 District in terms of Death (GBV)				
Ran k	District	Incident	Death	Aver.
1	Dhaka Zila	1977	853	107
2	Gazipur Zila	693	312	39
3	Chattogram Zila	926	310	39
4	Narayanganj Zila	803	223	28
5	Mymensingh Zila	539	222	28
6	Bogura Zila	656	187	23
7	Cumilla Zila	362	169	21
8	Jashore Zila	433	163	20
9	Sirajganj Zila	335	159	20
10	Pabna Zila	336	150	19

Table 10: Bottom 10 District in terms of Death (GBV)				
Ran k	District	Incident	Death	Aver.
1	Rangamati	46	18	2
2	Bandarban	67	20	3
3	Khagrachhari	82	26	3
4	Rajbari	120	32	4
5	Meherpur	64	34	4
6	Lalmonirhat	142	35	4
7	Feni	147	36	5
8	Narail	90	38	5
9	Panchagarh	76	38	5
10	Magura	82	40	5

Table 11, 12 and 13 show the districts' place in red, yellow, and green zones regarding their death rates in GBV related incidents. A total of 14 districts are in the red zone, 45 districts are in the yellow zone, and only five are in the green zone. A comparison between table 6 and table 8 shows that application of population ratio

influences the districts' positions in the color zones significantly. In terms of death numbers, Dhaka has the highest mortality, 2.5 times more than the next district, Gazipur. Gazipur has the same death number as Chattogram (table 6). But, in terms of population ratio, Gazipur occupied the first position (table 8).

Table 11: Top Ten District of Red Zone (with death rate between 6.00 and 10+)			
Rank	District	GBV Death in 8 Years	Rate
1	Gazipur	312	9.74
2	Pirojpur	92	9.18
3	Jhalokati	54	8.77
4	Narayanganj	223	8.07
5	Dhaka	853	7.81
6	Natore	115	7.43
7	Manikganj	94	7.24
8	Barishal	149	6.78
9	Jashore	163	6.47
10	Pabna	150	6.28

Table 12: top ten Districts of Yellow Zone (having death rate between 3.00 and 6.00)			
Rank	District	GBV Death in 8 Years	Rate
1	Chuadanga	61	5.93
2	Meherpur	34	5.73
3	Joypurhat	47	5.70
4	Narail	38	5.61
5	Cox's Bazar	131	5.55
6	Sirajganj	159	5.42
7	Bandarban	20	5.39
8	Rajshahi	127	5.35
9	Dinajpur	143	5.27
10	Patuakhali	74	5.13

Table 13: District of Green Zones (having death rates between 0 and 3.00)

Rank	District	GBV Death in 8 Years	Rate
1	Sunamganj	43	1.76
2	Kurigram	48	2.46
3	Feni	36	2.59
4	Lalmonirhat	35	2.95
5	Kishoreganj	87	3.00

Violence against Minorities (VAM)

Minority groups or minorities in Bangladesh are different from the majority population in terms of religion, ethnicity, language and, to some extent, sexual orientation.³¹ But the majority of the incidents recorded in BPO under this category is targeted at the 'Hindu' population. The VAM situation is historically linked with the political trends of Bangladesh. The election years are regarded as considerably dangerous for religious minorities.³² Recently, there is another variable at work, the defamation

of the religion of the majority on social media, in this case, Islam.³³ Also, most of the reported violence enlisted in BPO are vandalism at the temples and idols, followed by targeted personal and communal attacks. A series of violence against religious minorities has taken place in recent years.³⁴ In table 14, the yearly trend of Violence against Minorities is shown. The trend shows an irregular pattern. In 2014, 2016 and 2021, the incidents and related deaths and injuries increased significantly. 2014 was an election year. In 2016, the Upazilla election took place in various areas.

³¹ World Directory on Minorities and Indigenous People, Bangladesh, Cited in- <https://minorityrights.org/country/bangladesh/>

³² Chowdhury, N,F, (2010) 'Bombs and Ballots: Terrorism, Political Violence, and Governance in Bangladesh, IPI, Cited in- https://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/publications/e_pub_bombs_and_ballots.pdf

³³ 'Cumilla mayhem: A chronicle of hate unleashed', The Daily Star, 18 October 2021, Cited in- <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news/chronicle-hate-unleashed-2200801>

³⁴ 'Seven dead after violence erupts during Hindu festival in Bangladesh', The guardian, 16 October 2021, Cited in- <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/oct/16/seven-dead-after-violence-erupts-at-hindu-festival-in-bangladesh>

Year	Incident	Death	Injury	Arrest
2014	174	11	357	159
2015	64	10	63	59
2016	147	25	150	169
2017	88	10	70	164
2018	82	15	62	56
2019	43	9	89	31
2020	37	2	62	15
2021	111	11	243	721
Grand Total	746	93	1096	1374

Table 15 depicts the divisional segregation of the VAM related incidents. It is noticeable that the incidents are

concentrated in four divisions, Dhaka, Chattogram, Rajshahi and Rangpur.

Division	Incident	Death	Injury	Arrest
Barishal	60	1	116	43
Chattogram	136	28	279	688
Dhaka	156	15	151	128
Khulna	66	8	95	70
Mymensingh	52	2	20	37
Rajshahi	115	19	72	75
Rangpur	116	17	210	253
Sylhet	45	3	153	80
Grand Total	747	93	1096	1374

There are several other motives that exist apart from the religio-centric reasons for violence against minorities. Although religion is a more visible and impactful cause of violence, other motives like land,

control over natural resources, the tension between local people and ethnic minority groups are also catalysts in instigating violence.³⁵

³⁵ 'Land grabbers attack Srimangal Khasi people' The Daily Star, 31 May 2014, Cited in-

<https://www.thedailystar.net/land-grabbers-attack-srimangal-khasi-people-26463>

Table 16 depicts the district ranking and their position in red, yellow and green zones in terms of incident numbers. A total of 9 districts are in the red zone, 27

districts are in the yellow zone and 27 **districts are** in the green zone. In Meherpur, there was no incident reported in eight years.

Table 16: Districts in Red, Yellow and Green Zone in VAM related incidents (see box 1 for class limits)

Rank	Top Ten in red zone		Top ten in yellow zone		Bottom Ten in green zone	
	District	Incident	District	Incident	District	Incident
1	Dinajpur	31	Brahmanbaria	19	Narail	1
2	Chattogram	28	Naogaon	18	Bhola	3
3	Dhaka	26	Natore	18	Jamalpur	3
4	Bogura	25	Netrakona	18	Kushtia	3
5	Mymensingh	24	Gazipur	17	Magura	3
6	Rangpur	23	Narayanganj	17	Shariatpur	3
7	Barishal	23	Tangail	17	Kishoreganj	4
8	Faridpur	22	Cumilla	16	Jhalokati	5
9	Noakhali	21	Bagerhat	15	Khulna	5
10	N/A	---	Gaibandha	15	Lakshmipur	5

Violence against Children (VAC)

Recalling the previous discussion about children being the main victim of sexual assault, this section will elaborate on the trend of violence against children in Bangladesh. Bangladesh has ratified the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* in 1990. It has also ensured significant advancement

in enrollment in levels of education and mitigating infant mortality rate in the years.³⁶ However, children face threats in Bangladesh in both public and private spheres. A child can face discrimination and violence in his/her family due to poverty, social norms, negligence, etc. Children in Bangladesh are prone to

³⁶'25 years of CRC in Bangladesh: Snapshot of success', Child Rights Advocacy Coalition in of Bangladesh, ASK, Save the Children, Cited in-

<https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/crc402520report2028bangladesh292020th20november202014.pdf/>

malnutrition, stunted growth and other developmental difficulties. Teaching children discipline is another area where children face severe psychological and physical violence threats. Girl children face sexual violence, and for the boy children, abduction is the most occurred violence.³⁷ Bangladesh has a policy of not employing children in hazardous works, but the monitoring is loose. About 1.7 to 3.4 million children are engaged in child labour in Bangladesh.³⁸ ³⁹The recent COVID-19 pandemic has put the children in distress and at risk of food availability, education opportunity, health and violence.⁴⁰

According to BPO data, kidnapping, sexual assault, assault are the major types of

violence that children face. Children were caught between political and social conflict in several cases and sustained injury. There are a significant number of reported cases where newborns were abandoned. Also, children faced physical punishment from the teachers at school for discipline or academic reasons in many instances.

Table 17 shows the yearly trend of violence against children in Bangladesh. It is noticeable that in 2019 the number rose to the highest, and following years, it declined, but the number was still higher than the number before 2019. The decrease in number may correlate with the pandemic's impact on daily life in 2020 and 2021.

Table 17: Yearly Trend of Violence against Children

Year	Incident	Death	Injury	Sexual Assault	Arrest
2014	854	484	258	231	407
2015	837	396	291	340	428
2016	783	416	308	250	345
2017	1096	511	505	490	547
2018	836	362	341	379	571
2019	1645	579	598	881	1113
2020	1481	620	805	752	1032
2021	1198	486	656	621	847
Grand Total	8730	3854	3762	3944	5290

³⁷Policy Brief: The situation of children in Bangladesh, April 2020, Cited in-
<https://rapidbd.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Policy-Brief-Situation-Analysis-of-Children-in-Bangladesh.pdf>

³⁸ UNICEF, Children in Bangladesh, Cited in-
<https://www.unicef.org/bangladesh/en/children-bangladesh>

³⁹ A future without hazardous child labor in Bangladesh, Global Fund For Children, Cited in-
<https://globalfundforchildren.org/story/a-future-without-hazardous-child-labor-in-bangladesh>

⁴⁰Children Perception survey, COVID-19 Impact on Children, Save the Children, Cited in-
<https://bangladesh.savethechildren.net/sites/bangladesh.savethechildren.net/files/library/Children%20Perception%20Survey%20on%20COVID19.pdf>

Table 18 and 19 show the top ten and bottom ten districts in terms of the average number of deaths in a year. And table 20, 21 and 22 show the districts that are in red, yellow and green zones in

terms of death rate per million population. The average shown in the last column to the right is calculated by dividing the total number of deaths by eight years.

Top 18: Top ten Districts in terms of Death (VAC)				
Rank	Top districts	Total Incident	Total Death	Avg.
1	Dhaka	1033	555	69.38
2	Chattogram	439	190	23.75
3	Barishal	308	142	17.75
4	Gazipur	324	139	17.38
5	Bogura	303	115	14.38
6	Narayanganj	329	110	13.75
7	Mymensingh	256	96	12.00
8	Jashore	222	93	11.63
9	Sirajganj	148	84	10.50
10	Rajshahi	183	83	10.38

Table 19: Bottom 10 Districts in terms of Death (VAC)				
Rank	Districts	Total Incident	Total Death	Avg.
1	Meherpur	18	9	1
2	Khagrachhari	35	11	1
3	Feni	66	13	2
4	Narail	35	14	2
5	Rangamati	27	14	2
6	Bandarban	47	16	2
7	Gopalganj	42	16	2
8	Rajbari	59	17	2
9	Jhalokati	62	23	3
10	Panchagarh	51	24	3

There are 8 districts in the red zone, 40 in the yellow zone, and 16 in the green

zone, respecting the death related to VAC.

Table 20: Districts in the Red Zone in terms of Death Rate (see box 1 for scale)			
Rank	District	VAC Death in 8 Years	Rate
1	Pirojpur	72	7.18
2	Barishal	142	6.46
3	Dhaka	555	5.08
4	Natore	73	4.71
5	Chuadanga	45	4.38
6	Gazipur	139	4.34
7	Bandarban	16	4.31
8	Patuakhali	58	4.02

Table 21: Top Ten Districts of Yellow Zone (see box 1 for scale)			
Rank	District	VAC Death in 8 Years	Rate
1	Narayanganj	110	3.98
2	Joypurhat	31	3.76
3	Jhalokati	23	3.73
4	Bogura	115	3.72
5	Jashore	93	3.69
6	Rajshahi	83	3.49
7	Barguna	27	3.37
8	Magura	29	3.36
9	Munshiganj	44	3.33
10	Manikganj	42	3.23

Table 22: Bottom Ten Districts of Green Zone (see box 1 for scale)

Rank	District	VAC Death in 8 Years	Rate
1	Feni	13	0.94
2	Sunamganj	27	1.10
3	Gopalganj	16	1.50
4	Meherpur	9	1.52
5	Gaibandha	36	1.53
6	Cumilla	80	1.54
7	Kurigram	31	1.59
8	Chandpur	41	1.77
9	Rajbari	17	1.79
10	Jamalpur	39	1.82

Conclusion:

The journey towards attaining a society without violence needs both theoretical and practical approaches. Identifying the area of society that facilitates violence and eradicating the root causes of this phenomenon is necessary to achieve sustainable development. The findings from the discussion above point out some broad areas where violence occurs in Bangladesh. Women are at risk of violence at every level of the public and private sphere despite their contribution to the formal and informal labour force and care works. Children are the nation's future,

although the present scenario suggests serious developmental risks to those young minds. Bangladeshi people love to celebrate all cultures, but the data on violence against minorities suggest a looming threat to this harmony. The strength of the harmony is tested several times due to the unrest, which took advantage of the easy and irresponsible use of technology. Reforms are needed and this write-up tries to identify the areas to work on. Also, the regional classification to identify the risk zones will likely help identify societal and cultural factors, both good and bad, to help formulate plans of actions.

Annex:

Some definitional clarification according to BPO Codebook.

Gunfight. Shootout between the law enforcement agencies and criminals, militants, or other irregular forces, including amongst the latter, that does not match the definition of a non-state armed group.

Clash. Two-sided violence between groups, outside of the context of war or insurgency. *Example: supporters of rival political parties fight each other.*

Assault. One-sided violence by an individual or small group against another individual or small group. *Example: stabbing, shooting of someone by a perpetrator*

Fight. Two-sided violence between individuals or small groups. *Example: brawl between 3-4 people.*

Sexual assault. One-sided sexual violence, such as rape or attempted rape, by an individual or small group against another individual or small group.

Destruction of property. One-sided violence perpetrated with the intent of damaging property. *Examples: vandalism, arson.*

Mob violence (large group assault). One-sided violence by a mob or large group against an individual or a comparatively small and/or defenseless group. *Examples: lynching of a thief, looting of shops and houses owned by a religious minority*



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