

STATE OF PEACE | 2019



STATE OF PEACE 2019

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From the Editor's Desk

If it was not for 31 December 2019, when the Chinese government informed the World Health Organization (WHO) about the deadly novel coronavirus or Covid-19, the *State of Peace 2019* would have had no reason to copy paste the image of the virus on its cover. In normal circumstances the annual report would have come out by end January 2020, but it got delayed by three months for which we can only blame the virus. The delay, however, has created an opportunity to reflect not only on 2019 but also on the first four months of 2020. I'm not sure whether I should take this as a bad omen or an opportunity to contemplate and pen something more contemporary.

Comparison is not always a good science, but it does provide us with some ideas as to where we are heading. Again, year-by-year comparison would differ from decade-by-decade or century-by-century comparison, yet it is true that a shorter timeline can make one frustrated while a longer timeline can cool you down. Humans' capacity to learn, develop, innovate and progress remain boundless, but this may not be visible on a day-to-day basis. It always requires a relatively longer timeline and a critical sense of history.

In this light, if 2019 is compared with 2018 then one gets a mixed scenario of the *State of Peace* in Bangladesh. According to BPO, there is a slight decline in at least four categories of violence in 2019 compared to 2018, and this can be found from the 'number of death' in 2019, although analysing 'death' *numerically* is something I find morally reprehensible. This is because a single death is worse enough for a mother. But then the method that is being pursued here would not allow us any other way. Keeping the moral issues out of our gaze, at least for the moment, we find that in *violent extremism* 15 people died in 2018 while the figure has come down to 4 in 2019 (see, Appendix I). The relative success of Bangladesh in countering violent extremism is also validated by the Global Terrorism Index, which has ranked Bangladesh 31 in 2019, while 25 in 2018, that is, Bangladesh is six notches down in 2019 (see, Appendix II).

In the category called *violence against minority* Bangladesh did slightly better. The number of death went down from 15 in 2018 to 9 in 2019 (see, Appendix III). This otherwise shows that the so-called anti-minority campaign in the name of NRC and CAA across the border in India has not made an impact on Bangladesh. The bulk of the population still think that it is an internal problem of India and the people of India would be able to resolve it wisely without making it a cross-border issue.

The death figure arising from *gunfight* also showed a relative decline, from 614 in 2018 to 543 in 2019 (see, Appendix IV). But this is a complex category because it includes *gunfight* not only between two groups of criminals but also between criminals and law-enforcement agencies, including extra-judicial killing. The decline could suggest a greater awareness on the part of the law-enforcement agencies in apprehending the suspect without resorting to extra-judicial killing, indeed, resulting from the sustained campaign of human rights activists both national and international.

Finally, there is a decline in the number of death in *drug-related violence*, from 469 in 2018 to 379 in 2019 (see, Appendix V). Again, this could have resulted from the awareness of the law-enforcement agencies in addressing the problem through incarceration rather than killing, as number of arrest went up from 13,116 in 2018 to 13,573 in 2019. But then whether anti-drug campaign is having an impact or not is too early to tell.

But the mixed scenario is evident when one looks at categories like *violence against women* (VAW), *youth violence* (YV), and *violence against children* (VAC). In all three categories, the number of death went up, from 793 to 869 in VAW, from 579 to 1279 in YV, from 416 to 560 in VAC, in 2018 and 2019 respectively (see, Appendix VI, VII, VIII). This would certainly be of concern, particularly when both governmental and non-governmental agencies, including some international organizations, are working for decades in bringing down VAW, YV and VAC. May be there ought to be a greater gaze on the perpetrator and not just on the victim, indeed, in the case of VAW, the gaze ought to be as much on the empowered male perpetrator as it is on the disempowered female victim. Since empowering the female does not automatically result in disempowering the male, there ought to be programs for de-masculinizing, even de-patriarchizing, the male if we were contain and root out VAW.

A rising trend in violence also showed in categories like *mob violence* (MV), *cross border violence* (CBV), and *Rohingya-related violence* (RRV). In MV, the number of death in 2018 stood at 41, but it almost doubled in 2019 to 80 (see, Appendix IX). Such a steep increase in the number of death needs a closer examination, since reasons could range from 'turf war' to shrinking shares of booties, including proceeds from drugs. In fact, pairing *drug-related violence*, which saw a decline, with MV, which has increased, would be worth an effort before coming to a conclusion on either of them. Similar seems to be the case with CBV and RRV, both saw a steep rise in the number of death, from 15 to 49 in CBV, and from 21 to 89 in RRV, in 2018 and 2019 respectively (see, Appendix X, XI). Again, a closer examination is required, because in many instances such violence is related to smuggling, including illicit drug trade. Indeed, in the case of RRV there has been cases where trading *yaba* or 'madness drug' has led to violent death. If anything, the comparison between 2018 and 2019 only shows that a greater effort is required in containing violence and reproducing peace.

Covid-19 has hit the world badly, including Bangladesh, both mortally and economically. As indicated earlier, counting death, whether across nations or continents, does not interest me at all. But then the most pertinent question now is, can we limit the number of death and reproduce the economy in the shortest possible time, nationally as well as globally? There is no doubt that the two are connected, and the connection has become all the more clear with Covid-19 spreading throughout the world regardless of border, sovereignty, ethnicity, religion, language, race, even gastronomical preference or choice of dress!

It is unfortunate that Covid-19 came at a time when the conservative or right-wing forces are in power in several of the major countries of the world, including USA, UK, Brazil and India. Given their agenda of guarding their national interests, albeit territorially conceived, and that again, mainly for winning national elections and remaining in power, the spread of Covid-19 found them paralyzed beyond description. In fact, as *The Washington Post* reported on 19 April 2020, even when more than a dozen US researchers, physicians and public health experts were providing real-time information about Covid-19 to the US administration from Geneva headquarters of the World Health Organization (WHO) when the virus emerged in Wuhan in December 2019, the President of the US remained unaffected, calling it either a hoax or another kind of flu or something that will vanish soon! The case was no different with other conservative-led governments around the world. Probably they were all thinking that since it originated in Wuhan let China deal with it or even worse, let them suffer, without realizing that the virus would soon create havoc to their own life and living.

Indeed, sealing borders or policies resembling political gimmicking became more important than giving time and resources to understand and contain the virus. Trump, for instance, banned foreigners visiting China to enter the US from 2 February 2020, but kept it open to the American citizens traveling from China as late as end March 2020. Not sure why this was done, knowing very well that the virus would not be able to distinguish an American from a non-American.

Nearer our home, India too was slow in responding to the spread of Covid-19, and then when it started to respond it came out with the idea of cancelling visas to non-Indians from 13 March 2020 onwards and calling for a 14-hour all-India 'public curfew' on 22 March 2020. The first one is easy to implement, but since the virus is fully country-blind the impact would be no different from that of the US. The second one probably was intended to be more symbolic and a way to build awareness, but then how it would be operationalized defies logic, particularly when New Delhi alone has more than 300,000 street children, while some estimates put the total number of street children in India as high as 18 million. In the midst of all this there was one interesting move on the part of India and that was to call a SAARC virtual meeting on 15 March 2020. But then in the backdrop of having no SAARC Summit since 2014, the virtual meeting

remains ineffective, if not out of place, not only because it was programmed to contain China's influence in South Asia, which few would be excited about at this moment, but also it was too late to stop the spread of Covid-19. More collective efforts ought to have been pursued by the major powers, indeed, as early as January 2020 when news of Covid-19 started pouring in from China and WHO, and not wait till 12 March 2020 when WHO came out with a scientific declaration of Covid-19 outbreak as a pandemic.

Bangladesh too lacked knowledge and preparation in responding to the pandemic. It had some plans in the beginning when 316 Bangladeshis were evacuated from Wuhan on 1 February 2020 and quarantined for 14 days in Dhaka, although none of them tested positive for Covid-19. Bangladesh, however, lost hold of the situation when thousands started returning from Europe, mainly from Italy and Germany, and this continued even after international flights were banned on 14 March 2020. Some estimates put the figure between 450,000-550,000 passengers returning from abroad in the first three months of 2020. Although late in February the passengers were asked to go for self-quarantine in their respective locations for 14 days, but the instruction lacked strict supervision. Returnees too were less enthusiastic in maintaining the quarantine. It may be pointed out here that Bangladesh was relatively slow in dealing with Covid-19 in January and February mainly because the whole country was geared towards the centennial birthday celebration of the Father of the Nation, which was due on 17 March 2020. The Prime Minister, however, took the bold decision of postponing the event on 8 March 2020. This may have helped a little because large gatherings celebrating the event across Bangladesh would have made the situation even worse, although the spread of Covid-19 must have already taken place by then. On 17 April 2020 the Government of Bangladesh declared that the entire country is at risk of Covid-19. Now there is no option but to face the virus boldly and smartly!

What is to be done then? Banishing *fear* ought to be the first thing. This is because fear takes us nowhere, it can only make things worse. Not only because much of it arises from ignorance, but also because, as Ibn Rushd would say, it leads to intolerance and violence. Indeed, by mid-March 2020 the social media was full of fearful news, creating panic in the minds of people. I too had to step in and text the following message on 7 April 2020 to a former student of mine, who was regularly *re-posting* fearful news in social media:

Please refrain from re-posting sad and fearful news! It doesn't help anyone. If you have time and can't resist the temptation of posting something and letting people know that you are alive then post some positive news on medical breakthroughs or some encouraging news from China or Korea. A country is just like our mother, we don't make her sad and fearful at times of her distress, we try to encourage her and make her smile! One can take lessons from Tagore's poem: *Birpurush*! This is precisely what we did in the

midst of a genocide in 1971 when 1.5 to 3 million people died in 9 months! The current Covid-19 global death figure is nothing to a child of 1971! We surely will overcome this too. Spread encouraging news to keep the spirit of the people alive! Take care.

Critics probably will say what has pandemic to do with genocide? In fact, in both pandemic and genocide one can end up becoming a victim almost unknowingly! But more importantly, neither in genocide nor in pandemic fear helps. Remaining cool, boosting the morale of others, and working relentlessly to make a difference to life and living can turn out to be lifesavers in the midst of Covid-19 pandemic.

Secondly, taking lessons from the countries who have fared better in dealing with Covid-19 ought to be prioritized. China, South Korea and Vietnam are some of the countries that would immediately come to the mind. Apart from getting information from the media and the internet, governmental and non-governmental, even personal, contacts ought to be activated for a continuous flow of knowledge and know-how. Since some of these countries have opened up special hospitals, even factories producing essential items, it is important to know from multiple sources how that is being done and in what way Bangladesh could replicate without jeopardizing the lives of the people. Bangladesh missions, including the diaspora, can play a critical role in disseminating the knowledge and mapping the requirements so that Bangladesh would know how to save lives, what to produce, and what to supply.

Thirdly, there is an urgent need to reenergize the GO-NGO partnership, which has proven its efficiency and effectiveness in Bangladesh in dealing with both natural and human-induced disasters. The former refers to the periodic floods and cyclones, while the latter refers to the Rohingyas, over a million of them, now residing in refugee camps in Cox's Bazar. Indeed, the partnership need to be activated not only in the much-required health sector, which, I understand, is getting some pace, but also in the advocacy of handwashing and social distancing, delivering food and medicines, helping farmers, even providing education and supporting community policing at the ward/thana level.

Fourthly, public health ought to be revisited. There is certainly lot to learn from the regimes that have fared better during the pandemic, from Vietnam, for instance, mainly because, like Bangladesh, it is also a developing country. In fact, in matters related to public health, the democratic-authoritarian dichotomy has become meaningless. Instead, what is required is professionalism in delivering things when it is required in emergencies. One cannot help remembering here the words of Alexander Pope, "For forms of government let fools contest; whatever is best administered is best." Public health ought to be mainstreamed, indeed, at all levels of education, from kindergartens to tertiary, and not limit the knowledge to medical schools only. Also public health ought to be the subject of the visual and print

media, professional courses, both civil and military, cultural performance, indeed, with a larger allocation in the national budget.

Fifthly, making good use of civil-military relationship. Bangladesh is the only country in South Asia where its military fought side by side with the people for the independence of the country during the war of liberation. I am, indeed, referring to 1971. This has created a structure which has proven useful not only during natural disasters but also in international peacekeeping, with Bangladesh peacekeepers even managing hospitals in Gbarnga, Liberia, during the Ebola outbreak in 2014. The expertise of the military in disaster management ought to be utilized alongside the civil authority and international agencies to the full. In this context, the military can play a critical role in ensuring inter-district communication, including supply of food and essential goods, besides helping in lockdown efforts.

Sixthly, re-starting the economy. This relates more to the formal sector than the informal sector, although the workforce of the latter probably has suffered more than the workforce of the former. This is because the income of many in the informal sector is on a daily basis, whereas in the case of the formal sector it is mostly monthly. A complete or partial lockdown otherwise is possible in the formal sector, but not in the informal sector. If one looks at the composition of the informal sector then one will find that in all three employment sectors - agriculture, industry and service - the informal employment is overwhelming, indeed, according to the Labour Force Survey Bangladesh 2016-2017, 95.4 percent in the agriculture sector, 89.9 percent in the industry sector, and 71.8 percent in the service sector of the total employment in that sector. This, of course, has advantages and disadvantages. One critical, if not unfortunate, advantage is that the informal economy will keep on running even in a dire situation. This gives us hope in the sense that a large section of the population, given that they are employed in the informal sector, would continue reproducing their lives in some form or another. Apart from not being able to get employed because of the lockdown and not getting the daily wage, the disadvantage of the informal workforce would be in their getting exposed to Covid-19 in a much bigger way. This is where creative intervention is required in reproducing the informal sector, which cannot be stopped in anyway, of course, without the workforce getting exposed to Covid-19. Washing hands, physical distancing, even testing for virus, would play a major role in reproducing the informal sector.

The matter is different for the formal sector, which needs to be 'smart' to bounce back. There is bound to be a short-term downturn, but it is destined to have a quick upturn, provided it can play its part smartly. A cue can be taken from the South Korean tech giant Samsung, whose operating profit in the first three months of 2020, when Covid-19 was creating havoc all over the world, rose from a year ago and beat expectations slightly. The reason is not difficult to understand. Samsung was selling items, mainly memory chips, whose demand went up as more people were working from home and making their purchases

online. As Albert Einstein once said, "In the midst of every crisis, lies great opportunity." Indeed, a thorough knowledge, backed by in-depth research, is required to map the items that would be required in short, mid, and long-terms.

The need for medical items, including PPE, ventilators, sanitizers, gloves, and the like is understandable. Securing the health condition of the workforce, particularly physical distancing, the production of such items ought to be carried out in full speed and, if required, with extra workforce. Given the relative secured space, the EPZs could play a greater role in re-starting the production lines. Clothing certainly would be one item that would be required mid-term onwards. A greater smartness is required in this sector, mainly because there are countries (Vietnam, for instance), who have managed to re-start their RMG sector, and then, there are few other countries (Myanmar, for instance), whose workforce, particularly those who have lost their jobs, is being supported by the European Union with emergency cash fund. Since Bangladesh has to compete with both Vietnam and Myanmar, for instance, in the RMG sector, it is important that Bangladesh keeps a track of things around the world so that it can best strategize its clothing industry. A change from shopping malls to e-shopping is bound to happen in both short- and mid-terms, the quicker the reorientation is done in the demand-supply channels the better. A proliferation of e-offices will also make virtual business the new norm, indeed, as much in the cities as in the rural areas, where e-entrepreneurs, subject to their availability and training, would certainly make a difference.

There is no denying the fact that a dubious business-political nexus, involved in money laundering, exists in the country. The GOB needs to keep a close eye on this more than ever. Indeed, a part of the laundered money in Bangladesh is regularly siphoned off to the developed countries, with the latter legalizing the illegal money to the full! In fact, one report, published in March 2020, indicates that capital flight from Bangladesh stands at USD 7.53 billion on an average per year, and that again due to misinvoicing during import and export alone. Since those involved in capital flight are from the same nexus, it becomes difficult to stop such transfer of wealth. As one critic pointed out, "Many politicians, bureaucrats and businessmen try to launder money as their children stay abroad." This is where the GOB, including civil watchdogs, must remain extra vigilant as 'fear' at home would make the nexus and many more rationalize their illegal transfer of wealth even more.

Seventhly, education in the broadest sense of the term needs to be reinvented. There is no doubt that during this crisis some have made use of the "de-class space" with the help of the internet through various apps, such as Skype, Zoom, Google, and many more, instead of delivering lectures at the locked down traditional classrooms. But this needs to be institutionalized at all levels, from kindergartens to tertiary levels, with an effort to have education connected globally in real time. Fresh MOUs need to be signed to

partner within and outside the country to offer gradable e-courses. But then, the national curricula at various levels need to be revisited as well. Not only for mainstreaming public health, as indicated earlier, but also for mainstreaming knowledge of survival, with a focus as much on the futures, nature and post-nationality as on the civilizational ingenuities. Indeed, planting a tree and keeping the community clean ought to be made mandatory at all levels of education, while the civilizational foundation of learning from nature and showing reverence to it ought to be mainstreamed.

Finally, restoring confidence in the minds of people with the objective of reproducing social resilience. It is important to keep in mind that humans are not only political and economic beings but also spiritual beings. Napoleon Bonaparte once said that "An army marches on its stomach." This is true but then he forgot to add that while the soldiers were marching, the drummers and the bagpipers were boosting their morale. Indeed, it is no wonder that when Napoleon attacked and occupied Vienna in 1805 Ludwig van Beethoven could not sit idle but wrote the ever-energizing 5th Symphony in the midst of his increasing deafness and had it performed in the city in 1808. The 5th Symphony even today remains a morale booster as it had been during World War II to the Allied forces.

In 1971 also the people of Bangladesh, particularly the freedom fighters, got their morale boosted and found their confidence restored when listening to Tagore's *amar shonar bangla*, Nazrul's *karar oi louho kopat*, and many more poems and songs. In fact, Bertolt Brecht once flagged an interesting motto:

In the dark times,
Will there also be singing?
Yes, there will also be singing
About the dark times.

There is no doubt that some would find solace and get spirited in prayers, some in music, some in poetry, some in plays and films, some in breathing fresh air, and then some just by remembering their mother walking past by them from nowhere. Whatever may be the means keeping faith in humans and restoring confidence in them are equally urgent in reproducing social resilience, without which overcoming the current crisis or any crisis, for that matter, would become difficult if not impossible.

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Executive Summary

Bangladesh Peace Observatory (BPO) is a research facility housed at the Centre for Genocide Studies (CGS), University of Dhaka. It is a component of “Partnerships for a Tolerant and Inclusive Bangladesh” (PTIB) project by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) which seeks to address the issues of mass atrocities, violence, and crime in order to move towards a peaceful world. ‘State of Peace’ is an annual research report of BPO that projects trends of violence and status of peace across Bangladesh with a comparative overview of the global and regional scenarios on the basis of data, evidence, research, and critical analysis. State of Peace 2019 addresses issues like violence against women and girls (VAWG), trends and dynamics of youth and violence in Bangladesh, Rohingya identity crisis and impacts of Rohingya exodus in Bangladesh, global and national trends of drug-related violence, situation analysis of mob violence, and fake news-mob violence nexus by analyzing the BPO database from January 2019 to December 2019. In addition, the report used quantitative (11 sources in 2018 and increased to 15 in 2019) and textual data other national and regional data sources to explore the aforementioned issues and compliment the BPO data.

The Annual Report 2019 demonstrates that there is a slight decline in four categories of violence in 2019 compared to 2018 in terms of ‘number of death’. In violent extremism (VE), the number of death has come down from 15 to 4 in 2019 compared to 2018. In violence against minorities (VAM), it went down from 15 to 9, in gunfight from 614 to 543, in drug-related violence (DRV), from 469 to 379. In the case of DRV, the number of arrest went up from 13,116 in 2018 to 13,573 in 2019.

However, a different picture emerges in instances like violence against women (VAW), youth violence (YV), and violence against children (VAC). All these categories recorded an escalation in number of deaths, from 793 to 869 in VAW, from 579 to 1279 in YV, from 416 to 560 in VAC, in 2018 and 2019 respectively. All forms of gender-based violence; sexual assault, sexual harassment, domestic violence, etc. had a drastic uptick in 2019. Firstly, according to BPO data, in 2019 gender-based violence has increased by 69.49% compared to 2018. Secondly, rape has increased by 154.12% and sexual harassment has increased by 176.60% in 2019 than 2018. The existence of traditional gender norms, cultural practices, social inequalities, and socio-political unrest reinforce VAW. In the case of YV, BPO data projects that 3,337 incidents occurred in 2019 in which youth were solely involved. They are mostly involved in urban teen gangs, political violence, and drug peddling. It needs to be noted that the review and analysis of BPO

database suggests that youth were not always the perpetrators; rather they were often the victims and also acted as mitigating force.

Moreover, Bangladesh has witnessed rising trends in mob violence (MV), cross-border violence (CBV), and Rohingya-related violence (RRV). Bangladesh has sheltered a staggering 1.1 million Rohingyas since 2017. It has created a two-way crisis, on the one hand, the repatriation of Rohingyas is uncertain. They are reluctant to go back to Myanmar for varied reasons ranging from physical security to economic plight; on the other hand, a small number of the refugees residing in the camps of Cox's Bazar is intermittently escaping from the camps out of desperation and later they are found to be involved in illegal activities like drug peddling and petty crimes in the other parts of the country. According to BPO dataset a total of 224 Rohingya-related incidents were reported in Bangladesh in 2019, which is 105% higher than the previous year. Similarly, Bangladesh witnessed a spate of violent acts of mob lynching in 2019, which rose by 57% and 88% compared to 2018 and 2017 respectively.

The Annual Report 2019 through its rich dataset and analyses of issues aims to provide the readers, the academics, researchers and analysts with an overview and understanding of the the contemporary socio-political realities with the objective to move towards peace through studying evidence and data-driven acts of violence.



BANGLADESH PEACE OBSERVATORY



To advance the understanding of peace and tolerance

THROUGH

DATA INSIGHTS

**HOSTED BY THE CENTRE FOR GENOCIDE STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF DHAKA**

Bangladesh Peace Observatory: An Overview

University of Dhaka was the epicenter of genocide during the Liberation War of Bangladesh in 1971. The University lost many of its eminent teachers, academicians, students, employees and their family members during the Liberation War of 1971. After 41 years of the massacre, University of Dhaka established and launched the Centre for Genocide Studies (CGS) on 25 March 2012. CGS recognizes that in the past 150 years, tens of millions of people have lost their lives in genocides and mass atrocities across the world. Millions have been tortured, raped, and forcibly displaced from their homes. At present, more than 60 countries are involved in armed conflicts around the globe. There are more than 40 situations of protracted conflicts. CGS aims to address the issues of genocide, mass atrocities, violence and crime in order to move towards a peaceful world. In an attempt to attain the objectives of addressing the larger questions of humanity, CGS is involved in a number of activities, which among others include the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) project titled “Partnerships for a Tolerant and Inclusive Bangladesh” (PTIB). BPO is a component of PTIB. Accessible at www.peaceobservatory-cgs.org, BPO is a research facility established in 2016 and housed at the CGS in partnership with UNDP. BPO seeks to support government institutions, academia, civil society organizations, and the media - in formulating effective public policy decisions, tailored interventions and programming, enhanced research, and effective advocacy campaigning for social cohesion and peace based on data, evidence, research, and critical analysis.

This virtual platform of Open Access Data (OAD) was officially launched on 13 April 2017 to advance the understanding of peace and tolerance through data insights. Since the beginning, BPO is offering facility of online mapping and data analytics technology that informs users on the state of violence in Bangladesh. BPO is collecting different streams of publicly available data, regularly updating the platform with newer incidents, conducting research and providing education opportunities to better understand the state of violence in order to promote peace. Currently, BPO is updated with new outlook, user-friendly search options and real-time data of the running month at any given point of time.

BPO offers a virtual open data platform equipped with GIS-based mapping and data analytics technology that informs users on the state of violence, crime and other information based on timelines, geographic distribution, and type of violence. Each administrative level (division, district, and upazila) has its own automatically generated profile page on violence with a click, which is fed by BPO datasets. Users can view trends, rankings, agents, and impact of violence in terms of death, injury, arrests and property damage. The data can be filtered and downloaded from the BPO, and used in any third-party tools to garner in-depth insights and visualizations on the incidence of violence. Till date, BPO contains openly accessible data from January 2015- January 2020. Besides the real-time, BPO is also collecting data from the year 2014 and aims to continue going backwards simultaneously with the real-time update. Over time, BPO has come up with a developed outlook, new search options, and advanced filtering features. These new updates are results of rigorous brainstorming, trials and opinions from the advisory group and platform users.

Bangladesh Peace Observatory: Key Activities

Designing effective responses to public policy challenges is heavily dependent on evidence. Evidence is dependent on good data. In the present day “Open Data” is the future. More data has been produced globally in the last two years than in the previous 3000 years of human activity. Most of this data is openly accessible. The future challenge for decision-makers therefore is not the unavailability of data: the challenge is efficiently managing and digesting the explosion of public data. BPO is a response to the challenge. Therefore, BPO offers a number of programmes and activities to promote its goal to advance knowledge and the understanding of peace in the country.

Open Access Data: BPO brings together different streams of publicly available data on violence, analyses and visualizes them in a useful and interactive way for decision makers, civil society and media to understand, consume, and debate. During January-December 2019, BPO recorded more than a total of 26038 incidents all over Bangladesh. These incidents are entered into an online dashboard and goes through a rigorous validation process to become publicly available. More information on this is available in the Methodology section.

Figure 1: BPO Heat Map: <http://peaceobservatory-cgs.org/#!/homeheat>

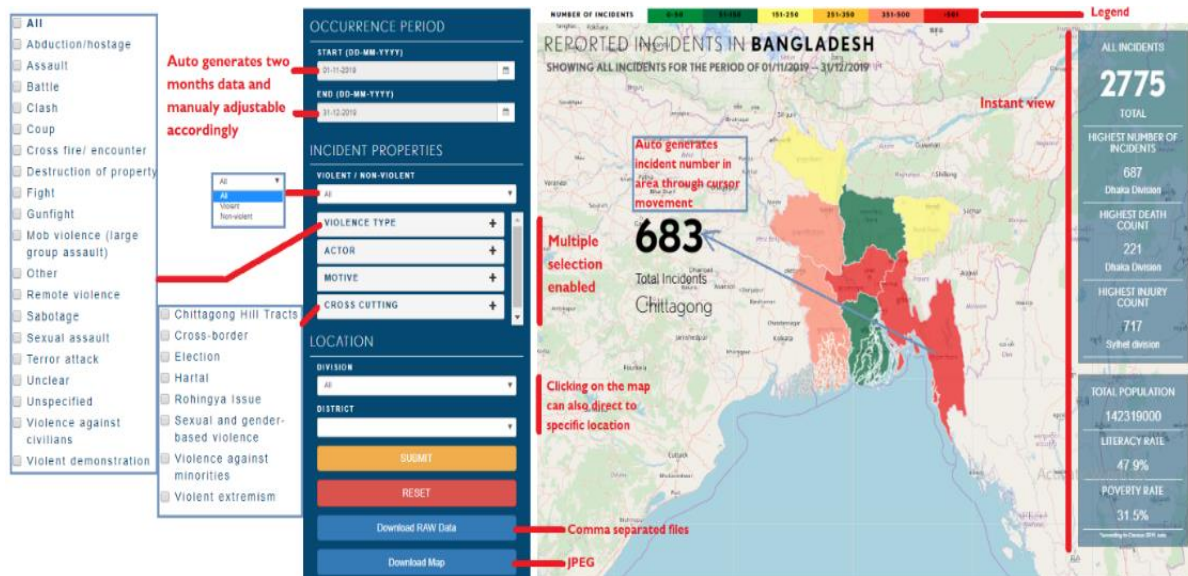


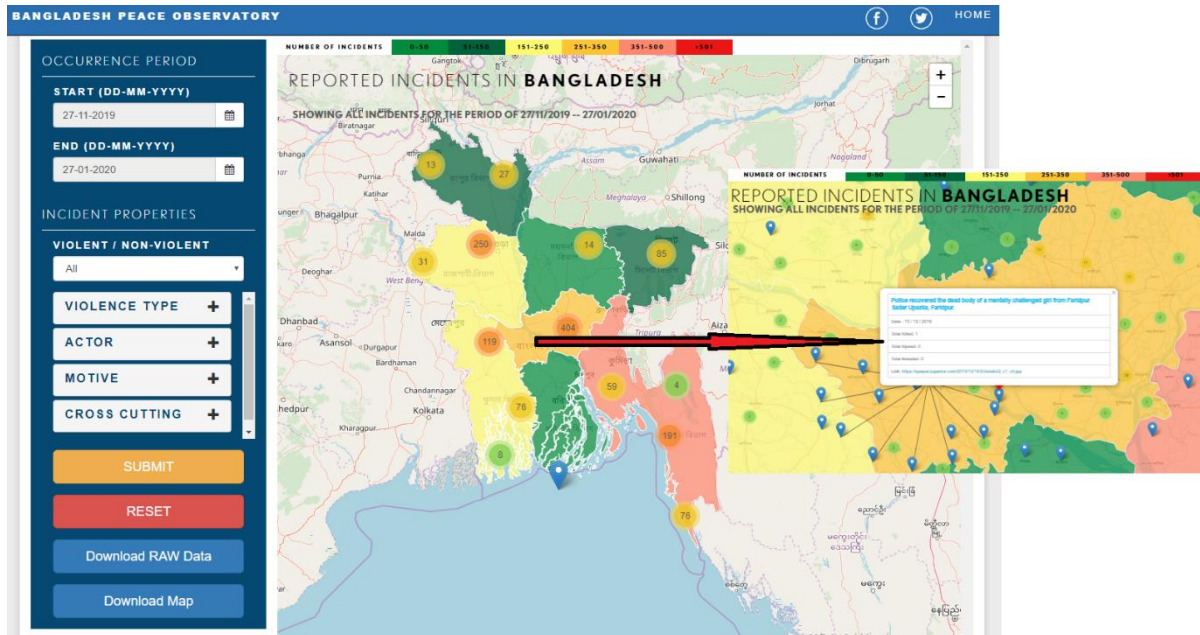
Figure 2: Cluster Map: <http://peaceobservatory-cgs.org/#/homecluster-new>

Figure 5: BPO Raw Data

Figure 4: BPO On-Platform Data Analysis

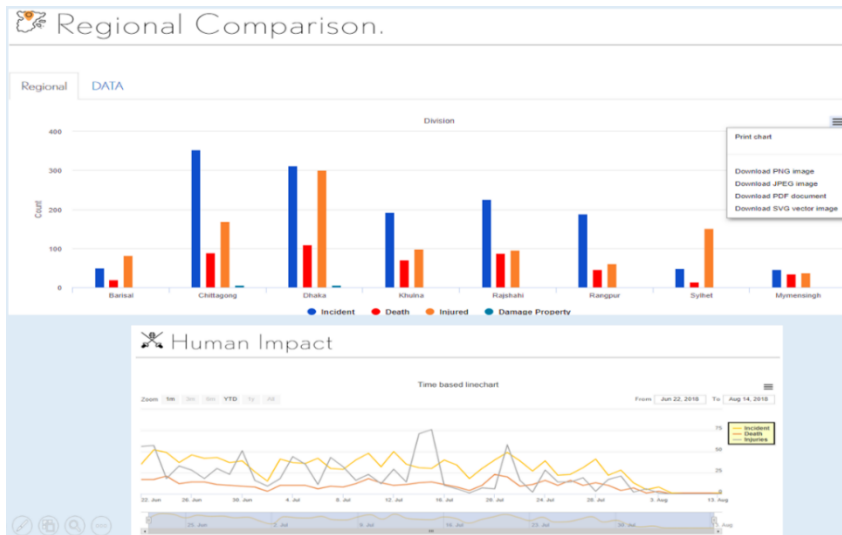
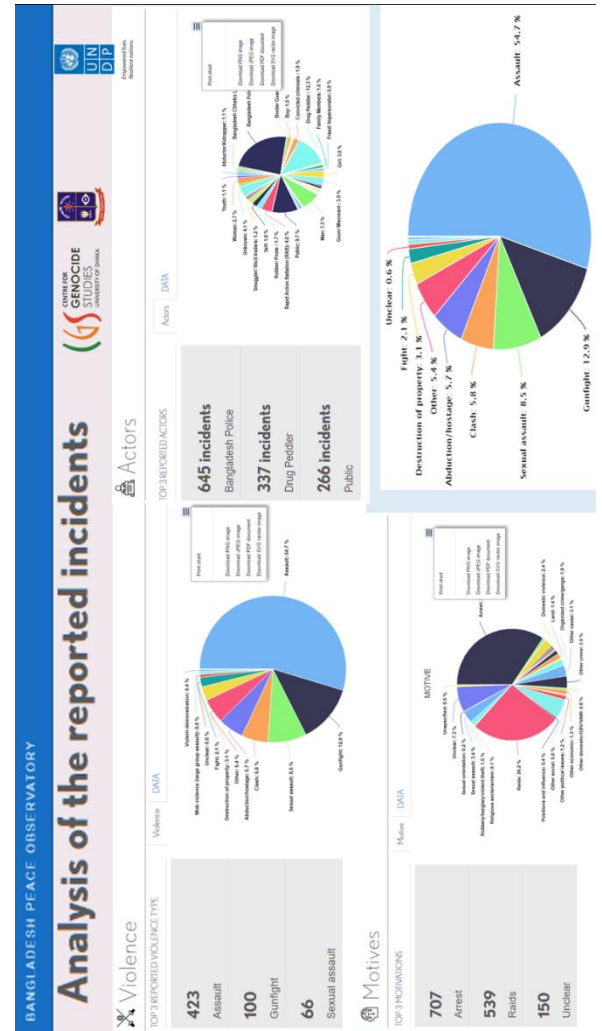


Figure 3: BPO On-Platform Data Analysis



CGS Peace Report: As a part of BPO initiative, CGS publishes Peace Report to provide an understanding of thematic situations. Sixteen CGS Peace Reports have been published so far covering a number of issues. The latest CGS Peace Report focuses on Violence against Children. In the year 2019, CGS has published a total of six Peace Reports available at: http://peaceobservatory-cgs.org/#!/peace_report





Volume 3, Issue 1
DUCSU Election



Volume 3, Issue 2
Violence against Minorities



Volume 2, Issue 6
Pre-Election- 2



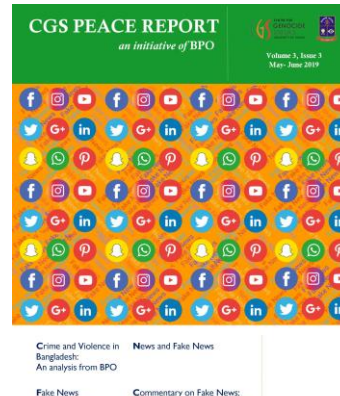
Volume 2, Issue 5
Pre-Election- I



Volume 3, Issue 5
Casino-Cadres-Corruption



Volume 3, Issue 4
Campus Violence

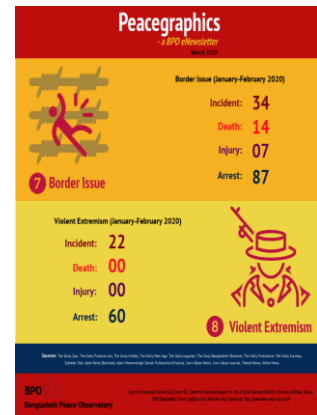
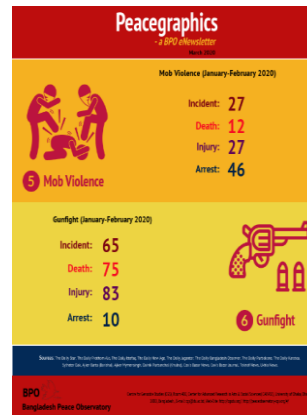
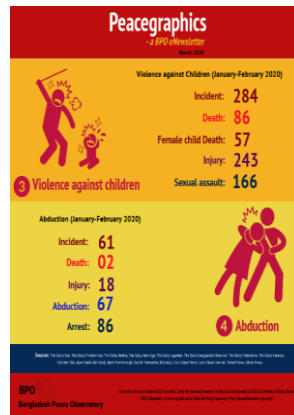
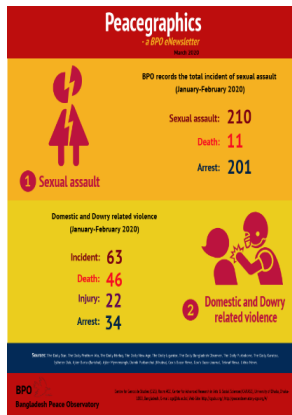
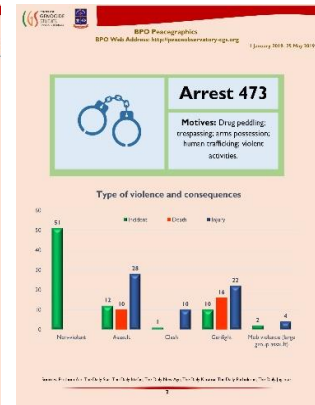
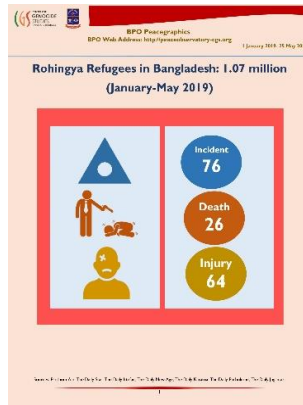
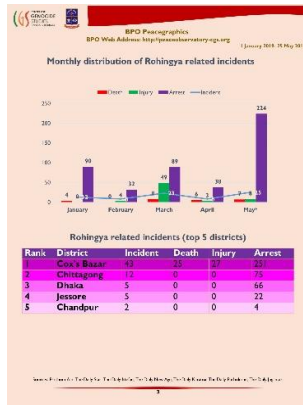
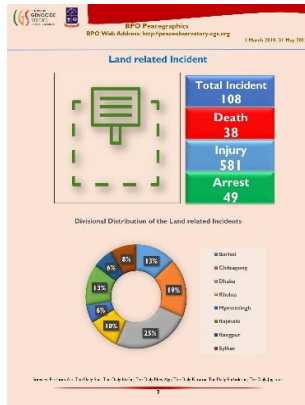


Volume 3, Issue 3
Fake News



2018
State of Peace

Peacegraphics: Peacegraphics are published online on BPO website to visually comprehend the monthly and weekly data on violence situation of Bangladesh. In the year 2019, CGS has published a total of four peacegraphics available at: <http://peaceobservatory-cgs.org/#/highlights>. A quick look to the latest issues are given for reader's interest.



Electographics: Electographics are produced for in-house consumption to visually comprehend electoral violence in Bangladesh.

International Conference: CGS annually organizes International Conference on Genocide and Mass Violence in which a panel is exclusively designated to violent extremism.

Joint Research and Programmes: CGS in partnership with UNDP conducts joint research and collaborative programmes with different stakeholders and government offices from time to time. This activity includes the mapping facility of BPO to prepare initial mapping and data support to conduct advanced research, educating stakeholders to do research with open access data insight, and identifying crucial areas of academic and policy inquiry.

International Exchange: To brand BPO internationally and enhance capacity of the team, CGS and UNDP is offers exchange opportunity.

Micronarratives: One of the effective ways of understanding the dynamics of peace and violence in a country is through collecting micronarratives on the issue. In this regards, CGS carries out a number of qualitative research work on violent extremism and electoral violence under the umbrella of UNDP's 'Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE)' programme in Bangladesh. BPO uses micronarratives collected from CGS's qualitative research works and incorporates these in its peace reports and discussions.

Professional Certificate Course/ Trainings: As a part of BPO initiative, CGS offers intensive course to understand the underlying factors behind violence, including practices in various countries for preventing/countering. The Professional Certificate Course on PVE is designed mainly to initiate discourses on violence and formulate practices for combating violent extremism and promoting tolerance in the society. The training covers critical issues on preventing violent extremism with reference to Bangladesh and beyond. Prominent faculty members, scholars, practitioners, as well as foreign experts on the issue of PVE conduct the sessions of the course. So far, three Professional Certificate Courses on PVE have been offered under this activity.

Course Topic

- Understanding violent extremism
- History of violent extremism
- Psychology of violent extremism
- Major violent extremist incidences: investigation methods and techniques
- BPO platform: Open access data
- Forensic science related to violent extremism
- Violent extremism: discourse on religions
- Dealing with suicide bombings: global best practices
- Women, children and violent extremism
- Fighting extremist finance
- Civil society, offender treatment & Human Rights
- Role of intelligence in PVE
- Cyber security and violent extremism
- Media and violent extremism
- De-radicalization: theories, methods and techniques

Fellowship: For the first time in 2018, Centre for Genocide Studies (CGS), University of Dhaka, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), offered one CGS-UNDP Fellowship on Peace. BPO as a repository of data on violence, violence prevention, and social cohesion, is the basis of research under this fellowship. It also aims to engage the researcher with the BPO Platform for disseminating the evidence through sophisticated analytical work. The fellowship was awarded to one scholarly researcher who can contribute to theoretical and empirical research through using the data from the BPO and relevant sources. The findings of the research will be presented in the upcoming International Conference on Genocide and Mass Violence. In 2019, a total of four researchers were awarded with the fellowship.

Joint Programme with Advisory Board Members:



Stop Violence Coalition



Bangladesh Police



National Defense College



Centre for Genocide Studies



University of Dhaka



Society for Environment and Human Development



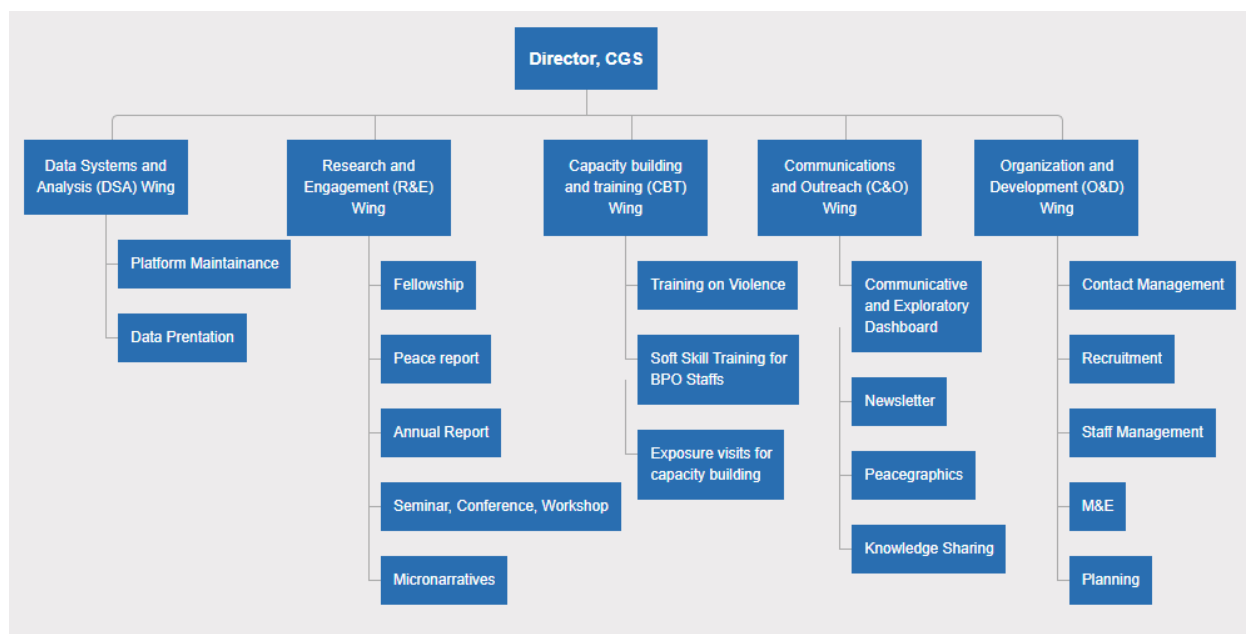
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The Daily Star

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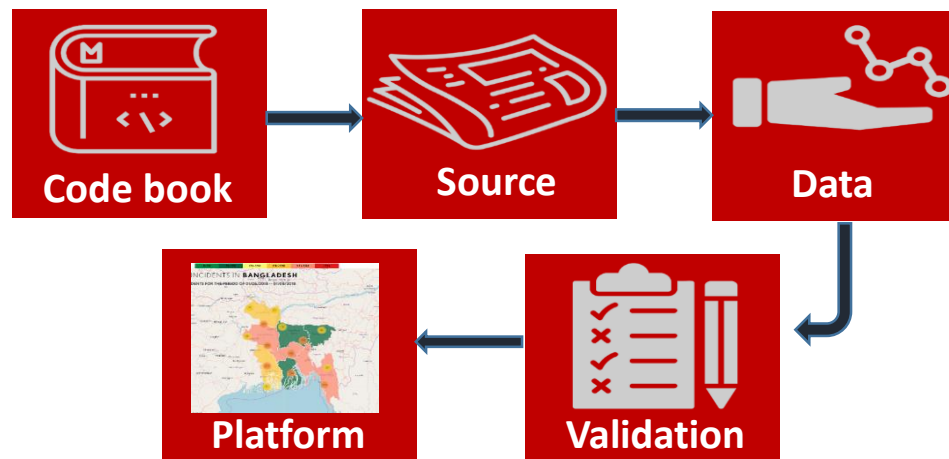
BPO advisory board is one of its kind comprised of government agencies, defense, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions and media. The board meets regularly, suggests and supports on data validation, academic research, fellowship selection board formation, participating in training programmes and contribution by issue-centric point of view for the improvement of BPO from time to time. The board also helps to cross check the state of crime and violence with the help of different datasets and sets out targets for micronarratives. The group is also engaged in conducting joint research and programmes on the basis of BPO data. In 2017, CGS organized two professional certificate course programmes with the officials from different defense forces and different media houses. In 2018, CGS conducted joint research with the Bangladesh Police and jointly organized two seminars with ActionAid (Seminar on Violence and Resilience) and Society for Environment and Human Development-SEHD (Seminar on Minorities: Life and Living). In 2019, Bangladesh Ministry of Foreign Affairs joined the advisory board.

Bangladesh Peace Observatory: Organogram



Bangladesh Peace Observatory: Data Collection, Verification and Validation Method

BPO uses an online data collection platform developed by a website developer organization namely Zeteq System. This online system of data collection follows the BPO codebook to categorize and record incident. After data entry of an incident, the submitted entry goes for an intensive validation process in the back-end and published in the platform.



Since January 2018, BPO has extended its data collection capacity and incorporated new sources (The Daily Purbokone and The Daily Karatoa) along with the existing sources (The Daily Star, The Daily Prothom Alo, The Daily Ittefaq, The

Daily New Age). By the end of 2018, the BPO platform contained data sourced from 13 daily newspapers including The Daily Bangladesh Observer, The Dainik (Daily) Bangla, The Daily Bhorer Kagoj, The Daily Janakantha, The Daily Jugantar, The Daily Sylheter Dak (Sylhet), and The Daily Ajker Barta (Barisal). The data collection method was also updated in 2018 with elaborated description of incident and also actor-wise segregation of victims in violence on the basis of reported data. This is now available in the downloadable raw data on BPO. For proper validation and to avoid duplication, a new duplicate identification feature was introduced in the back-end to mark the same incident reported from different sources. By the end of 2019, three more sources Ajker Mymensingh, Dainik (Daily) Purbanchal (Khulna), and The Daily Samakal were added. Thirteen full-time Research Data Analysts (RDAs) are now working for BPO to collect data from the aforementioned newspapers back and forth.

Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)

Nadia Nur¹

Ashique Mahmud²

Violence against women (VAW) is one of the most common and multifaceted human rights violation that often goes under-reported. It is not confined to a particular age group, class, socio-economic status or ethnicity; rather it is taking place in every corner of the world that adversely impacts women and girls. Increasing reports on violence against girls has become a major global concern. “Violence against children includes all forms of violence against people under 18 years old, whether perpetrated by parents or other caregivers, peers, romantic partners, or strangers”.³ It is estimated that worldwide more than one billion children aged 2-17 years, have experienced physical, sexual, or emotional violence or negligence.⁴ In general, a female child from birth to womanhood is considered as a girl. During this period girl children also undergo different kinds of violence. As a whole, violence against women and girls incorporates acts or threats of violence against women during peacetime, war and armed conflict in both private and public spheres.⁵ Reporting the prevalence and other related issues of various forms of violence against women epitomizes the most common as well as ignored forms of violence which women experience at home, work place, in the society and by their surroundings. VAW in different forms undermines socio-cultural opportunities, and impends the rights of women from fullest participation in social and community life. Bangladesh is not an exception in terms of

¹ Research Data Analyst (RDA), Bangladesh Peace Observatory (BPO), Centre for Genocide Studies, University of Dhaka.

² Research Data Analyst (RDA), Bangladesh Peace Observatory (BPO), Centre for Genocide Studies, University of Dhaka.

³ “Violence against Children”. Fact Sheet of World Health Organization, <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-children>. Accessed 27 January 2020.

⁴ *Ibid*

⁵ “Gender Based Violence Against Women”. The state of African Women (SOAW) Report 2018, p-127.

experiencing violence against women and girls. Last two years data on VAW show that child rape and sexual assault related incidents has increased at an alarming rate. The existence of different harmful gender norms, cultural practices, social inequalities, socio-political unrest, social mobilization, war and conflict underpin VAW. In times of war, armed conflict, VAW is used as an instrument of war and terror to disgrace or disrupt social tie and ethnic identity.

This write-up is based on secondary research. Data were collected from different secondary sources including 17 newspapers which Bangladesh Peace Observatory (BPO) have used for accumulating violence data in Bangladesh. Moreover, other secondary sources like websites of different organizations including Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF), Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum (BSAF), Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK), National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), journals, website of United Nations, UN Women, World Health Organization (WHO), newspapers and books were consulted in this research. The main challenge however is to collect the most recent data on violence against women and girls, and to get age segregated data on violence. The write-up has also used data from different national level organizations working on gender-based violence. There are noticeable variations in rates of violence according to data published by BPO, MJF, BSAF, ASK and NHRC. This indicates that many of the incidents of VAW go under-reported, although each of the data-set speculates that violence against women has increased in Bangladesh. The data sheets of different organization on VAW demonstrates that violence is on the rise. According to the BPO data, in 2019 gender-based violence has increased by 69.49% compared to 2018 (see Chart 11).

This write-up attempts to illustrate the settings in which women experience violence. It reviews the existing legal instruments which works as a legal binding to protect women's rights nationally and globally. The write-up examines the contemporary violence ratio based on data published by different organizations in Bangladesh to analyze the pattern of violence committed against women and girls in Bangladesh in 2019.

Box 1: Settings in which women and girls experience violence⁶:

- **At Home:** violence that takes place at home by in-laws and husband. There are different forms of domestic violence including marital rape or sexual abuse, spousal beating- but not limited to verbal or physical abuse by in-laws, abuse of the elderly and child abuse.
- **In the Community:** in such cases women/girls became victim by individuals, who may or may not be familiar with each other. However, it takes place outside the home or to be more precise in the community settings for instance, open spaces, public transport and educational institution. Such violence includes, for instance, physical assault, sexual or verbal abuse, sexual harassment or rape
- **At workplace:** violence that takes place against women in and outside the work place. Such violence incorporates verbal or sexual abuse, sexual harassment, physical assault.
- **During armed conflict and war:** physical and sexual harassment, sexual or verbal assault that takes place against women and girls in times of armed conflict and war, prior to and during flight, in country of asylum, in times of repatriation and reintegration and post-conflict reconstruction.

Existing International Instruments of Eliminating VAW:

Existing international instruments to address VAW includes the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.⁷

The UDHR (1948) stipulates that 'All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.' Article. 3 of the UDHR states that 'Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.' Notably, the UDHR, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and the

⁶ "Violence against Women". Fact Sheet of World Health Organization, 2017, <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-women>. Accessed 5 April 2020.

⁷ United Nations General Assembly resolution 48/104 of 20 December 1993.

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) each of these played a gender-neutral role in their formulation of rights. In 1979, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was the first document to make reference to discrimination of women specifically, but it remained silent on VAW. The 1993 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (DEVAW) broke this silence, and stated that 'States should pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating violence against women' (Art. 4).⁸

The Convention on the Rights of the Child states that "States Parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or status".⁹

The United Nations Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security adopted some resolutions to address the issue of VAWG. UNSCR 1325 (adopted 2000) calls upon member states to increase the participation of women in the 'prevention and resolution of conflicts' and in the 'maintenance and promotion of peace and security'. UNSCR 1820 (adopted 2008) calls for an end to the use of acts of sexual violence against women and girls as a tactic of war and an end to impunity of the perpetrators. It also calls for training troops on preventing and responding to sexual violence and for more deployment of women in peace operations. UNSCR 1888 (adopted 2009) reiterates that sexual violence can exacerbate armed conflict and calls for leadership to address conflict-related sexual violence and for deployment of experts to areas in which sexual violence is occurring. Specifically, UNSCR 1888 asks the Secretary-General to appoint a Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict to provide strategic leadership and promote coordination and cooperation through UN action. UNSCR 1889 (adopted 2009) reaffirms UNSCR 1325 and calls for the development of indicators to measure the implementation of UNSCR 1325. It also focuses on the importance of women's participation in all stages of peace processes. UNSCR 1960, (adopted 2010) reiterates the importance of ending conflict-related sexual violence. It also

⁸ GVAW also addressed in Cairo, Beijing and Vienna. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women has adopted two general recommendations that address GVAW: General Recommendation No. 12, adopted in 1989, and the more elaborate General Recommendation No. 19, adopted in 1992, "General Recommendations Adopted by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women". UN Women, <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/recommendations/index.html>. Accessed 9 January 2020.

⁹ "Directory of UN Resources on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women". WomenWatch, https://www.un.org/womenwatch/directory/the_girl_child_3012.htm. Accessed 29 January 2020.

establishes a listing mechanism for those suspected of committing or of being responsible for patterns of sexual violence in situations. UNSCR 2106 (adopted 2013) calls to strengthen monitoring and prevention of sexual violence in conflict. UNSCR 2122 (adopted 2013) affirms an integrated approach to sustainable peace and focuses on stronger measures and monitoring mechanisms to increase women's engagement in conflict resolution and peace-building. UNSCR 2242 (adopted 2015) calls for assessment of strategies and resources in the implementation of and integration of the agenda across all countries and highlights the importance of cooperation with CSOs. UNSCR 2272 (adopted 2016) provides measures to address sexual exploitation and abuse in peace operations.

An inter-governmental regional body has been established in South-Asia to end violence. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was established in 1985. As a geopolitical union of states it has a concrete convention to deal with the regional issues. The convention aims to prevent violence, protect child rights, support reproductive health, to prevent early marriage, combat woman trafficking.

The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh complies with the doctrines of equality and non-discrimination, entailed in the articles. Article 10 stipulates about participation of women in national life. Article 17 (a) states about compulsory and equal education for boys and girls. Article 27 specifies equality before law for all citizens. Article 28 emphasizes on no discrimination on grounds of race, religion, sex or place of birth. Article 28 (1) ensures equal opportunity for men and women in all spheres of state and public life. Article 29(1) guarantees equal opportunity in terms of employment for all citizens. Article 65 (3) states that 50 seats¹⁰ shall be reserved exclusively for women members to ensure equal participation in politics. Beside the constitutional entitlement there are some act followed to protect women's rights in Bangladesh. They are Child marriage restraint Act-1929, the Muslim Family Law Ordinance-1961, The Children Act-1974, The Muslim Marriage and Divorce Registration Act-1974, Dowry Prohibition Act-1980, The Suppression of Violence Against Women and Children Act-2000 and The Acid Crime Control Act-2002.

¹⁰ In the eighth parliament elected in 2001 there was no quota for women, but it passed the 14th amendment to the constitution, which guaranteed 45 seats for women for a period of 10 years. To give effect to Article 65(3) of the Constitution, Parliament, on 29th November 2004, enacted the Jatiya Sangsad (Reserved Seats for Women) Election Act 2004 for holding indirect election by the 300 directly elected MPs. This was increased to 50 seats with the 15th amendment in 2011.

The existing national, regional and international legal instruments are considered to be the legal mechanisms that aim to ensure equal opportunity, participation and contribution of women at different levels. Sincere and responsible use and implementation of the legal instruments can help to promote and ensure dignified life for women and girls.

Patterns of Violence Against Women (VAW):

Violence against women has now become a widespread phenomenon that persists in all countries of the world. Statistics shows that, worldwide 35% women experience either physical or sexual violence in their life time.¹¹ Globally, one in three women becomes victim of gender-based violence.¹² This has significant impacts on women health as the social, sexual, reproductive health and wellbeing of millions of girls and women are adversely affected by violence.^{13, 14} As suggested earlier, women at all ages are at risk of gender-based violence. This takes place in different forms which include domestic violence, sexual assault and harassment, early and forced marriage, dowry-related violence etc. Each of these violence is ingrained in the unequal gender relationship. The perpetrators are often well known to their victims.¹⁵

¹¹ "Facts And Figures: Ending Violence against Women". UN Women, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/facts-and-figures>. Accessed 26 January 2020.

¹² Decker, Michele R et al. "Understanding Gender-Based Violence Perpetration to Create a Safer Future For Women And Girls". *The Lancet Global Health*, vol 1, no. 4, 2013, pp. e170-e171. Elsevier BV, doi:10.1016/s2214-109x(13)70085-8. Accessed 21 January 2020.

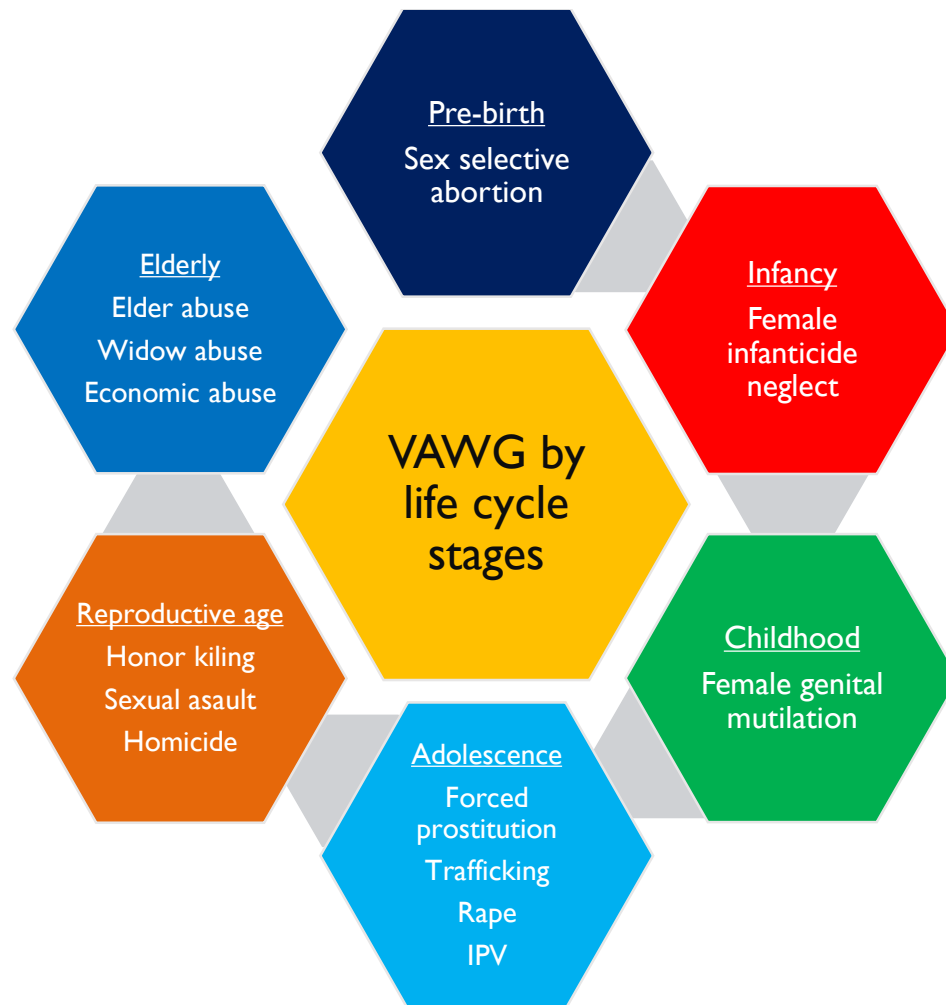
¹³ "WHO Multi-country study on women's' health and domestic violence against women." World Health Organization, 2003, <http://www.cih.uib.no/journals/EJHD/ejhd17-special-issue-2/ejhdv17-special-issue-2-2003-cover.htm> or <http://www.who.int/gender/violence/en/>. Accessed 21 January 2020.

¹⁴ "Addressing Violence against Women and Girls in Sexual and Reproductive Health Services: A Review of Knowledge Assets." UNFPA.

"Ending Violence against Women and Girls Reduction and prevention of gender-based violence as a contribution to the protection of human rights and to development." World Bank, 2003, <http://www.gtzt.de>. Accessed 21 January 2020.

¹⁵ WHO. Strengthening the role of the health system in addressing violence, in particular against women and girls, and against children, The Sixty-seventh World Health Assembly. A67/A/CONF.1/Rev.1 Agenda item 14.3. 2014.

Figure 6: Types of violence Against Women and girls by Lifecycle stages¹⁶



¹⁶ "Resource Guide". Violence against Women & Girls, 2014, <https://www.vawgresourceguide.org/overview>. Accessed 25 January 2020.

In Bangladesh, women mostly become victims of domestic violence by their husband and in-laws. The cost of domestic violence is not only confined to physical, sexual, mental harm to women rather it has a far-reaching impact on the children, family and community. This violence is a major obstacle in achieving development targets. Women from all socio-economic backgrounds experience domestic violence. Data on VAWG can help to understand the pattern, nature, context and depth of the problem. The following section reviews the trends of VAW in Bangladesh from 2018 to 2019.

Figure 7: Top three districts experienced gender based violence.

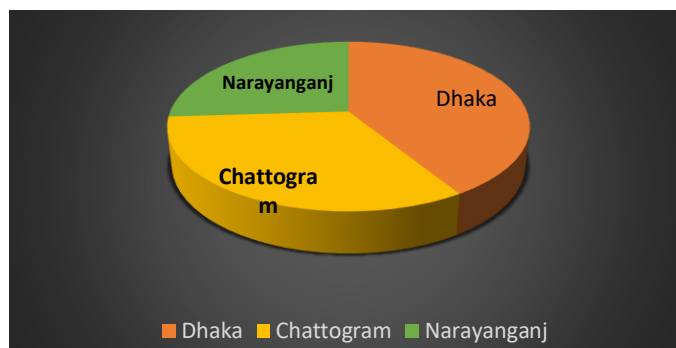


Table 1: Violence ratio in top 15 districts-2019¹⁷

Rank	District	Incident	Death	Injury	Sexual Assault	Arrest
1	Dhaka	203	75	79	90	187
2	Chattogram	162	46	38	61	155
3	Narayanganj	128	33	53	56	130
4	Bogura	109	31	54	44	79
5	Mymensingh	103	22	32	50	76
6	Gazipur	88	33	38	36	83
7	Jashore	76	11	32	41	71
8	Barishal	70	13	26	29	44
9	Pabna	65	24	16	26	64
10	Rajshahi	59	18	28	23	36
11	Noakhali	56	13	20	29	49
12	Khulna	54	11	17	27	67
13	Pirojpur	54	14	18	19	31
14	Sylhet	53	7	20	20	56
15	Rangpur	50	9	18	21	48

¹⁷ Bangladesh Peace Observatory. <http://peaceobservatory-cgs.org/#/>. Accessed 20 January 2020.

Table 2: Violence ratio in top 15 districts, 2018

Rank	District	Incident	Death	Injury	Sexual Assault	Arrest
1	Dhaka	183	91	67	84	137
2	Chattogram	141	66	93	46	116
3	Bogura	104	37	66	34	67
4	Narayanganj	86	40	40	27	43
5	Gazipur	53	39	14	12	18
6	Pabna	52	19	25	22	43
7	Cox's Bazar	47	25	18	16	17
8	Rangpur	42	22	17	11	22
9	Rajshahi	41	14	17	15	36
10	Gaibandha	40	15	20	17	17
11	Sirajganj	40	24	11	8	18
12	Dinajpur	38	21	17	11	18
13	Mymensingh	38	21	15	6	31
14	Natore	38	15	8	15	30
15	Jashore	37	20	20	13	8

Dhaka is facing the problem of diversified forms of violence compared to other districts as represented in Figure 7 and table 1 and 2, consecutively in 2018 and 2019. There are many interconnected factors behind such increase of crime incidents in Dhaka. Growing number of slums owing to population density could be responsible for this. Being industrial capital, Chattogram also experienced high number of violent incidents.

As described in the BPO codebook sexual assault refers to one-sided sexual violence, such as rape or attempted rape, by an individual or small group against another individual or small group. It also covers any kind of sexual harassment, rape, gangrape, sexual abuse of boys or forceful prostitution.

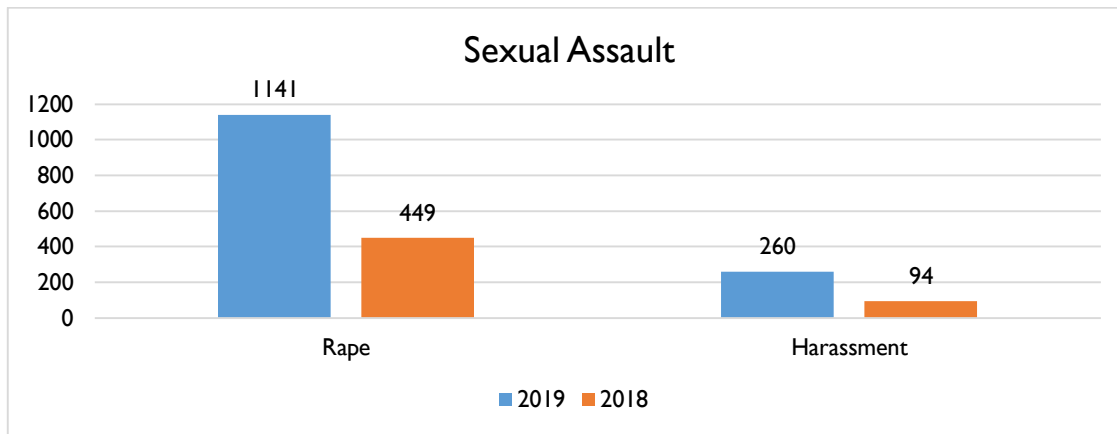
Figure 8: Rape and sexual harassment related incidents in 64 districts from 2018-2019 based on BPO data.¹⁸

Figure 8 shows that the number of rape incidents has a sharp increase to 154.12% in 2019 compared to 2018. Sexual harassment has also increased by 176.60% in 2019 than 2018. This increase of rape and sexual harassment has been an alarming concern to women and girls' rights.

As described in the BPO codebook, gender-based violence includes both violent and non-violent incidents. Violent incidents are related to sexual assault including rape, attempted rape, and other forms of sexual assault, domestic violence between intimate partners and/or members of the same household, regardless of the gender of the victims, gender-based human trafficking incidents, dowry-related incidents, sexual orientation or incidents related to discrimination towards sexual minorities and other domestic/GBV/VAW. The non-violent incidents include arrest related to any kind of sexual and gender-based violence. Following charts explain gender-based violence from these two dimensions. Figure 9 illustrates gender-based violence incidents based on 2018 and 2019 BPO data while Figure 10 depicts a comparative analysis between 2018 and 2019 data on arrest related to gender-based violence. These comparisons help to identify the rate of increase or decrease of incidents like death, injury, sexual assault and associated number of arrests.

¹⁸ *Ibid*

Figure 9: Trend of Gender Based Violence incidents in 64 districts from 2018-2019 based on BPO data.¹⁹

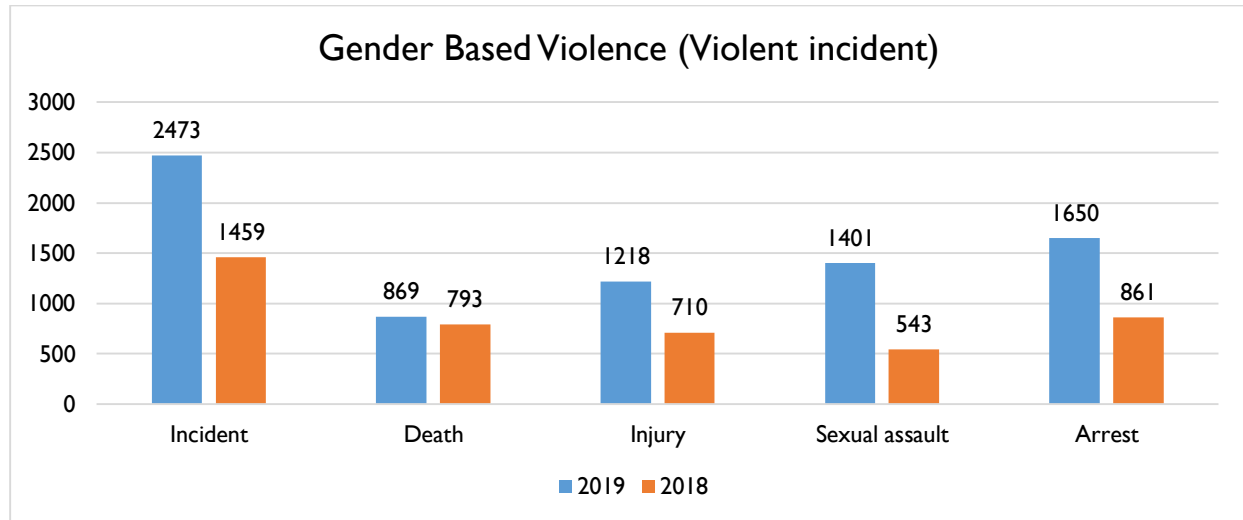


Figure 9 illustrates that incident of Gender Based Violence has increased in 2019 to 69.49% than 2018. The number of deaths has increased to 9.58% in 2019. A significant difference is noticeable in case of injury, sexual assault and arrest. In 2019 injury, sexual assault and arrest respectively increased to 71.55%, 158.01%, 91.63% than those of 2018.

¹⁹ *Ibid*

Figure 10: Trend of non-violent incidents (arrest) related to gender based violence in 64 districts from 2018-2019 based on BPO data.²⁰

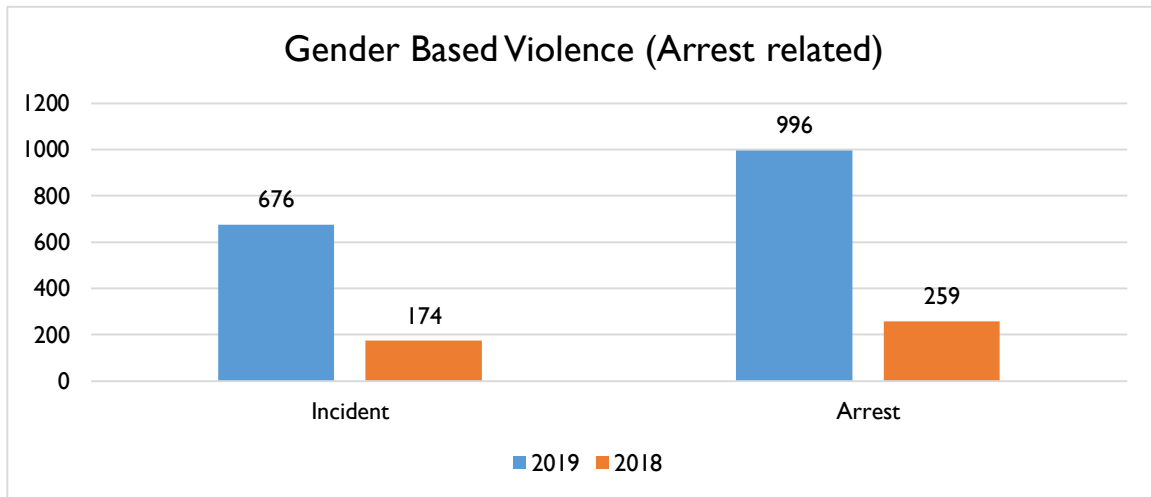
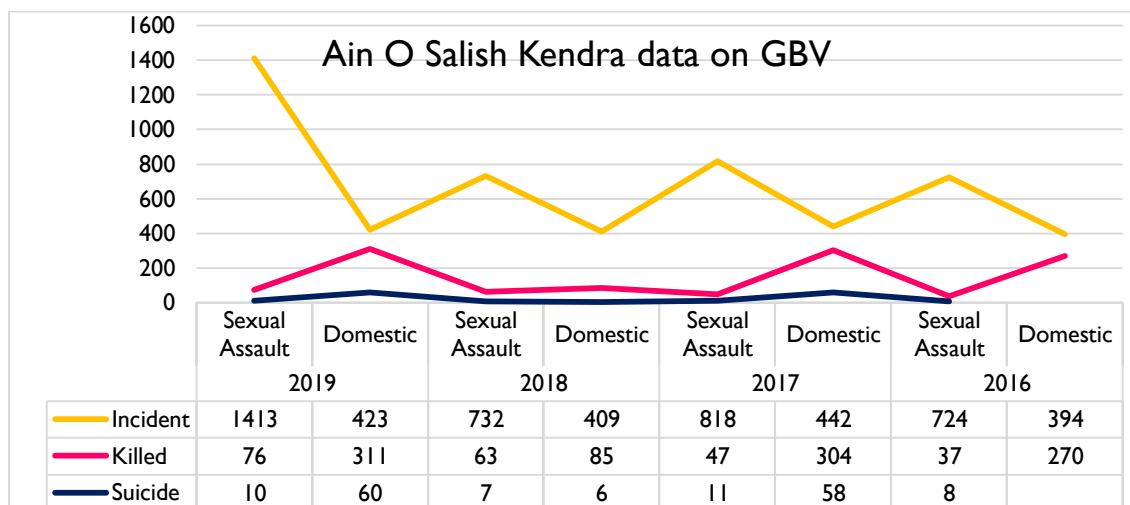


Figure 10 illustrates that incident of Gender Based Violence related arrest has increased in 2019 to 288.50% than 2018. Therefore, a sharp rise is noticeable in 2019 (284.55%) compared to 2018 regarding the arrest of perpetrators. It clarifies that, law enforcement agencies have taken strong stance against gender-based violence in 2019. Admittedly this indicates that law enforcing agencies played a strong role in terms of arresting perpetrators than last year.

²⁰ Ibid

Figure 11: Domestic violence and sexual assault²¹

The half yearly statistical report and annual report of Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK) state that incidents of sexual assault have increased by 93.03% in 2019 than 2018. On the other hand, the incidents of domestic violence have less fluctuated compared to sexual assault during this period. Moving on to 2017, the graph shows that both sexual assault and domestic violence increased in comparison to 2016.

Table 3: National Human Rights Commission data on violence against women and children.²²

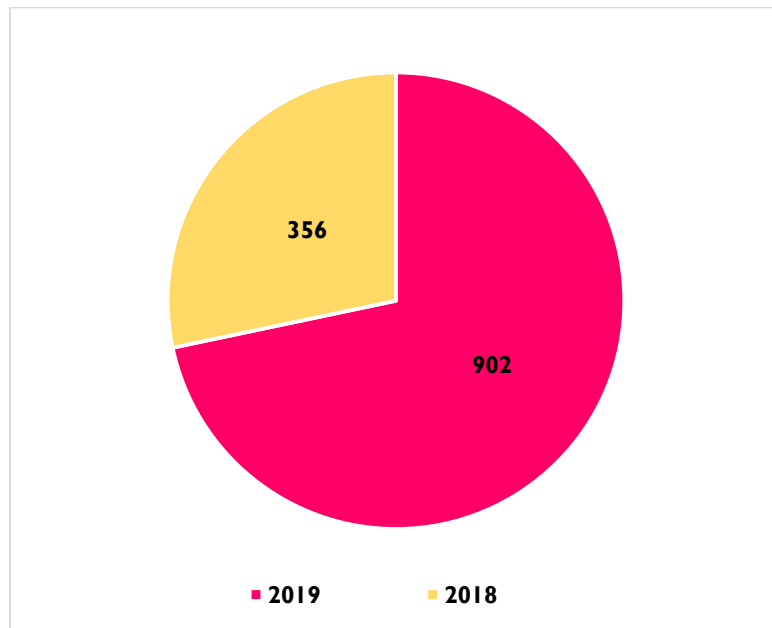
Year	Type of Violence	Settlement of complaints	Running	Total
2018	Violence against Women	71	10	81
	Violent against Children	23	17	40
2017	Violence against Women	28	28	56
	Violent against Children	04	37	41

²¹ "ASK Annual Report Archives". Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK), <http://www.askbd.org/ask/category/publications-and-resources/annual-report/>. Accessed 18 January 2020.

²² "NHRC Annual Report Archives". National Human Rights Commission Bangladesh, <http://www.nhrc.org.bd/site/page/74b9f308-8a25-4e28-a8cb-fb26daf7d93e/>. Accessed 18 January 2020.

The following table illustrates that National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), settled more complaints related to violence against women in 2018 (153.57%) compared to 2017. The number of settled complaints on violence against children in 2018 increased by 475% than in 2017. The reduced number of running complaints addressed by the NHRC provides a positive vibe of human rights protection in Bangladesh by the NHRC.

Figure 12: The MJF data of child rape 2018 and 2019



Referring to Manusher Jonno Foundation, Prothom Alo in a report on ‘rape statistics in Bangladesh’ stated that 902 children²³ were raped in 2019 and 356 children were raped in 2018. It indicates that violence against children has increased by 153.37%.²⁴

²³ Children refers to a human being between the stages of birth and puberty.

²⁴ *The Daily Prothom Alo*. 2020, <https://www.prothomalo.com/we-are/article/1636403/>. Accessed 2 April 2020.

Examples of some incidents, 2019

1. 7 raped every day last month²⁵
2. Rape incidents in September highest ever in 9 years²⁶
3. Rickshaw-van puller held for raping 4 kids in Bogura: Cops²⁷
4. Pabna OC closed, SI suspended: who allegedly arranged a marriage between a gang-rape victim and one of the alleged rapists²⁸
5. Mosque imam held for raping madrasa girl in Narayanganj²⁹
6. OC, ASI closed over rape at Khulna railway station³⁰
7. 826 children raped, abused in 6 months: Report, 224 of them killed after rape³¹
8. 10-year-old girl raped in running train³²
9. RU teachers, students demand justice for rape victims³³
10. Rape-accused found shot dead in Chattogram³⁴
11. Madrasa teacher held for raping 12 students³⁵
12. 9-month-old baby raped in Chattogram³⁶
13. Mentally challenged teenage girl raped in Manikganj³⁷

Throughout the write-up, different issues have been discussed based on the data set of various organizations. In terms of gender parity, Bangladesh ranked as the top of the South Asian region in the Global Gender Gap Index consecutively both in 2019 and 2018. In the 2018, Bangladesh ranked 48th while India and Pakistan were 108 and 148 respectively. In the following year, Bangladesh slipped two notches

²⁵ *The Daily Star*, <https://www.thedailystar.net/backpage/news/7-raped-every-day-last-month-1808509>. Accessed 20 January 2020.

²⁶ *The Daily Star*, <https://www.thedailystar.net/country/rape-incidents-in-september-19-highest-ever-9-years-1808359>. Accessed 20 January 2020.

²⁷ *The Daily Star*, <https://www.thedailystar.net/country/child-rape-in-bangladesh-rickshaw-puller-held-in-bogura-1798345>. Accessed 20 January 2020.

²⁸ *The Daily Star*, <https://www.thedailystar.net/country/rape-victim-marriage-with-accused-pabna-oc-closed-si-suspended-1798888>. Accessed 20 January 2020.

²⁹ *The Daily Star*, <https://www.thedailystar.net/country/madrasa-girl-raped-in-narayanganj-mosque-imam-held-1783111>. Accessed 20 January 2020.

³⁰ *The Daily Star*, <https://www.thedailystar.net/country/rape-in-khulna-railway-station-oc-asi-closed-1783006>. Accessed 20 January 2020.

³¹ *The Daily Star*, <https://www.thedailystar.net/country/826-children-raped-in-last-6-months-in-bangladesh-1776853>. Accessed 20 January 2020.

³² *The Daily Star*, <https://www.thedailystar.net/backpage/news/10-year-old-girl-raped-running-train-1770190>. Accessed January 20, 2020.

³³ *The Daily Star*, <https://www.thedailystar.net/country/rajshahi-university-teachers-students-demand-justice-rape-victims-1769860>. Accessed 20 January 2020.

³⁴ *The Daily Star*, <https://www.thedailystar.net/backpage/news/rape-accused-found-shot-dead-ctg-1768138>. Accessed 20 January 2020.

³⁵ *The Daily Star*, <https://www.thedailystar.net/country/madrasa-teacher-arrested-for-raping-12-students-1766677>. Accessed 20 January 2020.

³⁶ *The Daily Star*, <https://www.thedailystar.net/country/9-month-old-baby-raped-in-chattogram-1762798>. Accessed 20 January 2020.

³⁷ *The Daily Star*, <https://www.thedailystar.net/country/news/mentally-challenged-teenage-girl-raped-manikganj-bangladesh-1733602>. Accessed 20 January 2020.

and ranked 50.³⁸ However, in comparisons to its overall performance, Bangladesh has led the region, while India was in the 4th position and Pakistan scored last among the South Asian Nations.³⁹ Bangladesh was also praised for ensuring gender equality and increased contribution of women in the economic sphere.

Concluding Remarks:

Academic scholarship has examined various perspectives to identify the root causes of VAW. Many of them concluded that no single cause can be held responsible for gender-based violence. Understanding the contributing factors and root causes of gender-based violence embedded in the practices of day-to-day life is a complex phenomenon. At the societal level customary practices directly contribute to VAW. In the existing socio-cultural system, access to justice is very limited for sexual and domestic violence. In some cases, victim is victimized as a result of existence of the culture of impunity. Societal factors that directly contribute to create violence are limited employment opportunity, lack of economic freedom and child marriage. At the community level, the culture of tolerance of domestic violence has promoted man's control over woman. The masculine nature of dominance, belligerence, governance and rigid gender roles contributes to the increase in VAW. Any kind of interpersonal violence against women at the socio-economic and political level are considered as structural violence. VAW has increased as women's contributions to economy, society and livelihood are not widely recognized. Women become the victim of violence and discrimination because they lack a higher status in the family and community. Women's contribution at home is not a paid work and remains invisible. Although women's contribution has a monetary value still it is not factored in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) because the system only calculates saleable services. The recognition of women's unaccounted work in the GDP may change societal outlook towards them resulting in reduced violence and discrimination. Lack of recognition stimulates the chain of subordination and domination in the society. However, women's unaccounted contribution guarantees well-being, development, prosperity and economic growth. Unaccounted domestic work load reduces the prospect to enter into the work force. Such practice promotes gender

³⁸ "The Global Gender Gap Report". World Economic Forum, 2018, http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2018.pdf. Accessed 2 April 2020.

³⁹ *The Daily Sun*, <https://www.daily-sun.com/post/447133/Bangladesh-retains-top-in-South-Asia-on-World-Economic-Forum-gender-gap-index>. Accessed 20 January 2020.

inequality, domestic violence, and barriers towards women's empowerment, curtails economic freedom, right to education and most importantly curtails the enjoyment of women's right as human being.

In situations of instability, breakdown of law, family crisis and widespread community disruption, religious and cultural practice, women are less likely to disclose violent incidents. Moreover, the culture of impunity, justice system, inadequate and improper education, poverty, drug addiction, masculine nature of dominance, religious sacraments, social media and cultural intrusion, largely contributes to gender-based violence.

Although preventing and responding to VAW is a priority issue to many governments, still the under-reporting of VAWG makes it difficult to bring the perpetrator under justice. In 2009, over 70% of rape cases went unreported in UK.⁴⁰ To change societal outlook towards women, it is important to create massive awareness on VAWG, to build social support networks, to establish women friendly spaces and changing societal outlook towards women and girls can improve the status quo. Recognizing women's contribution is a way to raise their status. In order to counter gender violence public's view on women's role needs to be changed. Recognition of women's unaccounted work and evaluation of their contribution can change the scenario. Redistributing unpaid care work can positively contribute to promote gender equality, practice of human rights, decision making, economic and political engagement. The above are suggested as measures to come out of the menace of VAWG, but the change has to be at the level of the cognitive as well structure, data only help us measure to some extent the prevalence of physical violence, the lives lived in a culture of violence remain embedded within the sinews of the society and state. The need therefore is to change both the structure as well as the mind.

⁴⁰https://www.surrey.ac.uk/mediacentre/press/2009/16532_between_7090_rapes_thought_to_go_unreported_and_94_of_reported_cases_do_not_end_in_a_conviction.htm. Accessed 14 January 2020.

Youth and Violence in Bangladesh: Trends and Dynamics

Tithy Mondal⁴¹

Shah Muhammad Salahuddin⁴²

I. Introduction

Youth are valuable human resources for fostering the economic, cultural and political development of a nation.⁴³ A country's ability and potential for growth is determined by the size of its youth population. If harnessed, skilled and motivated properly, they can lead and accelerate the development process.

The size of young population is increasing noticeably worldwide. More than 600 million youth among them are living in fragile and conflict-affected countries and territories.⁴⁴ Socio-economic condition and political unrest of such countries are driving young people to involve in different violent activities. Due to lack of good governance and unemployment of a large number of youth who have graduated from their studies, many countries are facing challenges to deal with youth-led violence. Moreover, familial structure and parenting plays a critical role in these cases. Being home to approximately 27 million youth, Bangladesh is facing similar challenges.

Notably, while talking about youth violence, we generalize the factor that violent incidents are perpetrated by youth. But, there are other dimensions to it that needs discussion For instance, youth as the victims or mitigating forces in preventing violence.

⁴¹ Research Data Analyst (RDA), Bangladesh Peace Observatory (BPO), Centre for Genocide Studies, University of Dhaka.

⁴² Research Data Analyst (RDA), Bangladesh Peace Observatory (BPO), Centre for Genocide Studies, University of Dhaka.

⁴³ "Youth in India". Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Government of India, 2017, http://mospi.nic.in/sites/default/files/publication_reports/Youth_in_India-2017.pdf. Accessed 2 January 2020.

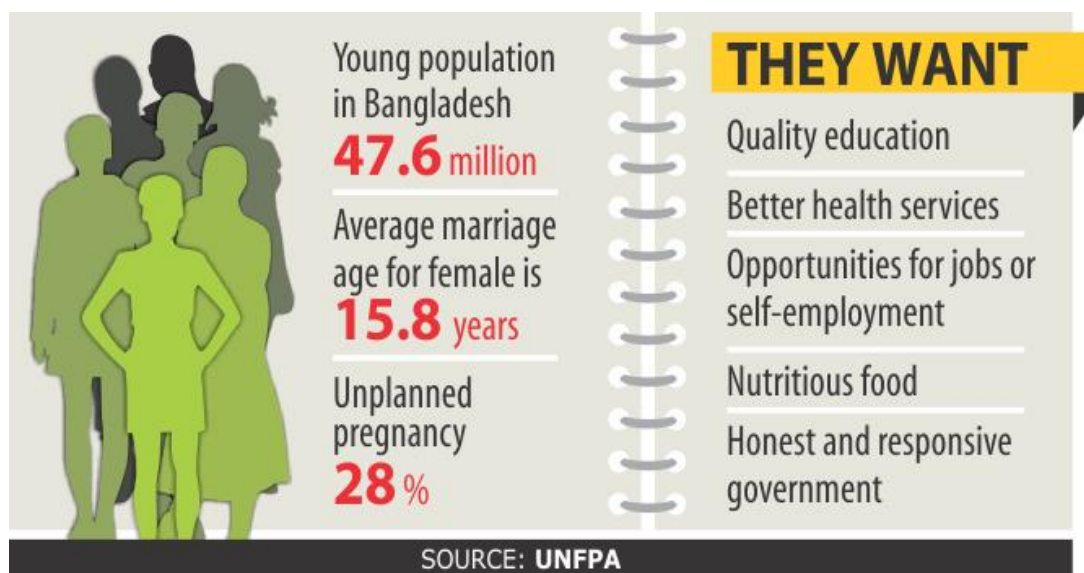
⁴⁴ UNDP Youth Strategy 2014-17.

There are multi-faced factors that are actively or inactively involved in youth violence. This write-up endeavors to understand the trends and dynamics of youth violence in Bangladesh.

2. Conceptualizing Youth and Violence

2.1 Youth

According to WHO, ‘Youth’ falls into the age group of 15-24 years while ‘young people’ covers the age group of 10-24 years.⁴⁵ However, for statistical purposes, the United Nations uses the same parameter to define Youth.⁴⁶ Many countries also draw the line of youth in terms of legal treatment- ‘age of majority’, by the time they are treated equally under the law. In this report, youth are identified as actors categorized in Bangladesh Peace Observatory (BPO) Codebook, which includes Boys, Girls, Students, Students group, Youth, Youth group, Bangladesh Chhatra League, Jatiotabadi Chatra Dal, and Islami Chhatra Shibir.



⁴⁵ “Adolescent Health in South-East Asia Region”. WHO, <https://www.who.int/southeastasia/health-topics/adolescent-health>. Accessed 13 Jan 2020.

⁴⁶ “Youth”, United Nation, <https://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/youth-0/index.html>. Accessed 13 January 2020.

Currently, 27.4 million youth are residing in Bangladesh.⁴⁷ As reported by *the Daily Star*, 47.6 million or 30% of the total 158.5 million people in Bangladesh are young (10-24 years). According to the demographic data of United Nations Funds for Population Activities (UNFPA)'s "State of World Population 2019", Bangladesh has a total population of 168.1 million in 2019. Among them, 28% of the population are aged between 10-24 years.

Country	Population (2019)	Population Change (2010-2019)	Population Composition (by age)
Bangladesh	168.1	1.1	28% (10-24)

Source: State of World Population 2019, UNFPA⁴⁸

2.2 Violence

According to the World Report on Violence and Health (WRVH), violence is defined as “the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against another person or against a group that results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation.” WRVH also presents a typology of violence that can be helpful to understand the contextual aspects of violent incidents. The typology distinguishes four modes of probable violence infliction, Physical; Sexual; Psychological attack and Deprivation.⁴⁹ In general definition of violence is further sub-sectioned into three types based on victim-perpetrator relationships.

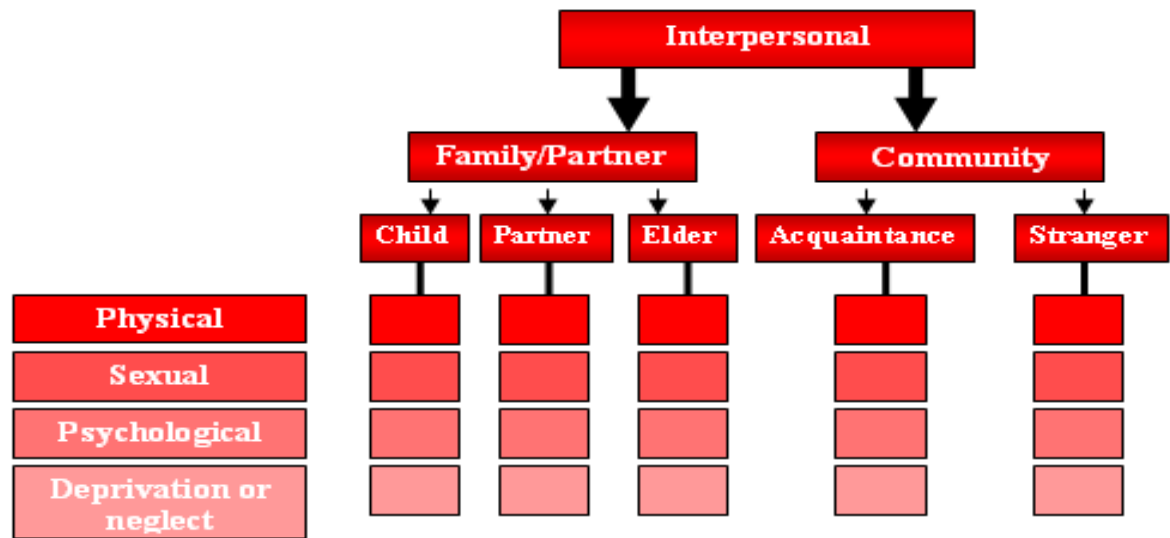
Self-directed violence refers to violence in which the perpetrator and the victim are unified individuals. Incidents like suicide, self-abuse are of such kind. Interpersonal violence indicates violence between individuals, where an individual or a group of individuals assault other of the same kind. It is sectioned into family and intimate partner violence and community violence. While the first category refers to child abuse violating intimate partner and elder abuse, the later one is subdivided into acquaintance and stranger violence. The second part therefore includes youth violence, violence over land-related dispute, assault by goon/miscreants, workplace/Institutional harassment, etc. Collective

⁴⁷ Bhattacharya, Barua, Islam. "CPD Working Paper 119: Exploring the State of Youth in the SDG Context | CPD". Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), <https://cpd.org.bd/cpd-working-paper-119-exploring-the-state-of-youth-in-the-sdg-context/>. Accessed 23 January 2020.

⁴⁸ "State of World Population Report 2019". UNFPA Bangladesh, 2020, <https://bangladesh.unfpa.org/en/publications/state-world-population-report-2019-0>. Accessed 23 January 2020.

⁴⁹ "Definition and Typology of Violence". World Health Organization, <https://www.who.int/violenceprevention/approach/definition/en/>. Accessed 23 January 2020.

violence indicates violence committed by mass and can be categorized into social, political and economic violence.



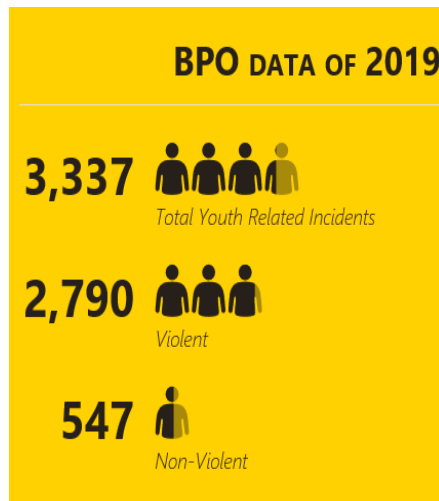
Source: Typology of Interpersonal Violence. (WHO)

According to the BPO Codebook, violent incidents are registered one which 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 person or property.

2.3 Relationship between Youth and Violence

Youth violence is a global issue. It ranges from bullying, fighting to serious fatal incidents like sexual assault to homicide. According to WHO, worldwide around 200000 homicides occur among the youth of 10-29 years old, which is 43% of the total number of homicides globally.⁵⁰ A significant portion of youth is affected by sexual violence. In a survey ran by WHO, 3-24% of women reported that their first sexual experience was a forced one. Youth violence is not only contributing to the number of death, injury and disability worldwide, it is also affecting a person’s socio-psychological functioning.

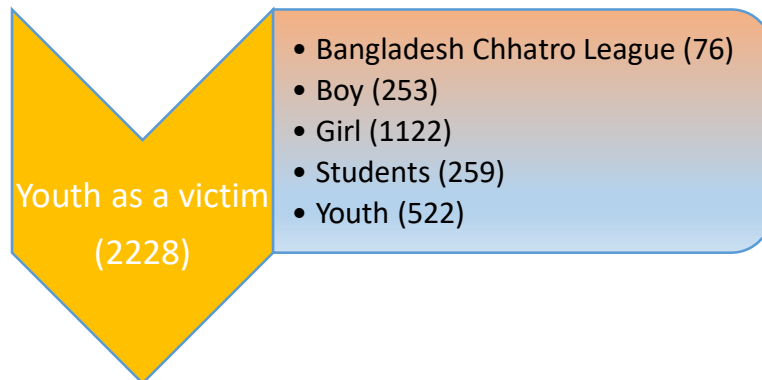
⁵⁰ "Youth Violence". World Health Organization, <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/youth-violence>. Accessed 31 January 2020.



Source: Bangladesh Peace Observatory Database⁵¹

BPO data projects that there were 3,337 incidents that occurred in 2019 in which youth were solely involved. Among these 2,790 were recorded as violent incidents⁵² and 547 were non-violent incidents.⁵³ The number of incidents has alarmingly increased over the year. In 2018, BPO recorded a total of 1,690 incidents where youth were engaged actively. While youths are bluntly accused for their involvement in violence, there is another side to it as well. BPO provides a robust database to understand the dynamics of ‘youth and violence’ related incidents in a binary manner; youth as a perpetrator and youth as a victim. Apart from this, another dimension of ‘youth and violence’ can be seen in the light of youth as a mitigating force.

2.3.1 Youth as a Victim



BPO database demonstrates that youth were mostly the victim of violence than the perpetrator. Among the total incidents, as the data projects, girls were victimized in a large number than any other category. Mostly girls were the victims of sexual assault.

Examples of some incidents:

⁵¹ Bangladesh Peace Observatory. <http://peaceobservatory-cgs.org/#/>. Accessed 20 January 2020.

⁵² Violent Incident: According to BPO Codebook, the reported incidents 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.

⁵³ Non-violent Incident: According to BPO Codebook, the reported incidents 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.

*A girl was gang-raped by her neighbor youth and her cousin and injured her in Lalmonirhat.⁵⁴

*A minor girl, aged eight, was allegedly raped by a listed musician of Bangladesh Betar, Police arrested the alleged rapist from his apartment at Taltola area of Agargaon in Dhaka district.⁵⁵

*An eighth-grader girl was raped by her brother-in-law and his friend.⁵⁶

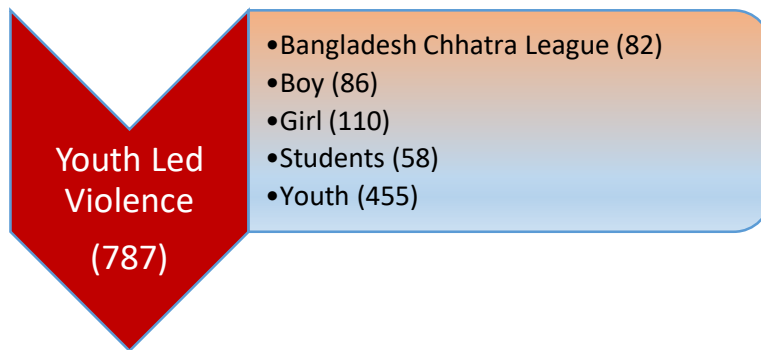
*A teenage girl was kidnapped for ransom and gang raped in Laksham upazila, Cumilla. Rapid Action Battalion rescued her and arrested four people from Haliashahar upazila, Chattogram.⁵⁷

*A girl of six years was raped by two boys 10 & 13 years respectively.⁵⁸

*A Secondary School Certificate candidate was abducted and raped by a youth for almost three months from Gobindaganj upazila, Gaibandha. Police arrested the culprit almost three months after the abduction.⁵⁹

The database shows that among all the actors, Bangladesh Chhatra League's involvement in violence as a perpetrator is higher than as a victim whereas, in all the other cases, the victim rate is higher than being a perpetrator.

2.3.2 Youth-Led Violence



In total incidents of 3,015, around 787 incidents were registered where youth were acting as perpetrator. On the other hand, around 2,228 incidents were recorded where youth were the victim. Mentioning 'youth', actors as listed in the BPO database, such as-Bangladesh Chhatra League, Boy, Girl, Students, and Youth were taken under the umbrella term to

⁵⁴ *The Daily Karatoa*, 2019, https://ekaratoa.com/2019/02/15/5/details/5_r16_c3. Accessed 20 January 2020.

⁵⁵ *The Daily Observer*, 2019, http://epaper.observerbd.com/2019/02/17/3/details/3_r3_c5. Accessed 20 January 2020.

⁵⁶ *The Daily Pratham Alo*, 21 February 2019, Page 04. Accessed 20 January 2020.

⁵⁷ *The Daily Ittefaq*, 2019, http://epaper.ittefaq.com.bd/2019/03/15/images/02_114. Accessed 20 January 2020.

⁵⁸ *The Daily Pratham Alo*, 21 February 2019, Page 04. Accessed 20 January 2020.

⁵⁹ *The Daily Karatoa*, 2019, https://www.ekaratoa.com/2019/05/14/5/details/5_r13_c3. Accessed 20 January 2020.

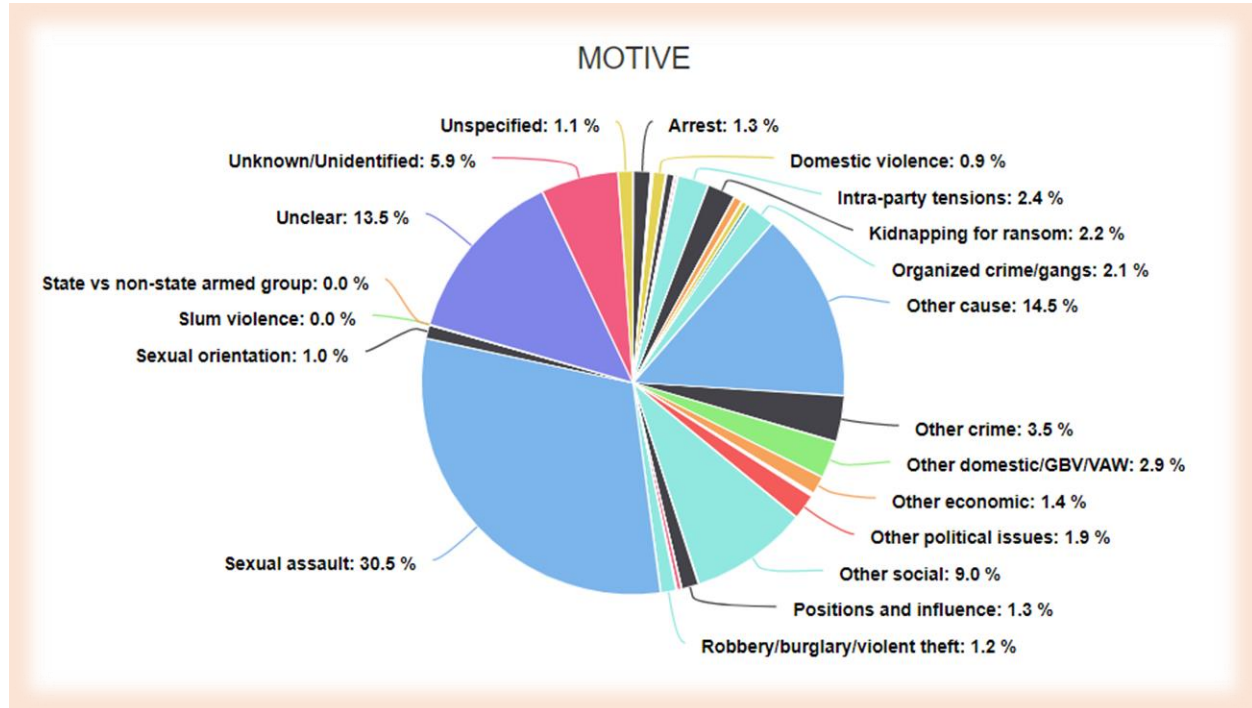
analyze the dynamics of the violent activities. As BPO database registered, in 2019, among the total incidents, 'youth' was the doer group in 455 incidents. In the second-highest, 'girls' were involved in 110 cases. Next in order were 'boys' with 86 incidents, 'Bangladesh Chhatra League' with 82 incidents and 'students' with 58 incidents were involved in violence actively. The cumulative figure is a disquieting fact considering the 2018's data.

Table 4: Categories based recorded incidents of 2019

Recorded Incidents of 2019		
Categories	Perpetrator	Victim
BCL	82	76
Boy	86	253
Girl	110	1122
Student	58	259
Youth	455	522
Total	787	2228

The above-stated data demonstrates that on the one hand, the number of incidents where youth were engaged, increased in comparison to the preceding year, on the other hand, youth were more of the victim of violence activities. It is a timely question to raise, why so? An endeavor to study the motives of those incidents may answer this question to some extent.

Motives of the incidents:



BPO demonstrates a vigorous database to understand the dynamics of violence in Bangladesh where youth perpetrated the act. The above brief review suggests that youth are mostly engaged in sexual offenses. This indicates the fact that it is time to rethink our traditional social and educational learning. In most cases, the hushed-up approach regarding sex is causing the youth to involve in such a crime. Be it their curiosity or lack of understanding of the criminal offenses or sense of power dynamics, youth, mainly boys are violating their counterparts sexually. While studying the characteristics of juvenile sex offenders, it comes out that youth who targets peers or adults shares certain similar characteristics. Such as- “high rates of learning disabilities and academic dysfunction (30-60%); the presence of other behavioral health problems, including substance abuse, and disorders of conduct (up to 80% have some diagnosable psychiatric disorder); observed difficulties with impulse control and judgment.”⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Hunter, A. J. “Understanding Juvenile Sex Offenders: Research Findings and Guidelines for Effective Management and Treatment”, <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/digitization/183507ncjrs.pdf>. Accessed 23 January 2020.

2.3.3 Youth as a Mitigating Force

There is a third dimension of the role of youth besides these two, i.e., perpetrators or as victims. There has been a strong role of youth- acting as a mitigating force. Bangladesh heard the voice of youth for public interest with the regenerative power of the society several times. Strong unity among student organizations played a crucial role in restoring democracy in the 1980s.

Recently, student agitation in various universities against corruption, irregularities, sexual harassment, and violence is widely noted. Not only university students, but school students also came out into the streets and occupied the streets in an angry but organized and peaceful way. They showed practically how to build a disciplined traffic system by controlling and challenging undisciplined VIPs, ministers, and police officials. Besides safety road movements, these students also raise their voices against climate change and to save the environment from disastrous projects. Students also came out in the streets to raise their voice against the quota system and imposing Value-added Tax (VAT) on tuition fees in private universities.

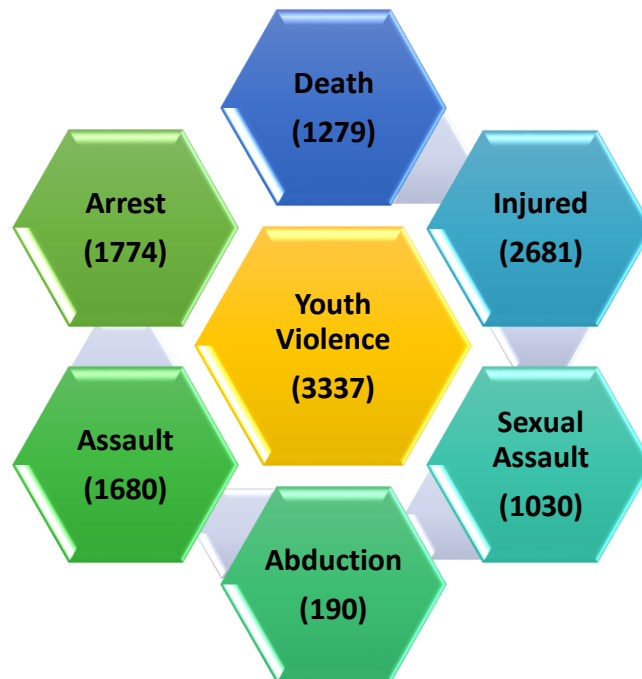
A female majority alliance was formed in Jahangirnagar University in 1988 to protest rape and sexual harassment in the university area. Maximum participants of this movement were general students who had no connection with political parties. Other notable similar kinds of movements include: against sexual harassment in Dhaka University (1998-99), against violence and terrorizing the campus in JU (2000), and against police atrocities in one of DU's female dormitories (2002). The mobilizations against sexual harassment had some notable results such as High Court directives to introduce a 'policy against sexual harassment' in every educational institution.

In the past few years, many banners of youths as mitigating force emerged, such as 'general students' unity', 'nipironer biruddhe amra' (students against oppression), 'nipironer biruddhe jahangirnagar' (Jahangirnagar against oppression), 'durnitir biruddhe jahangirnagar' (Jahangirnagar against corruption) 'nipiron o boishomya birodhi chatrasomaj' (students against oppression and discrimination), 'beton-fee briddhi birodhi chhatra oikyo' (student alliance against fee hike), 'dhorshon protirodh moncho'(rape resistance platform), 'sundarboner jonyo amra' (students for the Sundarbans), 'jatiyo sompod rokkha torun somaj' (youth for the protection of national resources), 'quota sonskar andolon' (quota reform movement), 'nirapod sorok andolon' (road safety movement), 'no vat movement' etc.

Although the role of youth as a mitigating force does not have a permanent organizational structure, they have a proven ability to attract significant participation of youth members. These youths are the source

of hope for Bangladesh not only for any particular institutions, but also for the socio-political struggles for emancipation, democracy, equality, and dignity in the time of repression, fear, injustice.⁶¹

3. Regional State of Youth Related Violence

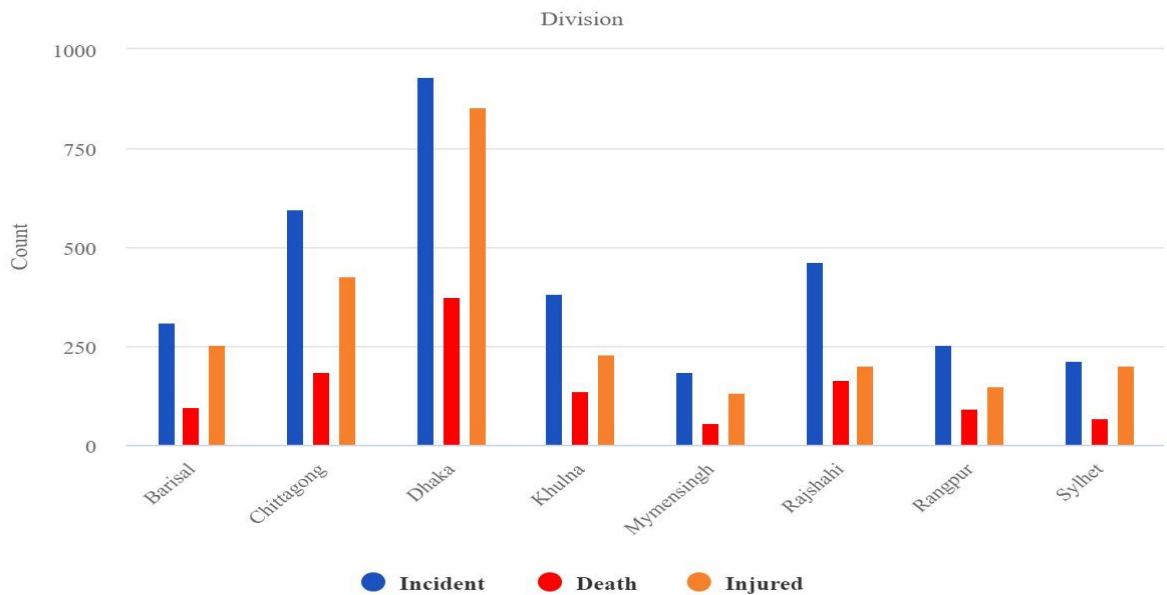


Source: BPO Database of 2019

BPO data demonstrates that among the incidents registered in the categories of youth's association, the number of death was 1,279, injured 2,681, arrest 1,774. Whereas the types of incidents that occurred more in numbers are assault 1,680, sexual assault 1,030, and abduction 190.

Figure: Regional youth related violent incidents in 2019

⁶¹ *The Daily Star*, 2019, <https://www.thedailystar.net/star-weekend/spotlight/news/youth-against-fear-and-injustice-1811827>. Accessed 20 January 2020.



Source: BPO Database

Table 5: Regional state of youth related violence

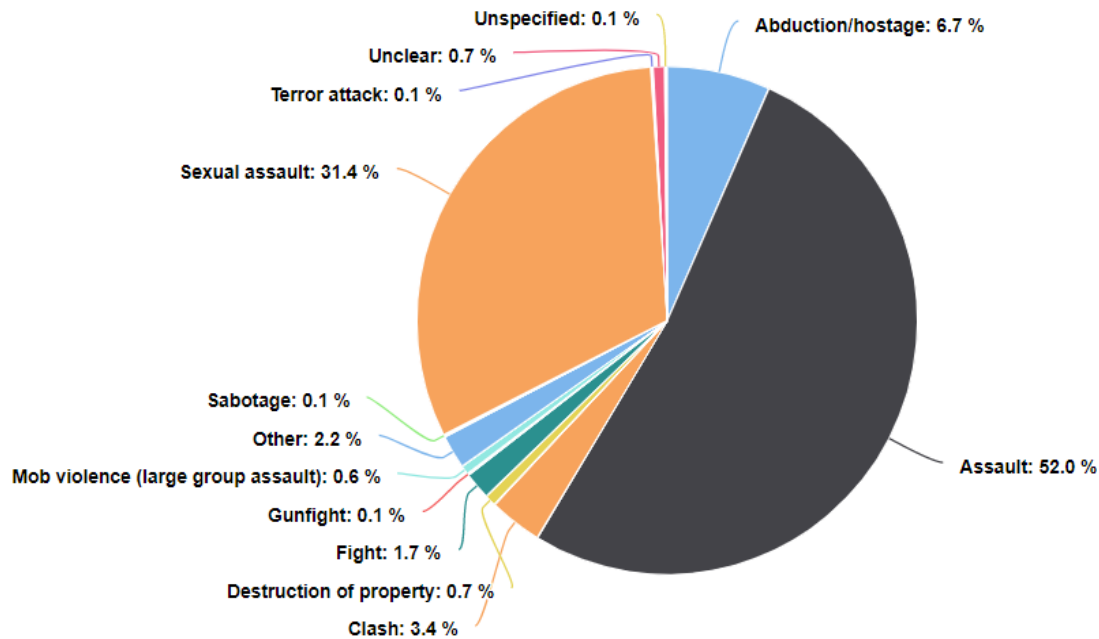
Rank	District	Incidents	Deaths	Injured
1	Dhaka	865	409	920
2	Chattogram	571	229	510
3	Rajshahi	393	171	229
4	Khulna	345	145	233
5	Barisal	267	98	255
6	Sylhet	189	73	243
7	Rangpur	230	98	157
8	Mymensingh	157	56	134

As the table projects, Dhaka ranked first for registering more incidents, deaths, and injuries where youth were involved. The numbers are 865, 409, and 920 respectively. Outside the capital, Chattogram is in the second position with 571 incidents, 229 deaths, and 510 injuries. From the northern part, Rajshahi ranked the highest.

Table 6: Recorded incidents based on the types of violence

Types of Violence	Incidents
Abduction/hostage	215
Assault	1680
Clash	111
Destruction of property	24
Fight	56
Gunfight	3
Mob violence (large group assault)	19
Other	97
Sabotage	4
Sexual assault	1014
Terror attack	4
Violence against civilians	1
Violent demonstration	1

The above table demonstrates that different types of violence took place in 2019, where youth were involved. As per the BPO database, sixteen types of violence occurred last year. There are also unspecified types of youth violence covered under the category of 'other'. The highest number of incidents were registered in the category assault (2680), followed by sexual assault (1014), abduction/hostage (215), clash (111) and others (97). The total picture of all the incidents by the types of violence is portrayed through the given chart.



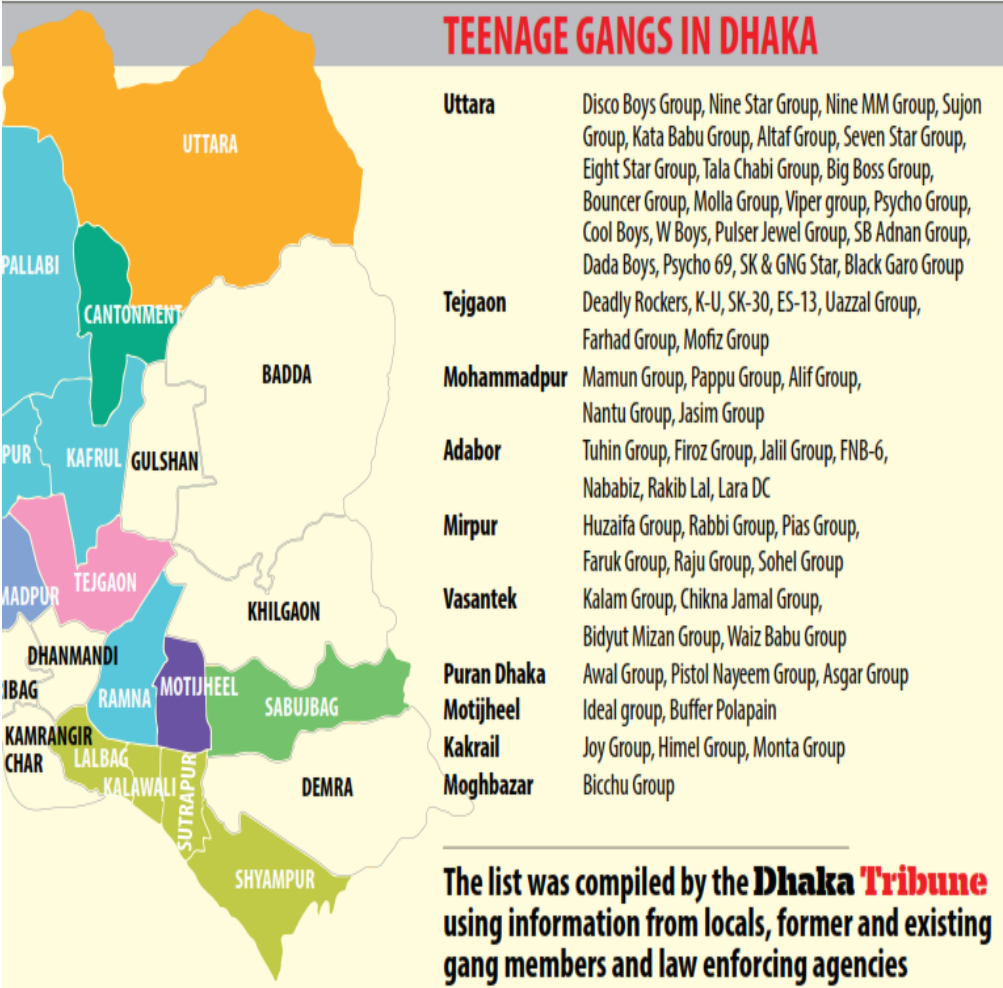
3.1 Urban Gang Culture

The gang culture made the headline in 2017 after a Uttara resident and a member of the gang 'Nine Star', Adnan was hacked to death by the members of his rival group 'Disco Boys' in the area on January 6 of that year.⁶² Active clampdown of law enforcers caused the gangs to go into hiding. With a pause of several months, they are back in action. Around 8,000 to 10,000 teenage people and youth are actively engaged in different youth-gangs in the capital.⁶³ In the period between 1990 and 2000, nearly 3,500 teen gang members had been active in different gangs. In the following 10 years, from 2000 to 2010, it increased up to 4,882.⁶⁴ A rough estimate suggests that gang members may have risen between somewhere 8,000 to

⁶² *Dhaka Tribune*, 2019, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/dhaka/2019/07/22/teen-gangs-rearing-their-ugly-heads>. Accessed 15 January 2020.

⁶³ *Dhaka Tribune*, 2019, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/dhaka/2019/08/29/over-50-teen-gangs-active-in-dhaka>. Accessed 15 January 2020.

10,000. And 50 to 60 gangs are active in Dhaka. As reported by the *Dhaka Tribune*, Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) director stated that approximately 190 gang-members were arrested singlehandedly in the capital city. The report has shown that among the arrestees, the majority are of the age of 14/15- 20/22. But the alarming fact is that they are actively operating outside of Dhaka as well.



Source: Dhaka Tribune



Source: The Independent

Examples of teen gang related incidents⁶⁵:

- * On September 4, a schoolboy was stabbed to death and three of his friends were injured, as two rival teen-gangs clashed.
- * On July 1, Yasin Arafat, 16, a member of the "Love Lane" gang, was killed in a fight with "Bangla Group" in Hazaribagh.
- * On May 14, Anmain Adil, 17, was stabbed to death, allegedly by a teen-gang, in the Karnaphuli Paper House area of Safari upazila, in Cumilla. The victim's family alleged that four members of the gang, "Eagle Group", attacked Adil and stabbed him indiscriminately.
- * On March 21, Kamrul Hassan Hridoy, an eighth-grader, was killed over a dispute between two teenage groups in the Uttarkhan area. Hridoy was killed as his gang, "Big Boss", exchanged heated words with members of the rival "Kashmiri Group".

While digging into the causes of youth's engagement in violent activities, different socio-political and economic aspects came into force as an instigating force. Criminology experts point out that open and unsupervised access to social media and the internet, the scope to roam freely and access to money are the prime causes behind the explosion of such criminal activities among the teens.⁶⁶ Added to these causes, academics and human rights activists blamed absence of alternative recreational activities – both socially and culturally, social and moral degradation, apathetic attitude of family, dearth of ethical lessons in the family and the educational institutes as well as the stagnant political situation as reasons for growing youth gang culture in the country.⁶⁷ In addition, Dean of Social Science Faculty of the University of Dhaka, Professor Sadeka Halim stated, breakdown of society and the tendency to go to the center of power is the main reason for the gang culture.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ *The Daily Independent*, 2019, <http://www.theindependentbd.com/post/214581>. Accessed 15 January 2020.

⁶⁶ *Dhaka Tribune*, 2019, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/dhaka/2019/07/22/teen-gangs-rearing-their-ugly-heads>. Accessed 15 January 2020.

⁶⁷ *The Daily New Age*, 2019, <http://www.newagebd.net/article/84035/gangs-of-teens-cause-concern>. Accessed 15 January 2020.

⁶⁸ *The Daily Sun*, 2019, <https://www.daily-sun.com/arcprint/details/444886/Preventing-teen-gang-violence/2019-12-08>. Accessed 15 January 2020.

3.2 Political Violence

Based on the empirical shreds of evidence recorded on the BPO, this section is an attempt to understand the multi-faced phenomenon of violence. World political incidents have its parallel history with violence. Anti-imperialism, nationalist struggle, democratization, globalization, and terrorism are historically linked with violence, more specifically with political violence.⁶⁹ Worldwide nation-building journey in the post-colonial era was associated with political violence. It is a vice versa process where violence is associated with both peacebuilding and identity creation and aggression. Political violence is defined as violence outside of state control that is politically motivated.

Table 7: Data of political actor based incidents in 2019

Political Actors	Incidents
Bangladesh Chhatra League	301
Jatiotabadi Chatra Dal	23
Islami Chhatra Shibir	25

The above table shows that student political parties, mainly practicing power politics, are much prone to violence. Notably, Bangladesh Chhatra League, which is the student wing of Awami League, was the perpetrator around 301 violent incidents throughout the year. This is the recorded number; mostly such incidents are hushed down by the leaders. Comparatively, other student political parties are less involved due to high surveillance against them. Explaining the position of Chhatra League, the Dean of the faculty of Social Science, University of Dhaka, Prof, Sadeka Halim pointed, these student political parties are patronized by the political parties and leaders. Therefore, they defy law and justice.

⁶⁹ Hossain, D. Actor-based Violence in Bangladesh in 2018: The Case of Political Parties. State of Peace 2018.

Examples of some incidents:

- *A businessman was hacked by the Chhatra League in Delduar upazila over a trivial issue. The Chhatra League man was arrested by the police.⁷⁰
- *At least five activists of Jatiotabadi Chhatra Dal were injured during a clash between two groups over a trivial matter in Dhaka city.⁷¹
- *A leader of Chhatra League was beaten in a clash between two groups of Chhatra League in Dhaka University over grabbing seats at the dormitory.⁷²
- *Five Chhatra League activists were injured in a fight between two units of the party from Dhaka University and Dhaka College during passing each other's procession in Dhaka.⁷³
- *12 people were injured in a clash between two groups of Jatiotabadi Chhatra Dal over declaring the district committee obsolete in Kotwali, Chattagram.⁷⁴
- *An activist of Bangladesh Chhatra League was stabbed by the members of Islami Chhatra Shibir in Modonmohon college.⁷⁵

3.3 Drug Peddling

According to the report of *Dhaka Tribune*, around 7.5 million people addicted to drugs and 1,60,000 drug traders are actively operating across the country.⁷⁶ Among the addicted, approximately 85% are male young people of age 15 to 30.⁷⁷ Statistics demonstrate that the number of drug traders increased by 29,900 in a year. The report reveals that 80% of the numbers are youth, of whom, 50% are actively involved in the criminal chain. It is to be noted that, around 43% of the unemployed population is addicted to drugs.

⁷⁰ *The Daily Karatoa*, 2019, https://ekaratoa.com/2019/01/07/6/details/6_r3_c3. Accessed 15 January 2020.

⁷¹ *The Daily Karatoa*, 2019, https://www.ekaratoa.com/2019/06/26/1/details/1_r13_c4.jpg. Accessed 15 January 2020.

⁷² *The Daily Karatoa*, 2019, https://www.ekaratoa.com/2019/01/31/3/details/3_r10_c7. Accessed 15 January 2020.

⁷³ *The Daily Star*, 2019, http://epaper.thedailystar.net/contents/2019/2019_01_27/content_zoom/2019_01_27_3_2_b. Accessed 15 January 2020.

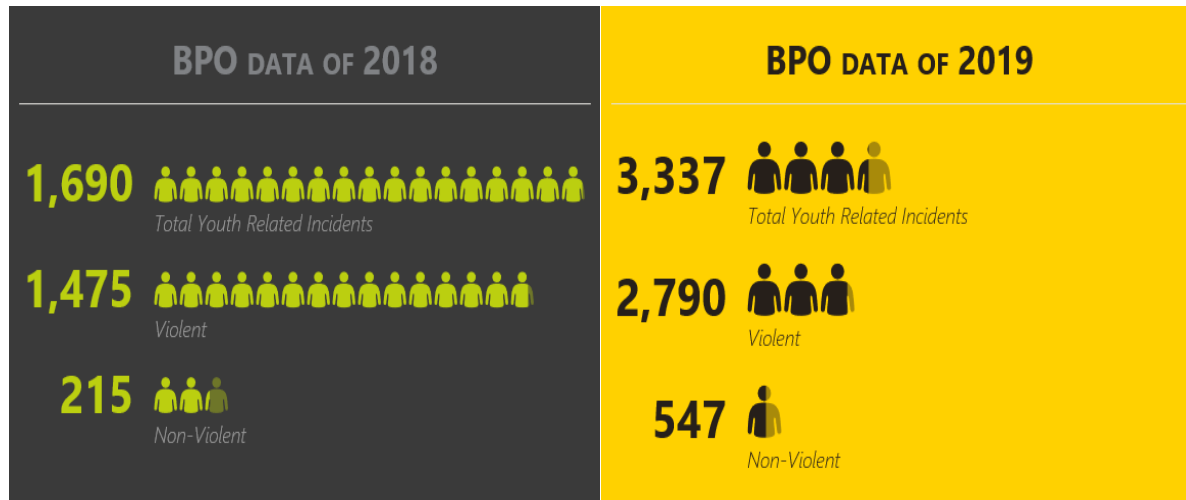
⁷⁴ *The Daily Purbokone*, 2019, https://www.edainikpurbokone.net/content/2019/2019-12-11/zoom_view/all.jpg. Accessed 15 January 2020.

⁷⁵ *The Daily Star*, 2019, http://epaper.thedailystar.net/contents/2019/2019_03_15/content_zoom/2019_03_15_5_4_b.jpg. Accessed 15 January 2020.

⁷⁶ *Dhaka Tribune*, 2019, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/dhaka/2019/02/27/43-of-unemployed-population-addicted-to-drugs>. Accessed 15 January 2020.

⁷⁷ *The Financial Express*, 2019, <https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/views/opinions/can-bangladesh-win-its-war-on-drugs-1561472527>. Accessed 15 January 2020.

4. Comparative overview



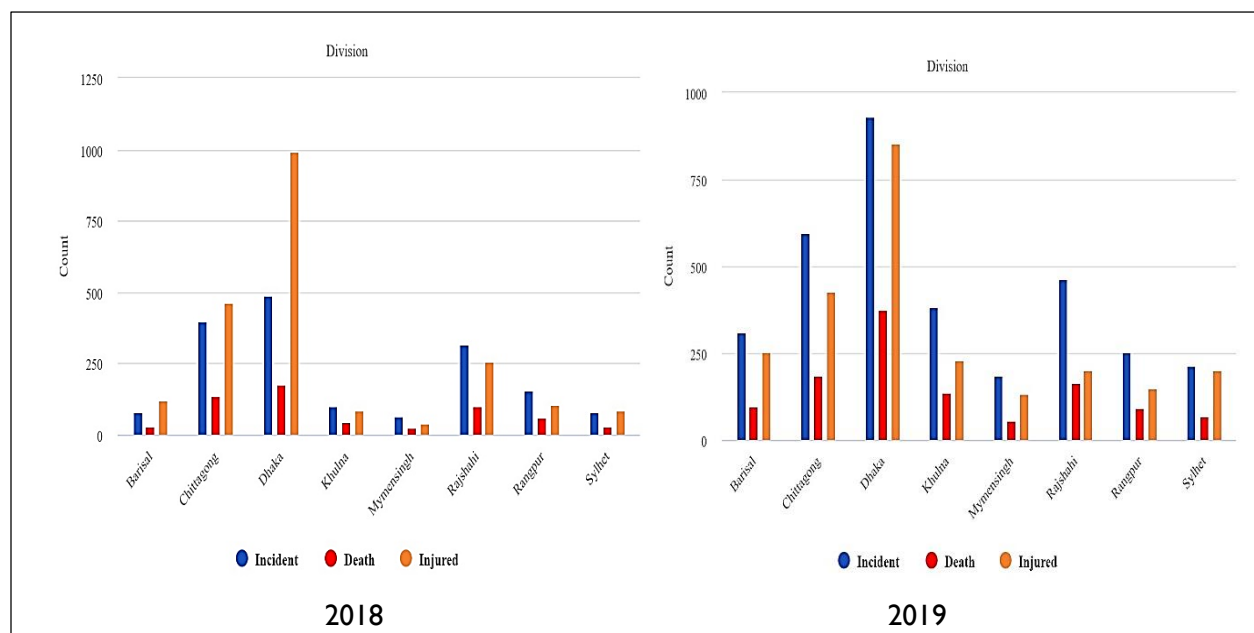
In 2018, BPO registered total of 1,690 incidents where youth were involved actively or inactively. Among the total number, 1,475 incidents were violent and around 215 incidents were non-violent. Shockingly, the number of incidents in 2019 is double than the previous year. A total of 3,337 incidents were recorded in 2019 as per the BPO database. Among them, violent and non-violent incidents are 2,790 and 547 respectively.

While we talked about youth's relation with violence, here BPO database projects a complete overview in comparison with the previous year. The data demonstrate that in political cases, perpetrators like Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) declined in comparison to the previous year. Whereas, they are being more victim than before. On the other hand, girl's involvement in violent activities increased than the previous year. Alarming, Youth's involvement in criminal activities has increased as the data projects. Victim rate is higher than the preceding year as well. The highest numbers of victims are of girls like the previous year, but the number is double than before.

2018			2019	
Categories	Perpetrator	Victim	Perpetrator	Victim
BCL	134	5	82	76
Boy	60	212	86	253
Girl	61	543	110	1122
Student	32	172	58	259
Youth	113	158	455	522
Total	400	999	787	2228

Source: BPO Database

The bar chart shows that Dhaka is an extremely violent incident prone district compared to the other districts. Chattogram, the port city is the second in terms of incidents occurrence, followed by Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal, Rangpur. Noticeably, Barisal, Khulna had recorded an alarming rise in violent activities than the other region in comparison to the previous year.



5. Legal Mechanism to Protect Youth

Youths need to be handled deftly as they belong to the stage where they are vulnerable but also are full of potentials. They might get involve in different illegal acts without proper knowledge of the consequences or out of peer pressure. Bangladesh enacted new legislation, the Children Act, 2013, repealing the previous provision for the benefit of the children. The law defines children up to the age of 18. In this Act, extra emphasis has been given to the establishment of Child Welfare Boards at the national, district and upazila levels to ensure the welfare of the children.⁷⁸ The 2013 Act introduces the concept of "restorative justice" that proposes compensation to a child who is a victim of crime. According to Section 38 of the Act, "the court may order any person found guilty of an offense committed against a child victim to pay compensation to the child on an application by the child or the child's parents or, in their absence, the foster care giver, guardian or member of her/his extended family, Probation Officer, lawyer or public prosecutor in order to restore the child to her/his previous position. Also, the court may order *suo motu* for compensation to be paid by the convict. The Court may order payment to be made at once or by installments through the court, and may direct that the money be used for the welfare of the child."⁷⁹

Moreover, to ensure the empowerment of youth, the Ministry of Youths and Sports has framed a policy, National Youth Policy 2017, in the vision of producing "moral, humane and forward-looking youth capable of boosting prosperity and glory of Bangladesh". The objectives of the policy are to develop youth into righteous, progressive, self-respecting and positive human beings; to create congenial conditions for youth to achieve their inherent potential; to develop youth into human resource; to ensure quality education, health and security for youth; to provide youth with employment and choice of profession according to their ability; to promote economic and innovative enterprise by youth; to enable youth to play an active role in every sphere of national life through their empowerment; to involve youth in the decision-making process at local, national and international levels; to encourage youth to volunteer in protecting the environment, combating climate change and calamities, and in nation-building; to imbue the young community with sensibility and a sense of responsibility towards those in the society who are backward and physically-mentally or otherwise challenged; to ensure rights of youth with special needs; to motivate

⁷⁸ Ali, M. Imman, 2013. "Justice for Children in Bangladesh: The Children Act, 2013- Brief Commentary".

http://www.supremecourt.gov.bd/resources/contents/Children_Act_2013-Brief_Commentary_v4.pdf. Accessed 15 January 2020.

⁷⁹ "The Children Act 2013: A Commentary by Justice Imman Ali. Bangladesh Legal Aid & Service Trust (BLAST) and Penal Reform International (PRI)", 2013. <https://www.blast.org.bd/content/publications/The-Children-Act%202013.pdf>. Accessed 15 January 2020.

youth to shun ideological radicalism and aggressiveness in conducting their lives; to inspire liberal, non-communal, humane and global spirit within youth.⁸⁰

6. Recommendation

➤ Good governance

The number of youth's involvement in violent activities has increased over the years. Lack of good governance is a major determinant of violence. "Good governance" can be defined through eight major characteristics where a governing system needs to be accountable, participatory, transparent, responsive, consensus oriented, equitable and inclusive, effective and efficient, and in adherence to the rule of law.⁸¹ Since its independence, Bangladesh has struggled over implementing good governing system due to rampant bureaucratic corruption, political instability and lack of accountability and transparency.

➤ Political stability

In developing countries, youth unemployment is associated with political violence and armed conflict. Another aspect is political turmoil that stagnates the socio-economic growth of a country. Lack of employment opportunities can turn a resourceful youth into a devastating militant extremist. In the past years, Bangladesh faced domestic political turmoil, violent extremism is still a challenge and threat. These affect the youth adversely.

➤ Rule of law

A fair legal framework is another requirement to restrain the youth from violent activities and drive them in a positive way. No proper 'Juvenile Act' exists in Bangladesh to act against the guilty youth. An impartial and independent judiciary is the call of the day.

➤ Inclusive education system

In this context, Sadeka Halim stated that textbook education is now incomplete and due to this, hatred towards other religions and humiliation of women is increasing.⁸² A children/youth learn

⁸⁰ "National Youth Policy". Ministry of Youth and Sports, Government of Bangladesh, 2017, [https://dyd.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/dyd.portal.gov.bd/policies/21e565b2_252f_4f80_bfce_31a1cb33163d/Draft%20English%20Version%20of%20National%20Youth%20Policy%202017%20\(1\).pdf](https://dyd.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/dyd.portal.gov.bd/policies/21e565b2_252f_4f80_bfce_31a1cb33163d/Draft%20English%20Version%20of%20National%20Youth%20Policy%202017%20(1).pdf). Accessed 15 January 2020.

⁸¹ "What Is Good Governance?" UNESCAP, <https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/good-governance.pdf>. Accessed 15 January 2020.

⁸² *The Daily Sun*, 2019, <https://www.daily-sun.com/arcprint/details/444886/Preventing-teen-gang-violence/2019-12-08>. Accessed 15 January 2020.

mostly from the formal and informal educational institute. In the vulnerable stage of adulthood, youth are often curious and prone to take actions without thinking of the consequences. It is also the time for psychological and behavioral growth. Failing to provide them with proper education, youth may engage in violent activities. A proper and holistic curriculum can go a long way in addressing the issue of youth violence.

➤ Social and cultural values

On the gang culture, Rapid Action Battalion officials stated that the teen-gang groups are engaged in crimes mainly due to problems in their families. Moreover, such gangs attract children who want to belong and tend to be highly susceptible to peer pressure. Proper monitoring from the families, school authorities, communities, and also from political platforms may help control the situation. Building awareness among parents is the key to solving the problem. Chairman of the Department of Psychology of Jagannath University, Professor Ashok Kumar Saha said, “Such incidents have been taking place due to the apathy of parents and the gap being created as the parents are not providing enough time to their children.”

➤ Intolerance/hate speech

Intolerance has become an epidemic syndrome among today's youth. They are reluctant to accept any second opinion except their own. Consequently, a state of violent extremism is hovering upon the head of our society. It is creating social degeneration. Controlled surveillance should be implemented to take such incidents in account and initiate needed action.

➤ Ensuring employment

— Work, employment and vulnerability	
	Employment to population ratio (% ages 15 and older)
	56.2
Employment to population ratio (% ages 15 and older)	56.2
Child labour (% ages 5-17)	n.a.
Employment in agriculture (% of total employment)	40.2
Employment in services (% of total employment)	39.4
Labour force participation rate (% ages 15 and older)	58.7
Labour force participation rate (% ages 15 and older), female	36.0
Labour force participation rate (% ages 15 and older), male	81.3
Old-age pension recipients (% of statutory pension age population)	33.4
Unemployment, total (% of labour force)	4.3
Proportion of informal employment in nonagricultural employment (% of total employment in non-agriculture)	91.3
Unemployment, youth (ages 15-24)	12.0
Vulnerable employment (% of total employment)	55.5
Youth not in school or employment (% ages 15-24)	27.4

Source: Human Development Index, UNDP⁸³

According to the UNDP's Human Development Index 2019, total unemployment rate in Bangladesh is 4.3% in comparison to the total labor forces. Among them, unemployed youth constitute 12%, comprising the age group of 15-24. Unemployment is a major reason for a large number of youth to indulge in subversive activities. Ensuring employment should be the top priority to restrain youth's engagement in violent activities.

7. Conclusion

It is unfortunate that, 'youth violence' is becoming a growing threat to the broad development spectrum. It is a global issue, capable of causing catastrophic consequences for the individual and the community. To prevent youth violence, a comprehensive approach is required that addresses all the socio-economic factors of violence, such as- lack of proper education, unemployment, weakening of social values, lack of good governance, political instability etc. Addressing and understanding the above can help towards formulating effective strategies to prevent violence. An inclusive approach is also needed to deconstruct the stereotyped notions of youth violence.

⁸³ "Human Development Reports." UNDP, hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/BGD#. Accessed 14 January 2020.

The "Rohingya identity" ensured!

Sourav Ghosh⁸⁴

The eyes of the international community were turned to The Hague on 23rd January 2020 when the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the United Nations' top court, ruled that Myanmar must implement provisional measures for the protection of the Rohingya population in the northern Rakhine state of Myanmar. Indeed, it is a moral victory for the Rohingyas, world's most persecuted people. The decision of the ICJ came after The Gambia, a West African country supported by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), filed a case against Myanmar for committing atrocities and systematic persecution against the Rohingya Muslims.⁸⁵

It has been more than two years since the Myanmar military launched a violent "clearance operation" in the Rakhine state against the Rohingya people. Just when the Rohingya issue was on the brink of fading from global headlines, it has again drawn attention of the global arena when The Gambia filed a lawsuit against Myanmar at the ICJ in November last year.⁸⁶ From the time Burma (now Myanmar) won its independence from Britain in 1948, the Rohingyas have faced systematic persecution, discrimination, statelessness in the Rakhine state of Myanmar.⁸⁷ Such persecution has forced the Rohingya women, children and men to take shelter in Bangladesh for a long period. Violent spates of atrocities against the Rohingyas in Myanmar took place at least on three occasions - 1978, 1991, and 2017, contributing to Asia's largest refugee population now.⁸⁸

The massive influx of hundreds of thousands of Rohingya refugees into Bangladesh in 2017 can easily be defined as one of the most catastrophic

⁸⁴ Research Manager, Bangladesh Peace Observatory (BPO), Centre for Genocide Studies.

⁸⁵ "Defending the indefensible Aung San Suu Kyi defends Myanmar at the ICJ in The Hague". *The Economist*, 8 December 2019, <https://www.economist.com/asia/2019/12/08/aung-san-suu-kyi-defends-myanmar-at-the-icj-in-the-hague>. Accessed 25 January 2020.

⁸⁶ "Rohingya Refugee Crisis". UN OCHA, 2 April 2019, <https://www.unocha.org/rohingya-refugee-crisis>. Accessed 20 January 2020.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

events in recent times. The discrimination and threat to life made Rohingya people flee from their country of origin to as many as 15 countries, including Bangladesh.⁸⁹ Today almost 1.1 million Rohingya refugees are living in squalid refugee camps in Cox's Bazar, a southwestern coastal city of Bangladesh.⁹⁰ Despite living in cramped conditions in the world's biggest refugee camp, possibly none of the Rohingya refugees want to go back to their country of origin. One of the primary reasons behind their unwillingness to go back is because Myanmar is yet to create a conducive environment for them where there will be no threat to their life, and they will be recognized as Myanmar's citizens.

After the ICJ ruling, now it would not be easy for Myanmar to ignore the UN top courts' decision and to continue persecution against Rohingya people. According to UN's top court, Myanmar must take all measures to stop further genocidal acts in Rakhine state, and the country also has to create a conducive environment to pave the way for voluntary repatriation for the Rohingyas.⁹¹ Myanmar has always insisted that it launched the military campaign in northern Rakhine state to tackle an extremist threat and it has nothing to do with the Rohingyas.

Key Facts about the ICJ Ruling:

In this landmark judgement, the ICJ has endorsed the provisional measures sought by The Gambia, marking a moral victory at this stage of the case. The panel of fifteen international judges including two ad-hoc judges (one nominated by each party) observed that there are fundamental rights at stake and the Rohingya people certainly deserve the protection of those rights. Moreover, the court also noted a recent UN report, which observed that the Rohingya people are at the risk of genocide.

According to the court order, Myanmar must prevent a range of acts that aims to destroy all or part of a national, ethnic, racial or religious group.⁹² Therefore, Myanmar not only has to stop killing of Rohingya people but also ensure that the Rohingyas are not harmed physically and mentally. Also, Myanmar must ensure that its military or other irregular armed units will not attempt any genocidal acts or will not destroy any evidence of possible genocide. In addition, the court also asked the Myanmar government to

⁸⁹ S.N. Parnini, "The crisis of the Rohingya as a Muslim minority in Myanmar and bilateral relations with Bangladesh," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 18 October 2013.

⁹⁰ "Not a single Rohingya wants to go back: Buses back to Myanmar left empty as refugees mark second year since fleeing genocide". *The Independent*, 22 August 2019, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/myanmar-rohingya-crisis-muslims-refugees-genocide-bangladesh-a9074851.html>. Accessed 23 January 2020.

⁹¹ "Myanmar Rohingya: World court orders prevention of genocide". *BBC*, 23 January 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-51221029>. Accessed 23 January 2020.

⁹² UN's top court orders Myanmar to protect Rohingya from genocide". *The Guardian*, 23 January 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jan/23/international-court-to-rule-on-rohingya-genocide-safeguards>. Accessed 29 January 2020.

submit a report to the court on all possible measures it has taken to implement the court's order.⁹³ Moreover, the country is required to do so every six months to ensure the safety of the Rohingyas.

For the first time, the seventeen judges of ICJ unanimously mandated such provisional measures in less than two months after The Gambia filed the case.⁹⁴ Moreover, for the first time, a genocide case was brought before the ICJ by a signatory country not in direct conflict with the accused country.⁹⁵ Most importantly, according to article 41(2) of the ICJ statute, the court's provisional order will now be automatically sent to the UN Security Council, which will increase pressure on the council to take action in Myanmar.⁹⁶ Although decision taken at the Security Council is much more complicated, but at least the provisional measures will act as a moral victory for the Rohingyas.

Besides, the ICJ ruling has proved that Myanmar has committed heinous crimes against the Rohingya community and is continuing a well-orchestrated policy of genocide against them. Furthermore, the ruling has also ensured the identity and existence of the world's most persecuted group. This is for the first time an international legal body has recognized the community as Rohingya. The court further observed that "Rohingya should be understood as references to the group that self-identifies as the Rohingya group and that claims a longstanding connection to Rakhine State, which forms part of the Union of Myanmar".⁹⁷ A critical fact about the ruling is that it has overruled the contrasting claim of Rohingyas as Bengalis, or their identification as "displaced Myanmar citizens" by many countries across the world. To recapitulate, it can be assumed that this is a small step in the right direction, but the journey ahead is long and arduous.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ "The Rohingya Find Some Justice in Court". *Foreign Policy*, 24 January 2020, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/01/24/myanmar-aung-san-su-kyi-genocide-rohingya-find-some-justice-the-hague/>. Accessed 30 January 2020.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ "World Court Rules Against Myanmar on Rohingya". Human Rights Watch, 23 January 2020, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/01/23/world-court-rules-against-myanmar-rohingya>. Accessed 30 January 2020.

⁹⁷ "Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide" (The Gambia v. Myanmar). 23 January 2020, <https://www.icj-cij.org/files/case-related/178/178-20200123-ORD-01-00-EN.pdf>. Accessed 18 March 2020.

Impact of the Rohingya Exodus in Bangladesh: An assessment of 2019

Faizah Sultana⁹⁸

The recent exodus of Rohingyas into Bangladesh, following massive atrocities by Myanmar forces started in August 2017. The Government of Bangladesh (GOB) and people extended their hands of support and gave them shelter. But after two years, the bulk of the refugee population has had impact on the local environment.

Rohingya people live in makeshift shacks, which are far from qualified for maintaining living standards in the congested camps. They are living under strict regulations and their mobility is restricted.⁹⁹ But amidst the obstacles they held an election for new group leaders under UNHCR's community government pilot scheme.¹⁰⁰ They commemorated the second anniversary of the exodus on 25th August 2019 entitling the day as the 'Genocide day'.¹⁰¹ Experts also fear about their dire situation if a large-scale natural calamity occurs or man-made hazards like land-slides or hill-slides take place. The locals in Cox's Bazar have been affected at micro and macro-levels. After the influx, prices of some products has increased and wages in agricultural and non-skilled works has gone down. Arable lands are occupied by the refugees, which local people used for their yields and fishing territories were restricted for the local fishermen limiting the nautical border for the sake of safety and security.¹⁰² Besides the level of tolerance has also declined among the host community by the extended stay of the distressed people.¹⁰³

⁹⁸ Research Data Analyst, Bangladesh Peace Observatory (BPO), Centre for Genocide Studies.

⁹⁹ Marsh, Sarah, and Redwan Ahmed. "Our Only Aim Is to Go Home: Rohingya Refugees Face Stark Choice in Bangladesh". *The Guardian*, 4 November 2019, www.theguardian.com/global-development/2019/nov/04/our-only-aim-is-to-go-home-removal-plans-raise-tensions-in-rohingya-camp. Accessed 29 January 2020.

¹⁰⁰ "Hölzl, Verena. "For Rohingya Women, Refugee Elections Bring New Opportunities – and New Problems". *The New Humanitarian*, 26 August 2019, www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news-feature/2019/08/26/Rohingya-women-refugee-elections. Accessed 28 January 2020.

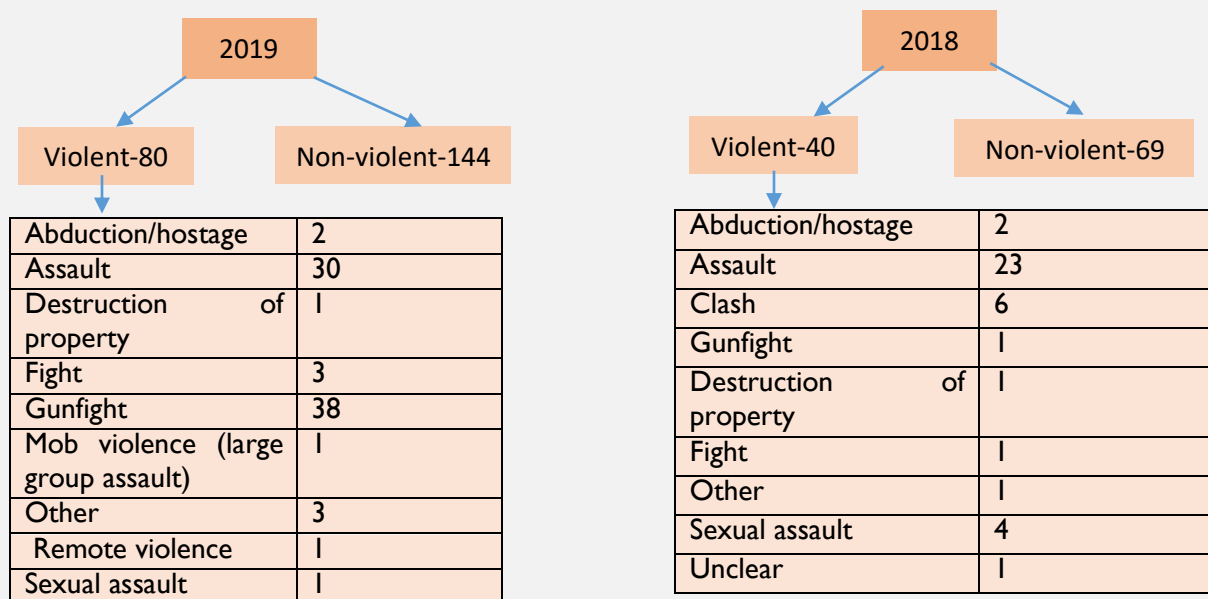
¹⁰¹ Al Jazeera. "'Genocide Day': Thousands of Rohingya Rally in Bangladesh Camps". *Al Jazeera*, 25 August 2019, www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/08/day-thousands-rohingya-rally-bangladesh-camps-190825055618484.html. Accessed 26 January 2020.

¹⁰² "Impacts of the Rohingya influx on the host communities". UNDP, 2018, <https://bit.ly/38DFNrB>. Accessed 28 January 2020.

¹⁰³ Vyawahare, Malavika. "Cox's Bazar: Rohingya Camp to Be Hardest Hit by Climate Change". *Al Jazeera*, 19 Dec. 2018, www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/cox-bazaar-rohingya-camp-hardest-hit-climate-change-181218233254118.html. Accessed 27 January 2020.

According to Bangladesh Peace Observatory (BPO), there are a total of 224 Rohingya-related incidents reported in Bangladesh in 2019. There are 80 violent and 144 non-violent incidents.¹⁰⁴ In 2018, there were 109 incidents in total with 40 violent and 69 non-violent incidents. So, 2019 has seen 105.50% increase in total Rohingya related incidents and 108.70% in non-violent and 100% increase in violent incident. In one year the incidents of violence have doubled. The section below analyses the factors behind this rise.

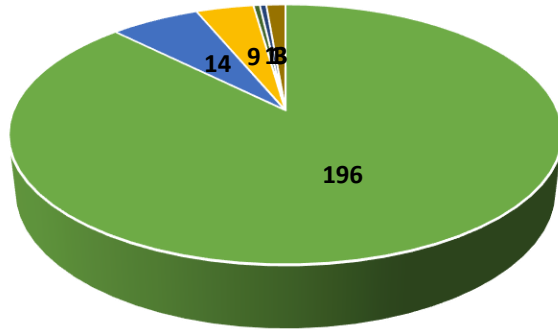
Violent and Non-violent incident update



¹⁰⁴ **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.

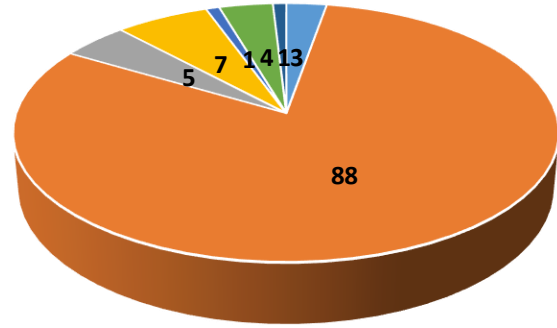
Non-violent Incident: According to BPO Codebook: The reported incident did not involve the intentional use of physical force by an individual or group against another individual or group, in a manner that resulted or could have resulted in death, injury or any other form of physical harm to persons or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

Divisional segregation of total reported incidents: 2019

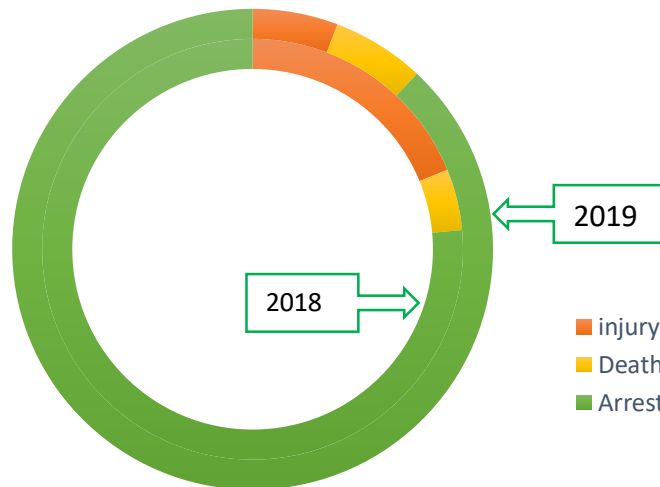


■ Chattogram ■ Dhaka ■ Khulna
■ Rajshahi ■ Rangpur ■ Sylhet

Divisional segregation of the reported incidents: 2018



■ Barishal ■ Chattogram ■ Dhaka ■ Khulna
■ Mymensingh ■ Rajshahi ■ Rangpur

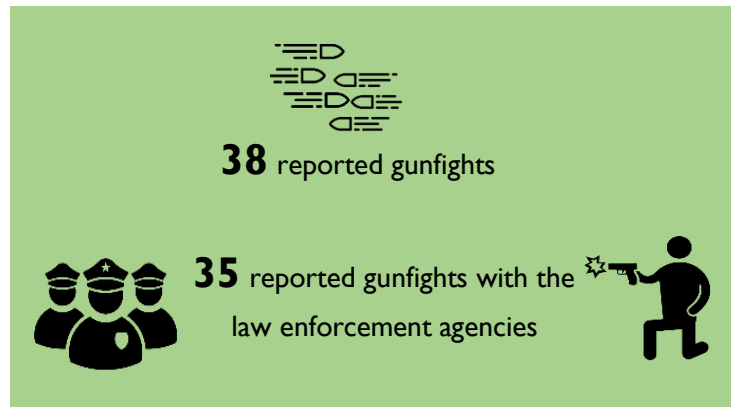


Overview of the BPO Data: Violent and Non-violent

Total number of gunfights has increased from 1 to 39 in 2019 and in 35 reported cases, law enforcement agencies were counterparts of the offenders who were mostly of Rohingya origin. In 20 cases, drug peddlers and smugglers were involved, in 9 cases robbers and rest of the cases the deceased were found next to firearms and other criminal possessions.

People inside the Rohingya camps were engaged in assaults (30 reported incidents) and fights (3 incidents) and other types of

violence among themselves and in some cases with the local people. Position and supremacy, domestic violence, personal feuds, attacks by unknown miscreants inside or outside the camp were prominent. The camp dwellers also attacked local people over trivial issues like, over a dog¹⁰⁵, protesting against beating a beggar¹⁰⁶, trespassing in private lands¹⁰⁷, etc. A local Jubo League leader was murdered allegedly by Rohingyas before the second anniversary of the exodus. This incident was followed by demonstration and vandalism by the locals in Jadimura area in Teknaf, Cox's Bazar.¹⁰⁸ The prime accused of the case, a Rohingya person named 'Nur Mohammad' was killed in a gunfight with the police. Later it was found that he managed to get a Bangladeshi NID card.¹⁰⁹ After this, the authority became aware and several government officials were arrested for involvement in manufacturing NIDs for Rohingyas.



¹⁰⁵ "An elderly man was killed by a Rohingya man in Ramu". *The Daily Jugantar*, 3 June 2019, https://epaper.jugantor.com/2019/06/03/2/details/2_r2_c1.jpg. Accessed 25 January 2020.

¹⁰⁶ "A youth was injured by Rohingya people". *The Daily Jugantar*, 6 December 2019, https://epaper.jugantor.com/2019/12/06/19/details/19_r7_c4.jpg. Accessed 25 January 2020.

¹⁰⁷ "Four Bangladeshis were injured by Rohingya people". *The Daily Purbokone*, 21 December, 2019, https://www.edainikpurbokone.net/content/2019/2019-12-21/zoom_view/e05.jpg. Accessed 25 January 2020.

¹⁰⁸ "Jubo League Leader Killed by Rohingyas". *The Daily Star*, 24 August 2019, http://epaper.thedailystar.net/contents/2019/2019_08_24/content_zoom/2019_08_24_1_5_b.jpg. Accessed 25 January 2020.

¹⁰⁹ "Another Rohingya killed in 'gunfight' after arrest". *The Daily New Age*, 2 September 2019, http://epaper.newagebd.net/images/02_09_2019/regular_43211_news_1567370803.jpg, http://epaper.newagebd.net/images/02_09_2019/regular_43212_news_1567370971.jpg. Accessed 25 January 2020.

There are a total of 144 non-violent incidents related to Rohingya people reported in 2019. BPO registers events of arrests, detentions, raids, eviction drives, rescue cases, etc. under non-violent category. There are 44 drug related reported incidents, 28 cases of passport counterfeiting, 15 cases related to human trafficking and, there are many cases where Rohingya people were detained outside the camp. In 2019, a trend has been observed by assessing the contents of the reported news. It shows that the Rohingyas are

attempting to flee from the camp with the intent to cross over to Malaysia, India or any other country. The number of these risky escapes has escalated in 2019. Needless to say, they cannot adopt any legal means to run off to these countries. So, they easily fall victim of the human traffickers. From the news articles published in 2019, it is observed that at least 475 Rohingyas attempted to flee from Bangladesh or tried to enter through borders and at least 201 people were rescued from the human traffickers while they were about to be shipped away. Few Rohingya people were detained outside Chattogram division.

The reasons behind these moves are many; many of the Rohingya households are carrying debt on their shoulders as they buy food, which are not given as relief from outside the camp.¹¹⁰ Also, the local law enforcement agencies shut down their temporary shops that could allow them legal earnings. A news report says the restrictions around the camps are increasing to limit the movement of the camp dwellers. Such hard and fast rules are sowing seeds of despair in the minds of captive people.¹¹¹ So, the need of income generation, frustration of staying in captivity may lead them to involve in criminal activities, mass escape through the risky tides. Besides, some of the Rohingyas are not new to this country, they have spread their net long before August 2017. Nur Mohammad, accused in the Jubo League leader murder case who was later killed in a gunfight, was an oldcomer and had earned bad name for his notoriety.



¹¹⁰ Bhatia, Abhishek & Mahmud, Ayesha & Fuller, Arlan & Shin, Rebecca & Rahman, Azad & Shatil, Tanvir & Sultana, Mahmuda & Morshed, K.A.M. & Leaning, Jennifer & Balsari, Satchit. (2018). "The Rohingya in Cox's Bazar: When the Stateless Seek Refuge". *Health and human rights* (20). 105-122. December 2018, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/329988225_The_Rohingya_in_Cox's_Bazar_When_the_Stateless_Seek_Refuge. Accessed 28 January 2020.

¹¹¹ Marsh, Sarah, and Redwan Ahmed. "'Our Only Aim Is to Go Home': Rohingya Refugees Face Stark Choice in Bangladesh". *The Guardian*, 4 November 2019, www.theguardian.com/global-development/2019/nov/04/our-only-aim-is-to-go-home-removal-plans-raise-tensions-in-rohingya-camp. Accessed 29 January 2020.

Drug-related Violence: Global and National Trends

Hazera Khanam¹¹²

Sharin Fatema¹¹³

Introduction

The use and trade of illicit drugs is one of the deadliest crimes, which claims thousands of lives in various forms of violence and health-hazards each year. The analyses below will trace the national and transnational nature of organized crimes related to consumption and trade of contraband drugs. The write-up provides an overview of global trends of drug-related violence in 2018 and 2019. The global trends of contraband drugs highlight not only the patterns of the abuses of illicit drugs, but also indicates its association with crime and violence. It will also shed some light on the patterns of illicit drug-related violence through a comparative analysis of consumption, trade, and violence in different countries of South Asia. The next section analyzes the national trends with a particular focus on legal-institutional response by statistically highlighting the Bangladesh Peace Observatory (BPO) data on contraband drug-related incidents of crime and violence amidst the zero-tolerance policy of the Government of Bangladesh (GOB). Furthermore, this section also observes the need for more awareness and intervention in waning transnational nexus of drug-related crime and violence in Bangladesh.

Global and Regional Overview on Contraband Drug

Worldwide, approximately, 35.5 million people are suffering from drug abuse and about 585,000 people died in 2017.¹¹⁴ Hepatitis C

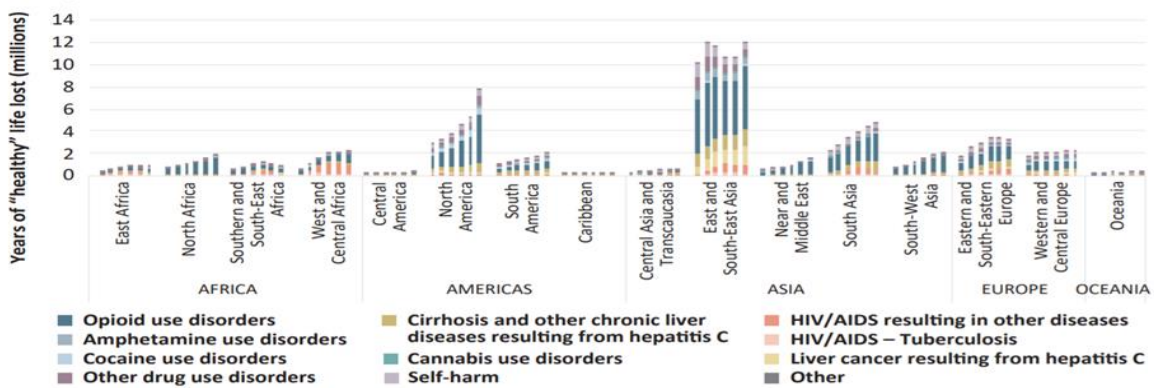
¹¹² Research Data Analyst (RDA), Bangladesh Peace Observatory (BPO), Centre for Genocide Studies, University of Dhaka

¹¹³ Research Data Analyst (RDA), Bangladesh Peace Observatory (BPO), Centre for Genocide Studies, University of Dhaka

¹¹⁴ "World Drug Report 2019: Executive Summary". United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (UNODC), 2019, https://wdr.unodc.org/wdr2019/prelaunch/WDR19_Booklet_I_EXECUTIVE_SUMMARY.pdf. Accessed 19 January 2020.

and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) were the main cause of these deaths. Among 11 million people who inject drugs, 1.4 million are living with HIV, 5.6 million with hepatitis C and 1.2 million are infected with both diseases.¹¹⁵ Drug abuse reportedly caused 190,000 premature deaths in 2016.¹¹⁶ Among the drug abusers, reportedly only one out of seven receives proper treatment.¹¹⁷ All these estimations reflect the severity of the global illicit drug consumption scenario.

Figure 13: Regional death rates from the abuse of drug substance.¹¹⁸



Source: Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation “Global Burden of Disease Study 2017”, Global Health Data Exchange. Available at <http://ghdx.healthdata.org/gbd-results-tool>.

Note: Regional grouping are not those used by the Global Burden of Disease Study. Country estimates were aggregated to produce regional estimates based on the World Drug Report regional groupings. In the charts showing subregional data, the bars refer to the years 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010 and 2017.

Activate Window

Figure 13 illustrates the regional distribution of the number of death caused by the consumption of the contraband drugs in 2017 according to the United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (UNODC) 2019 annual report. It is noted that East and South-East Asia had been suffering from the most distress situation with approximately 12 million of fatalities and these regions suffered from HIV/AIDS and liver cancers resulting from hepatitis C. North America holds the second-highest number of deaths of reportedly 8

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ “World Drug Report 2017: Executive Summary”. United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (UNODC), 2017, https://www.unodc.org/wdr2017/field/Booklet_1_EXSUM.pdf. Accessed 21 January 2020.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, page 9.

¹¹⁸ “Global Overview of Drug Demand and Supply”. United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (UNODC), 2019, https://wdr.unodc.org/wdr2019/prelaunch/WDR19_Booklet_2_DRUG_DEMAND.pdf. Accessed 23 January 2020.

million and the causes of deaths ranges from chronic liver diseases to the consumption of cannabis. East Africa, Oceania, the Caribbean, and Central America remain on the lowest points in terms of major health casualties causes for illicit drug intake.

According to UNODC, 5.5% of the global population aged 15-64 have used drugs.¹¹⁹ The use of cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine is increasing worldwide. The estimated global illicit manufacture of cocaine reached an all-time high with 1,976 tons in 2017 and the quantity seized approximately 1,275 tons, which is allegedly the largest quantity ever reported.¹²⁰ The highest number of cocaine consumers and seizure of this drug occurred in North America, East and South-East Asia respectively (37%, 34%).¹²¹

Figure 14: Global Cocaine Trafficking Routes¹²²



Two narcotic substances, opium, and cannabis (marijuana) are commonly used across the world among the drug abusers.¹²³ Cannabis is the most widely used drug in the world with 188 million users in which North America, South America, and Asia were the top three continents with the highest number of cannabis consumers reported by UNODC in 2019.¹²⁴ This amount of cocaine (**figure 14**) and cannabis consumption is responsible for various fatal diseases and costs millions of lives as **figure 13** illustrates.

¹¹⁹ "World Drug Report 2019: 35 million people worldwide suffer from drug use disorders while only 1 in 7 people receive treatment". United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (UNODC), https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/frontpage/2019/june/world-drug-report-2019_-35-million-people-worldwide-suffer-from-drug-use-disorders-while-only-1-in-7-people-receive-treatment.html. Accessed 19 January 2020.

¹²⁰ "World Drug Report 2020: Executive Summary". United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (UNODC), https://wdr.unodc.org/wdr2019/prelaunch/WDR19_Booklet_I_EXECUTIVE_SUMMARY.pdf. Accessed 8 January 2020.

¹²¹ "UNODC World Drug Report 2019". United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (UNODC), https://wdr.unodc.org/wdr2019/en/seizures_charts.html. Accessed 18 March 2020.

¹²² "Narco-Trafficking: The African routes". South World News and Views from emerging countries, <https://www.southworld.net/narco-trafficking-the-african-routes/>. Accessed 19 March 2020.

¹²³ "World Drug Report 2019: Perspectives On Protecting Public Health". IDPC analysis of the UNODC World Drug Report 2019, http://files.server.idpc.net/library/IDPC-analysis-to-UNODC-WDR-2019_EN.pdf. Accessed 16 January 2020.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

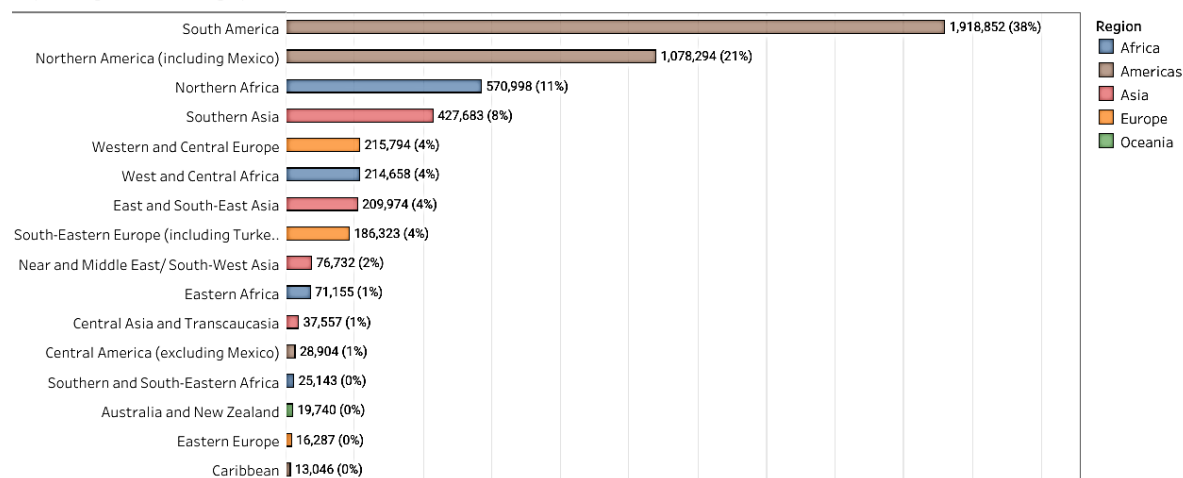
Figure 15: Seizure of marijuana in 2017 by sub-region.¹²⁵*as percentage of total and in kg equivalents*

Figure 15 shows the overall seizures of marijuana in the top 16 sub-regions. The highest number of the seizure is in South America (38%) whereas North America and South Asia are in the second and third position respectively (11% and 8%). The number of seizures in Central Europe and Africa is 8% of the total.

According to the 2019 UNODC report, the maximum number of the seizure of opium was in the Middle East, South East and West Asia, Western and Central Europe and North America. 99% of the drugs were recovered from Asia.¹²⁶ Millions of people are suffering from opium consumption and the majority of the death were caused due to various types of fatal diseases triggered by opium drug consumption like cocaine and cannabis, claimed the UNODC 2019 report.¹²⁷ Besides, fentanyl and its equivalents remain the key problem for North America whereas West, Central, and North Africa are experiencing a new crisis of another sort of synthetic drug named tramadol.¹²⁸

¹²⁵ "Annual report 2020". United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), https://wdr.unodc.org/wdr2019/en/seizures_charts.html. Accessed 25 January 2020.

¹²⁶ "Global seizures of cocaine 2007-2017", World Drug Report 2019, https://wdr.unodc.org/wdr2019/en/seizures_charts.html. Accessed 18 March 2020.

¹²⁷ "World Drug Report 2019: Perspective on protecting public health". IDPC analysis of the UNODC World Drug Report 2019, http://fileserver.idpc.net/library/IDPC-analysis-to-UNODC-WDR-2019_EN.pdf. Accessed 16 January 2020.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 8-9.

Global seizures of tramadol had soared from 10 kilograms in 2010 to 125 tons in 2017.¹²⁹ These three contraband drugs cocaine, opium, and cannabis are the most common drugs among the drug traffickers. The consumption rate showed that these are the most preferable one to take by the drug abusers too.

Illicit drug trade and consumption are connected with violence in multiple ways. Drug abuse, possession, manufacture, and trafficking are defined as crimes, which causes violence directly or indirectly. Consumption of prohibited drugs produces short-term excitement in the human brain, which gradually creates an unavoidable urge to ingest more into the vein and this leads the abusers to commit various criminal offenses.¹³⁰ Illegal financial flows, corruption and terrorism, and the contraband drug trade are also interlinked with each other, which emerged as a form of organized crime. For instance, contraband drug traffickers financed Columbia's left-wing insurgent Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia (FARC).¹³¹ The illegal financial flows from contraband drug trafficking is one of the key sources of many criminal activities which operated under the auspicious monitoring of the drug traffickers.

The transnational network of drug traffickers is also allegedly generating about one-fifth to one-third of their revenues from the illicit drug selling.¹³² Currently, the affiliation between crime and terrorism is constantly evolving through advanced communication technology. A new form of drug-market has evolved for drug traffickers because of this progression, which is known as darknet¹³³ drug transaction.¹³⁴ By using bitcoin¹³⁵ in darknet traffickers conceal their identity. Through darknet, approximately \$144 million worth of drugs are being purchased by the illegal drug consumers every year.¹³⁶ However, in 2018, reportedly the percentage of illicit drug sales through online remained quite low compared to the proportion

¹²⁹ "World Drug Report 2019: 35 million people worldwide suffer from drug use disorders while only 1 in 7 people receive treatment". United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (UNODC), https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/frontpage/2019/June/world-drug-report-2019_-35-million-people-worldwide-suffer-from-drug-use-disorders-while-only-1-in-7-people-receive-treatment.html. Accessed 19 January 2020.

¹³⁰ "Fact Sheet: Drug-Related Crime". U.S. Department of Justice, 1994, <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/DRRC.PDF>. Accessed 2 February 2020.

¹³¹ "War and Drugs in Columbia". Crisis Group, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/latin-america-caribbean/andes/colombia/war-and-drugs-colombia>. Accessed 15 March 2020.

¹³² Op.cit.

¹³³ The dark net is a network of secret websites that exist on an encrypted network which is connected with the deep web world and may able to break secured internet content too. It is mostly used for illegal transaction due its layers of secured encryption end.

¹³⁴ "Global Overview of Drug Demand and Supply". United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (UNODC), 2019, https://wdr.unodc.org/wdr2019/prelaunch/WDR19_Booklet_2_DRUG_DEMAND.pdf. Accessed 23 January 2020.

¹³⁵ Bitcoin is one of the first digital currencies invented in 2009 to use peer-to-peer technology to facilitate instant payments but can't use as day to day commodity.

¹³⁶ Op.cit

dispatched via traditional drug trafficking routes.¹³⁷ The illicit drug traffickers use several global illicit drug trading routes to operate their drug trade throughout the globe.¹³⁸ No matter which path they choose to transport the drugs, to stop the flow adequate measures need to be taken by the international community with a suitable coordination mechanism among the security agencies of the countries concerned.

Asia is emerging as a hub for both transportation and consumption of illicit synthetic drugs, especially in East and South-East Asia.¹³⁹ Afghanistan and Myanmar reportedly produced the maximum quantity of opium and methamphetamine tablets respectively in the South Asian region.^{140, 141} In 2018, the seizure of methamphetamine in this region reached 116 tons, whereas it was 82 tons in 2017.¹⁴² According to the 'Afghanistan Opium Survey report of 2018' by UNODC, approximately 3,30,000 hectares land were being used for the opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan in 2017.¹⁴³ Both countries are the major parts of the notorious Golden Triangle and Golden Crescent zone.^{144, 145} **Figure 16 and 17** illustrated below shows an overview of the endeavors of golden triangle and golden crescent and both of them are in the Asian continent.

¹³⁷ *Ibid*

¹³⁸ *Op.cit.*

¹³⁹ "Synthetic Drugs in East and South-East Asia- Trends and Patterns of Amphetamine-type Stimulants and New Psychoactive Substances". United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (UNODC), 2017, https://www.unodc.org/documents/southeastasiaandpacific/Publications/2019/2019_The_Challenge_of_Synthetic_Drugs_in_East_and_SEA.pdf. Accessed 10 January 2020.

¹⁴⁰ "Top 10 Countries known for Producing Opium". Listcrux.com, 2014, <https://listcrux.co/top-10-countries-known-for-producing-opium/>. Accessed 15 January 2020.

¹⁴¹ "Myanmar cracking down on opium, but conflicts push drug trade - UN report shows less land being used to grow opium poppies, but conflicts hampering eradication programme". *Aljazeera*, 2019, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/01/myanmar-cracking-opium-conflicts-fuel-drug-trade-190110083026170.html>. Accessed 15 January 2020.

¹⁴² "Synthetic Drugs in East and South-East Asia-Trends and Patterns of Amphetamine-type Stimulants and New Psychoactive Substances". UNODC, March 2019, https://www.unodc.org/documents/southeastasiaandpacific/Publications/2019/2019_The_Challenge_of_Synthetic_Drugs_in_East_and_SEA.pdf. Accessed 10 January 2020.

¹⁴³ "UNODC and Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Ministry of Counter Narcotics - Afghanistan Opium Survey 2018 Cultivation and Production". UNODC, https://www.unodc.org/documents/afghanistan/Opium_Surveys/Afghanistan_opium_survey_2018.pdf?lf=28&lng=en. Accessed in 17 January 2020.

¹⁴⁴ "Notorious Golden Triangle loses sway in the opium trade". *International Herald Tribune*, 2007, <https://www.tni.org/my/node/3673>, Accessed 16 January 2020.

¹⁴⁵ "Myanmar cracking down on opium, but conflicts push drug trade - UN report shows less land being used to grow opium poppies, but conflicts hampering eradication programme". *Aljazeera*, 2019, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/01/myanmar-cracking-opium-conflicts-fuel-drug-trade-190110083026170.html>. Accessed 16 January 2020.

Golden Triangle

The Golden Triangle is a 367,000 square miles' area, which connects Myanmar, Thailand, and Laos. This region is one of the global centers of opiate, heroin and methamphetamine production. The landscape of the Golden Triangle is quite hilly and loaded with terrains. For this reason, the area is used as the meeting spot for the exchange of drugs that are transported from Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, and China and then shipped to the rest of the world.^{146,147} To confront the situation Thailand, Myanmar, Laos and China launched an initiative to address the drug trafficking known as Thailand's Safe Mekong Coordination Centre (SMCC). The SMCC seems to be working well to bring down the drug routes in the triangle area where river patrol initiatives also had been introduced as the rivers are used to smuggle the chemical substances to the golden triangle zone to make synthetic drugs.¹⁴⁸ To bring down the drug smuggling cartels Thailand as an initiator proposed joint cooperation between the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and golden triangle border countries which seems to be effective due to the countries active involvement.¹⁴⁹



Figure 16: Map of “Golden Triangle”.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁶ “The Golden Triangle: Asia’s Busy and Deadly Drug Route”. Breaking Asia, April 2019, <https://www.breakingasia.com/gov/the-golden-triangle-asias-busy-and-deadly-drug-route/>. Accessed 10 March 2020.

¹⁴⁷ “Boats cent into Golden Triangle drugs battle”. *Bangkok Post*, 2020, <https://www.bangkokpost.com/thailand/general/1875884/boats-sent-into-golden-triangle-drugs-battle>. Accessed 10 March 2020.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ “New Center to Combat Mekong drug trafficking”. *Bangkok Post*, 2019, <https://www.bangkokpost.com/thailand/general/457058/new-centre-to-combat-mekong-drug-trafficking>. Accessed 9 March 2020.

¹⁵⁰ Images of golden triangle “Map of Golden Triangle, Cruise Mekong” https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fcrisemekong.com%2Froutes-destinations%2Fthe-golden-triangle.html&psig=AOvVaw2_akJRzS. Accessed 15 March 2020.

Golden Crescent

The Golden Crescent of South Asia comprises Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan. This region is considered a global hub for heroin and related opioid production and trafficking, which increased remarkably since 1980.¹⁵¹ In recent years, these countries have faced many challenges, including political turmoil, economic instability, war, and terrorism. All of these influenced the growth and expansion of the heroin trade in this region. As a result, this region is also confronting human Immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and other blood-borne related infections.¹⁵² To tackle this situation these three countries have taken initiatives along with UNODC to limit the flow of narcotics through “Triangular Initiatives”. In 2009, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran opened a border liaison office to coordinate their counter-narcotics operations and launched 11 joint operations in this border region. The countries are also working to raise awareness against the abuse of contraband drugs and protect public health and have taken various initiatives in this regard.¹⁵³



Figure 17: The drug trafficking routes of “Golden Crescent”.¹⁵⁴

Reportedly in the last ten years, the abuse of drugs has increased noticeably in India by 30%, and in 2017, the number of deaths caused by drug consumption had surpassed the previous years, it stood at 5,85,000.¹⁵⁵ On the other hand, Maldives emerged as a popular transshipment destination in the illicit drug trade more likely to the Asian countries, like Thailand and the Philippines which produced most of it and shipped it to other countries.¹⁵⁶ Due to the ideal strategic location and shipping routes, the increase in the number of drug smuggling has taken place. Maldives is close to both the Golden Triangle and Golden Crescent as well.¹⁵⁷ Besides, Maldives is considered as one of the most popular tourist destinations and the availability

¹⁵¹ “Opioids in the Golden Crescent: Production, Trafficking, and Cooperative Counternarcotic Initiatives”. NATO association of Canada, <http://natoassociation.ca/opioids-in-the-golden-crescent-production-trafficking-and-cooperative-counternarcotics-initiatives/>. Accessed 9 March, 2020.

¹⁵² Farooq, Syeda Ayesha, et al. “Opium Trade and the Spread of HIV in the Golden Crescent.” *Harm Reduction Journal*, vol. 14, no. 1, 2017, doi:10.1186/s12954-017-0170-1. Accessed in 27 January 2020.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ “World Drug Day: Drug use increased by 30% in India in last decade, claims UN Report”. *India Today*, 2019, <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/world-drug-day-drug-use-increased-india-last-decade-un-report-1556292-2019-06-26>. Accessed 15 January 2020.

¹⁵⁶ “Maldives emerging as hub illicit drug trade”. *WION*, 2018, <https://www.wionews.com/world/opinion-why-is-maldives-emerging-as-hub-illicit-drug-trade-28848>. Accessed 18 January 2020.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

of drugs may attract the tourists to try it out though any major consumption rate in the islands is yet to be reported.

Drug trafficking initiated a shady network of transnational crimes and human trafficking in South Asia.¹⁵⁸ Money laundering incidents become more frequent as the transnational crime networks wish to utilize their illegal earnings cleverly with a complex way of the financial grid.¹⁵⁹ Casinos are reportedly the most common means of hiding and laundering drug money mostly in South East Asian countries.¹⁶⁰

National Overview of Contraband Drugs: The Bangladesh scenario

At present, in Bangladesh, about 7.5 million people are reportedly addicted to contraband drugs and 50% of the drug abuser youths are allegedly involved in criminal activities, 57% became sex offenders due to the addiction, and 7% are infected with HIV.¹⁶¹

This situation poses quite a challenge for Bangladesh. The abundance and varieties of illicit drugs have created a huge drug consumer base. The demand and supply nexus, accompanied by the geographic location of Bangladesh, forced the state to confront the high risk of drug-related crimes.¹⁶² In recent times, methamphetamine (Yaba) tablets have become the frequently seized illicit drug in Bangladesh. To fight the menace the government has launched a nationwide anti-narcotic drive since May 2018.¹⁶³

Trends of Drug-Related Violence

BPO recorded a total of 3,233 drug related incidents across Bangladesh in 2019 (**Figure 18**). The divisional distribution of drug-related incidents of 2019 reflects here the total number of drug-related incidents of 2019 (3233) and the total number of arrests (393) along with recorded 393 death incidents. Drug trafficking, anti-drugs drives, gunfights, assaults, sexual assaults, and other types of crimes associated

¹⁵⁸ Op.cit.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ "43% of unemployed population addicted to drugs". *Dhaka Tribune*, 2019, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/dhaka/2019/02/27/43-of-unemployed-population-addicted-to-drugs>. Accessed 20 January 2020.

¹⁶² "The way drugs destroys a society and state (Madok Jebhabe Ekti Somaj o Rastro Dhongsho kore)". *Channelionline.com*, 2018, <https://goo.gl/nim4yc>. Accessed 22 January 2020.

¹⁶³ "Over 100 drug dealers surrender in Bangladesh crackdown". *Aljazeera*, February 2019, aljazeera.com/news/2019/02/drug-dealers-surrender-bangladesh-crackdown-190216165728814.html. Accessed 22 January 2020.

with drugs had occurred throughout the year. Arrests, assaults and alleged gunfights are the major reported incidents of 2019 according to the BPO data illustrated in **figure 18**. Women were also affected by the drug related violence in some cases without their direct involvement in drug abuse. In 2019, drug addicts were responsible for the death of 29 women and were involved with eight cases of sexual assaults as well. According to a report of Daily Observer, dated 3 September 2019, an elderly woman had been burnt to death by her drug-addict son who poured kerosene over her mother after she refused to give him money to buy drugs in Dhunat, Bogura.¹⁶⁴

Figure 18: BPO data on drug-related reported incidents of 2019.¹⁶⁵



¹⁶⁴ “Drug-addicted son kills mother”. *The Daily Observer*, 2019, https://epaper.observerbd.com/2019/09/03/7/details/7_r3_c3.jpg. Accessed 19 March 2020.

¹⁶⁵ Bangladesh Peace Observatory, <http://peaceobservatory-cgs.org/#/>. Accessed 27 January 2020.

Table 8: Divisional distribution of BPO data on drug-related reported incidents of 2019.¹⁶⁶

Rank	Division	Incidents	Death	Injury	Arrest
1	Chattogram	803	213	199	1628
2	Dhaka	744	63	71	6170
3	Rajshahi	636	28	32	2273
4	Khulna	445	32	18	1997
5	Rangpur	288	10	35	968
6	Barishal	150	4	6	224
7	Sylhet	86	7	22	152
8	Mymensingh	81	22	10	161
Grand Total		3233	379	393	13573

Table 8 shows the highest number of violent incidents, the total number of death, and injury reported in Chattogram division, whereas Dhaka division stayed on the top place in terms the number of arrests (6170). Due to the highest number of reported death and injury in Cox's Bazar (Table 2), the cumulative sum of incidents in Chattogram division shows it as a hotspot. The table also shows that the Sylhet division is in a better place than other divisions with the lowest number of incidents associated with contraband drug-related crimes.

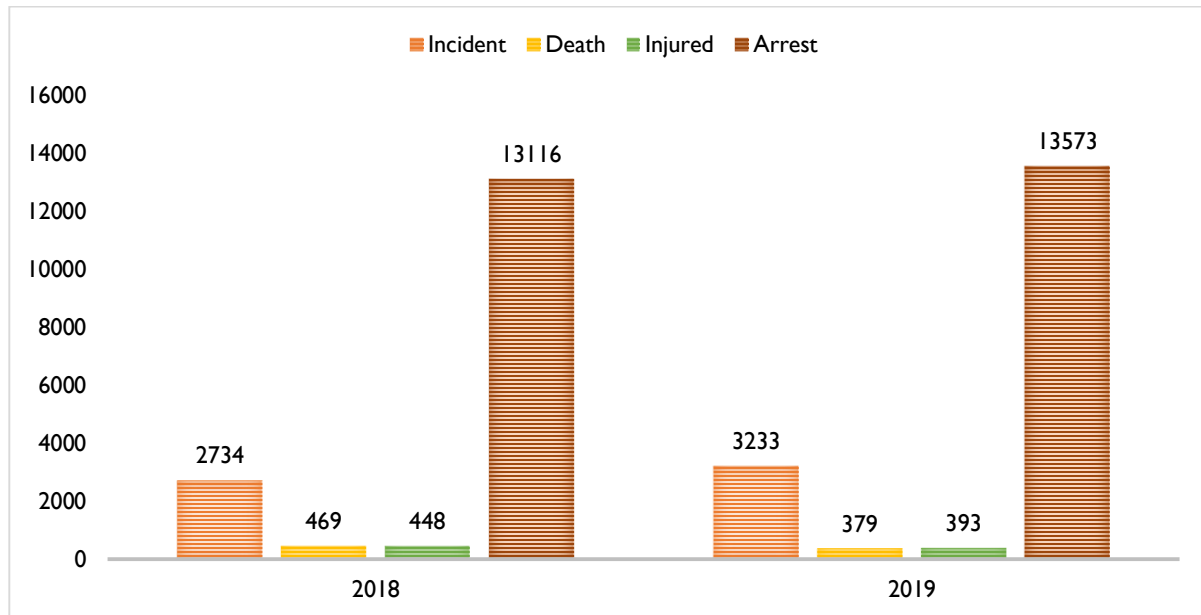
Table 9: BPO data on drug-related reported incidents: top ten districts, 2019.¹⁶⁷

Rank	District	Incidents	Death	Injury	Arrest
1	Dhaka	455	32	14	5459
2	Chattogram	327	18	52	641
3	Cox's Bazar	269	148	79	608
4	Bogura	186	5	8	549
5	Rajshahi	152	5	14	1004
6	Dinajpur	129	2	3	546
7	Khulna	120	5	3	727
8	Satkhira	119	2	5	754
9	Narayanganj	86	12	18	281
10	Chapai Nawabganj	79	3	2	191

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

Table 9 illustrates the drug-related violent incidents, deaths, injury, and arrest at district-levels in 2019. Chattogram, Dhaka, and Cox’s Bazar districts were the top three regarding death, injury, and arrest incidents. The highest number of death happened in Cox’s Bazar district (148). Due to reported clash among the contraband drug-crime rings and alleged gunfights between drug-traffickers and law enforcement agencies, Cox’s Bazar made to the top of the total death and injury. According to the BPO data, most of the incidents (163 out of 269), death (112 out of 148) and injury (71 out of 79) took place in Teknaf upazila of the district. The data further suggests that the reason behind the acceleration of violence rate in Cox’s Bazar is its emergence as a thriving zone for the contraband drug-trafficking by the smugglers and its shared border with Myanmar where the Naf River is only the barrier. But in terms of the total number of incidents, Dhaka district was on the peak (455), which is comprehensible as it also holds the highest number of arrests (5459) incidents in 2019. The lowest number of incidents were recorded in Chapai Nawabganj (79).

Figure 19: Trend of drug-related violence in Bangladesh, 2018-2019 based on BPO data.¹⁶⁸



¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

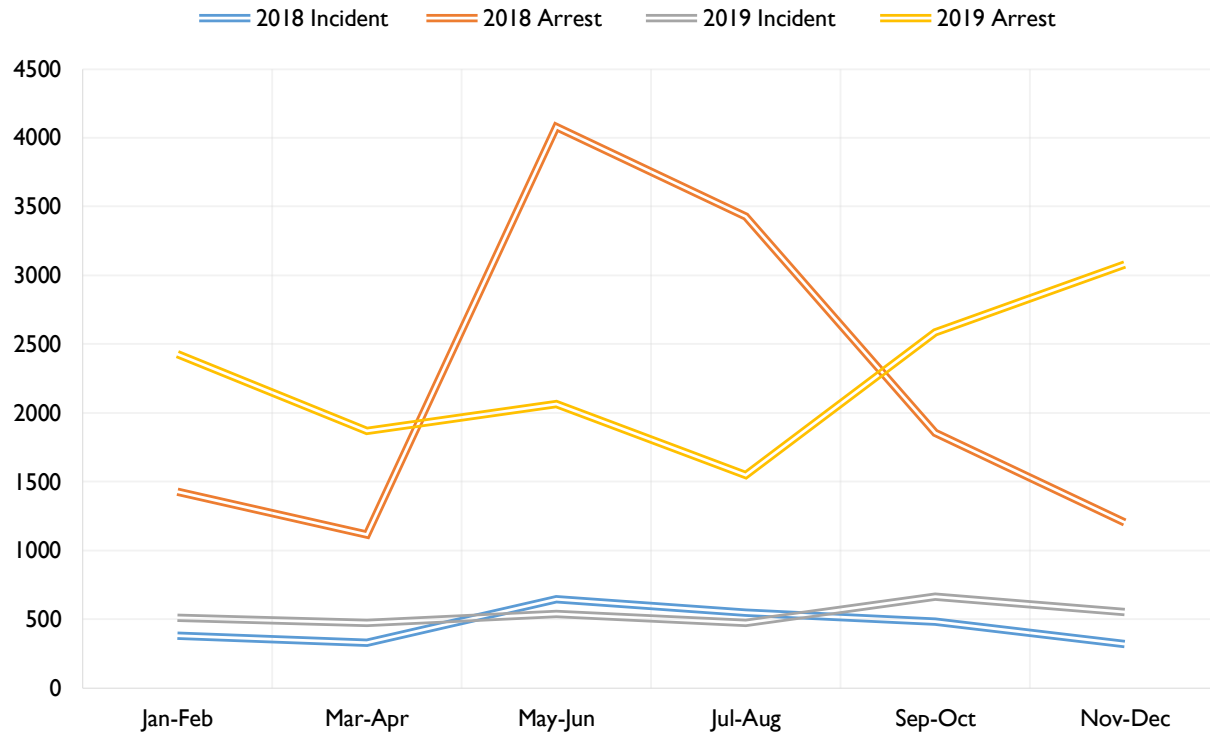
Figure 20: Bi-monthly drug-related violence trend of 2018-2019 based on BPO data.¹⁶⁹

Figure 19 shows a significant increase in the number of drug-related incidents in 2019 compared to 2018. However, the arrest rate was significantly high in the month of May-June in 2018, which gradually decreased with a fluctuation till September-October 2019. On the other hand, the incident trend remained almost the same in these two years (**Figure 20**).

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

Legal Frameworks in Bangladesh and its Challenges

In Bangladesh, there are a number of legal provisions to address drugs-related crimes and a range of Acts and rules to deal with different types of concerned issues related to the contraband drug. According to the Department of Narcotic Control,¹⁷⁰ a drug offender is subject to face several legal procedures before going through the trial process, which mostly falls under the Narcotics Control Act 1990 and other related Acts/Rules/Guidelines, which are listed below.

- The Special Power Act, 1975,¹⁷¹
- Customs Act, 1969.¹⁷²
- Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002.
- Coast Guard Act, 1995.
- The Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898.
- The Evidence Act, 1872.
- The Narcotics Control Rules, 1999.
- The National Narcotics Control Board Fund Rules, 2001.
- The Private Treatment and Rehabilitation Centre Rules, 2005.
- Drug Control (License and Permit Fees) Rules, 2014.
- Mobile Court Act, 2009.
- Alcohol Control (License Fee) Rules, 1991 (Revised 2002 & 2014).
- Departmental Recruitment Rules, 1994 (Department of Narcotics Control).
- Uniform Rules of Department of Narcotics Control, 2014.
- Rules and Regulation of Government Grant to the Private Treatment and Rehabilitation Centre Act, 2019.
- Narcotic Control Law 2018.¹⁷³

NARCOTIC CONTROL LAW 2018

The 1990 Act of abuse of drugs, its control, and prevention needed update with the escalation of the flow and dissemination of the drugs like methamphetamine tablets and cannabis. This law has been introduced and implemented in November 2018 and according to the law any person carrying or storing methamphetamine tablets weighing above five grams could face life imprisonment or even death penalty and the ones found with lower than five grams will face five years of imprisonment.

¹⁷⁰ Department of Narcotics Control (DNC) Annual Drug Report Bangladesh 2016.

¹⁷¹ This law particularly deals with prevention and control of smuggling. As drug is one of the major items of smuggling in Bangladesh, this law also addresses issues related to drugs. The main jurisdiction of this law is within five kilometers of the border. It is also applicable in other areas of the country in respect of drugs which are smuggled from other countries.

¹⁷² This Act covers the issues related to import and export of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursor chemicals.

¹⁷³ Department of Narcotics Control (DNC) Annual Report Bangladesh 2019, pp. 19.

Table 10: Seizure of the total number of drugs and drug-related substances by law enforcement agencies from 2006 to June 2019.¹⁷⁴

Name of Drugs	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019 (June)
Heroin(in kg)	101.591	87.039	146.593	159.783	188.186	107.499	126.92	123.73	78.3	107,539	366.785	401.633	451.506	4.205
Codeine (Preparation) (Bottle)	536,538	380,625	904,384	1,117,354	961.260	932,874	1,291,078	987,661	741,137	870,240	566,525	720,843	715,529	460,737
Codeine (loose) (In ltr.)	2,122.15	6,526.252	2,620.438	2,955.300	4,119.185	3,224	2,613	857.55	434.22	5,104.75	275.68	338.72	539.95	74.4
Cannabis (in kg)	9,613.515	13,550.028	24,282.395	32,955.581	48,749.357	54,244.16	38,702	35,012.54	35,988.56	39,967.594	47,104.655	69,989.508	60,295.124	17,852.1
Cannabis Plant	2182	26,380	2,834	791	1760	742	485	666	727	761	894	538	272	35
Cocaine	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2.085	5.778	0.620	5.050	0.750	-
Buprenorphine Ampoule	1610	5331	45921	89,469	69,158	1,18,890	157,995	99,509	17,889	85,946	1,52,740	10,90,63	12,8708	1494
Methamphetamine Yaba	1,687	1,44,751	36,543	1,29,644	812,716	1,360,186	1,951,392	2,82,152	65,12,869	2,01,77,581	2,94,50,178	4,00,79,433	5,30,48,548	1,64,39,870

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

Table 10 shows the trends of different types of drug seizure by the law enforcement agencies from 2016 to June 2019. The figure above suggests that the seizure of Yaba tablets is increasing over the years and the quantity of the seizure is quite higher than other kinds of drugs like cannabis, Phensedyl or cocaine.

Reportedly in Bangladesh, about 85% of drug users are the youth ageing between 15 to 30.¹⁷⁵ To stop the flow of methamphetamine substances namely methamphetamine (Yaba) tablets, Bangladesh government along with Dhaka Narcotics Control (DNC) took adequate steps by actively involving the law enforcement agencies as well as formed special taskforces mainly for Cox's Bazar and Teknaf to monitor the areas mostly used for the drug transportation routes by the drug peddlers and smugglers.¹⁷⁶

According to the DNC report, on the anti-narcotics drive that started from May 2018 to May 2019, Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) alone recovered approximately 10 million of methamphetamine (Yaba) tablets.¹⁷⁷ Moreover, 24 drug dealers of 73 listed "Big Traders" had surrendered in February 2019 alone.¹⁷⁹ DNC's latest report also shows that from 2014 to June 2019 there are approximately 56,173 drug-related cases filed by all the law enforcement agencies and those are still under the trial process, whereas the number of accused is also increasing.

¹⁷⁵ "Can Bangladesh win its war on drugs?" *The Financial Express*, 2020, <https://www.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/views/opinions/can-bangladesh-win-its-war-on-drugs-1561472527>. Accessed 16 January 2020.

¹⁷⁶ Department of Narcotic Control (DNC) Annual Drug Report Bangladesh, 2019, pp. 23-24.

¹⁷⁷ "Where does Bangladesh stand on drives against drug suspects?" *Dhaka Tribune*, 2019, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/nation/2019/05/25/where-does-bangladesh-stand-on-drives-against-drug-suspects>. Accessed 17 January 2020.

¹⁷⁸ "Bangladeshi Police Defend Deadly Crackdown on Drug Suspects". *Benar News*, 2018, <https://www.benarnews.org/english/news/bengali/bangladesh-drugs-07202018160513.html>. Accessed 17 January 2020.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

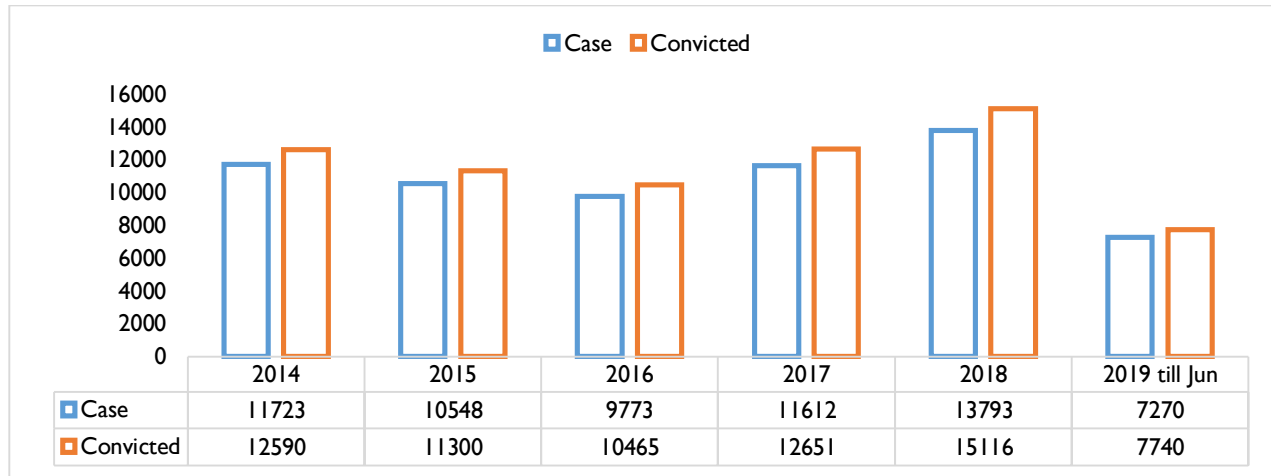
Figure 21: Case and convicted criminal in drug-related incident.¹⁸⁰

Figure 21 shows the total number of cases filed and the number of convicted ones related to contraband drug trading/smuggling from 2014 to June 2019. From 2014 to 2018, the report shows a rising trend with a slight fluctuation in 2016. However, these increasing trends will continue as the average incident and the accused number are higher than 2018 in 2019 along with 62.3 average means.

The nationwide anti-narcotic drive caused mass arrests and number of alleged gunfights also took place in different divisions between the law enforcement agencies and drug peddlers/smugglers according to BPO 2018 and 2019 data. The highest number of incidents were reported in Cox's Bazar district and Dhaka respectively (**table 9**).

¹⁸⁰ Department of Narcotic Control (DNC) Annual Drug Report Bangladesh, 2019, pp. 12-13.

Figure 22: Divisional segregation of drug-related gunfights of 2019.¹⁸¹

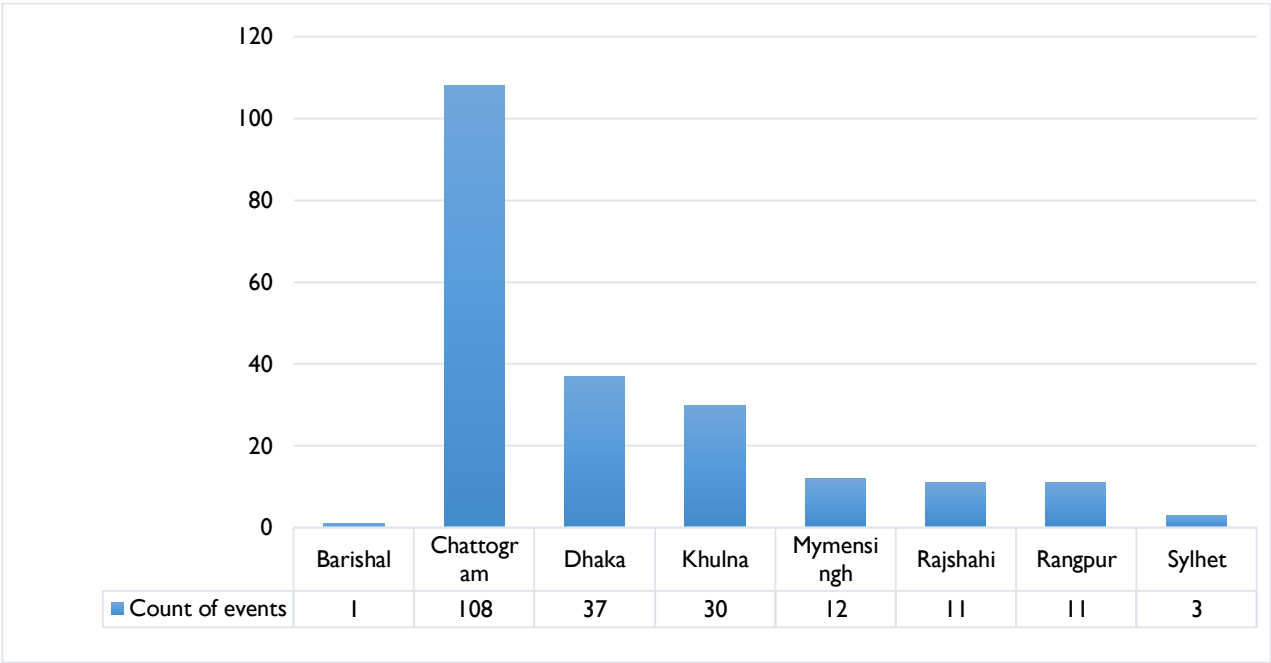
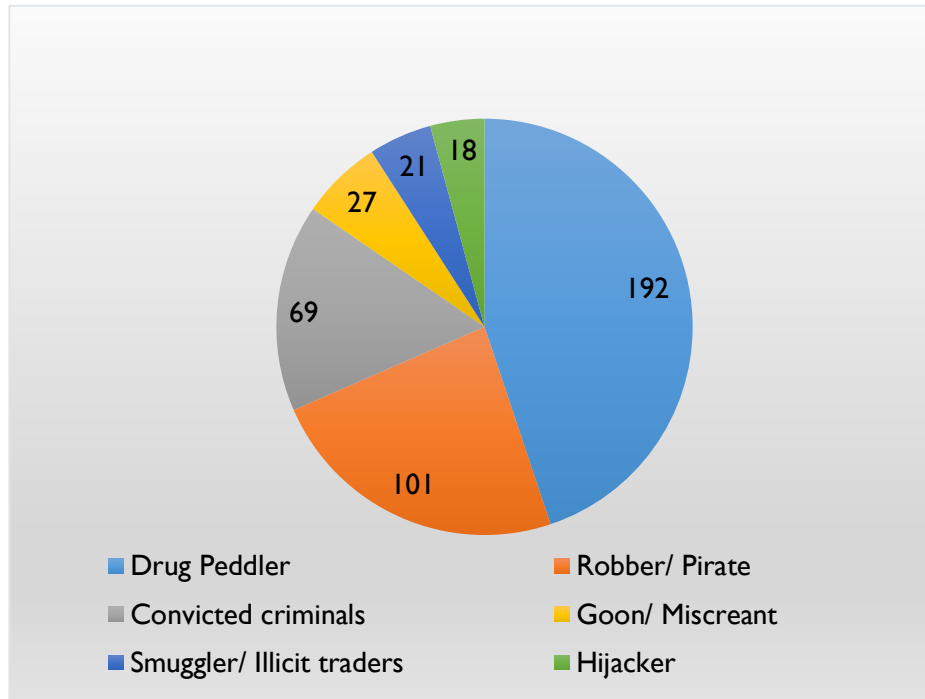


Figure 22 gives an overview of a divisional distribution of the incidents of the gunfight that reportedly took place in different divisions in Bangladesh in 2019. It shows that Chattogram division is on the top where 108 incidents have occurred. According to BPO data, in Cox’s Bazar district (especially Teknaf upazila) of this division most of the reported gunfights had taken place. Dhaka division stands at the second position (37) and the Barishal division barely makes the place in the list with only one reported incident in 2019.

¹⁸¹ Bangladesh Peace Observatory, <http://peaceobservatory-cgs.org/#/>. Accessed 17 February 2020.

Figure 23: Top six actors of the gunfights incidents of 2019.¹⁸²

The Figure 23 depicts reported incidents of alleged gunfights in 2019 and the top six actors (Drug peddlers, robbers/pirates, convicted criminals, goon/miscreants, smuggler/illicit traders, and hijackers). The chart, according to the BPO data, indicates that more than half (293) of the incidents of the alleged gunfights had taken place with the drug peddlers and smugglers. These alleged

gunfights reportedly had taken place between drug peddlers/smugglers and the law enforcement agencies, the Bangladesh Police, RAB and Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB). In addition, some of the incidents took place between groups of drug peddlers and smugglers throughout 2019. It also reflects that other categories of violent incidents had occurred less often than the alleged gunfights related to drug peddling/smuggling. The box below cites some of the criminal activities that aggravated drug-related crimes ranges from domestic violence by drug-addicts to the involvement of the vulnerable Rohingya community as well.

¹⁸² Ibid.

1. A drug addict youth killed his father as he refused to give him money to buy drugs.¹⁸³
2. A drug-addicted man killed a woman by stabbing and another four were fatally injured by the attack.¹⁸⁴
3. A drug addict man was stabbed to death by another drug addict over purchasing drug.¹⁸⁵
4. A drug-addicted boy hacked his parents to death over money to purchase drugs.¹⁸⁶
5. A drug peddler was killed in a gunfight between two feuding gangs of illegal traders for establishing supremacy over the drug trade.¹⁸⁷
6. Police recovered the body of a drug-addicted Rohingya from the camp in Cox's Bazar.¹⁸⁸
7. A gunfight between BGB and drug traders left a Rohingya female paddler killed on the spot.¹⁸⁹
8. An anti-narcotics campaigner killed by the beating of drug peddlers.¹⁹⁰
9. A drug addicted man allegedly killed his wife for dowry in Narayanganj.¹⁹¹
10. A woman raped by a youth for money that her drug- addicted husband accepted from the youth.¹⁹²
11. A son stabbed his mother to death as she refused to give the money to buy drugs.¹⁹³
12. A woman and a girl were beaten up by local drug peddlers after a failed attempt to abduct them in Cox's Bazar.¹⁹⁴

¹⁸³ *The Daily Star*, http://epaper.thedailystar.net/contents/2019/2019_01_09/content_zoom/2019_01_09_5_0_b.jpg. Accessed 28 January 2020.

¹⁸⁴ *The Daily Ittefaq*, https://epaper.ittefaq.com.bd/2019/05/16/images/06_114.jpg. Accessed 12 February 2020.

¹⁸⁵ *The Daily Ittefaq*, http://epaper.ittefaq.com.bd/2019/02/20/images/14_105.jpg. Accessed 15 February, 2020.

¹⁸⁶ *The Daily Star*, http://epaper.thedailystar.net/contents/2019/2019_12_26/content_zoom/2019_12_26_16_9_b.jpg and

http://epaper.thedailystar.net/contents/2019/2019_12_26/content_zoom/2019_12_26_10_8_b.jpg. Accessed 20 February 2020.

¹⁸⁷ *The Daily Star*, http://epaper.thedailystar.net/contents/2019/2019_02_12/content_zoom/2019_02_12_11_0_b.jpg. Accessed 23 February 2020.

¹⁸⁸ *The Daily Purbokone*, http://www.edainikpurbokone.net/content/2019/2019-03-12/zoom_view/106.jpg and

http://www.edainikpurbokone.net/content/2019/2019-03-12/zoom_view/i12.jpg. Accessed 1 March 2020.

¹⁸⁹ *New Age*, http://epaper.newagebd.net/images/01_04_2019/regular_40196_news_1554102956.jpg. Accessed 27 February 2020.

¹⁹⁰ *The Daily Star*, http://epaper.thedailystar.net/contents/2019/2019_03_30/content_zoom/2019_03_30_16_4_b.jpg and

http://epaper.thedailystar.net/contents/2019/2019_03_30/content_zoom/2019_03_30_10_3_b.jpg. Accessed 18 February 2020.

¹⁹¹ *The Daily Ittefaq*, https://epaper.ittefaq.com.bd/2019/04/18/images/05_104.jpg. Accessed 16 February 2020.

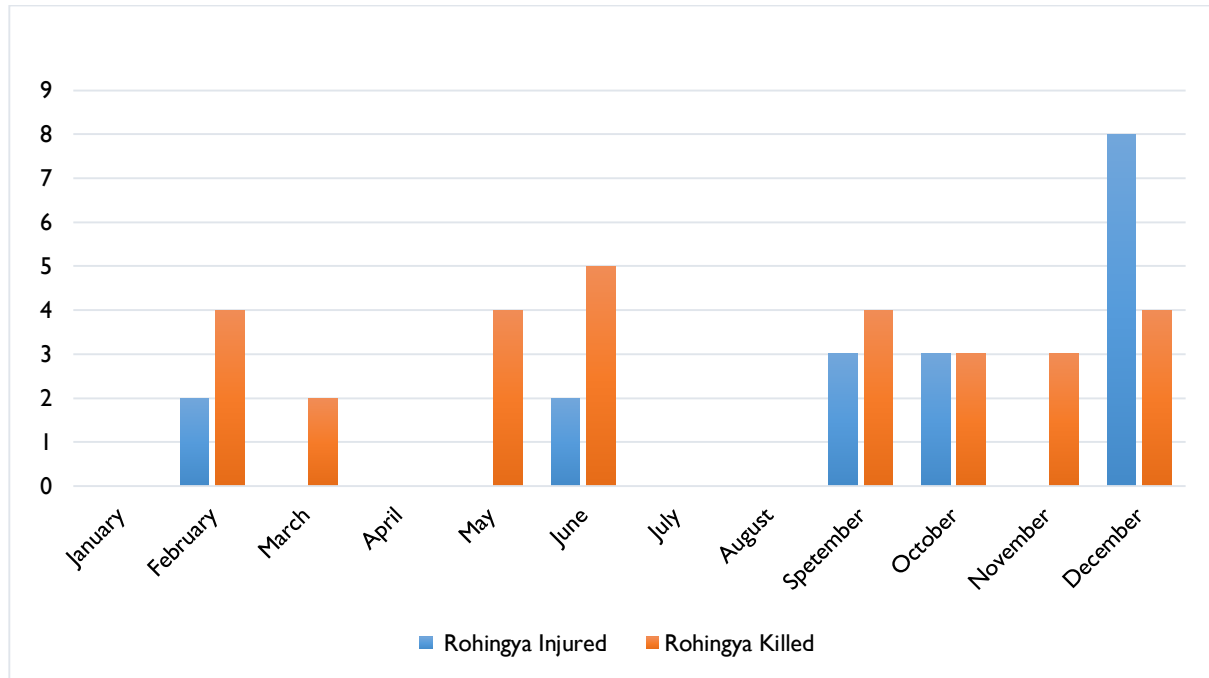
¹⁹² *The Daily Jugantor*, https://epaper.jugantor.com/2019/05/22/17/details/17_r2_c1.jpg. Accessed 2 March 2020.

¹⁹³ *The Daily Karatoa*, https://www.ekaratoa.com/2019/06/17/3/details/3_r13_c6.jpg and

https://www.ekaratoa.com/2019/06/17/7/details/7_r16_c4.jpg. Accessed 19 February 2020.

¹⁹⁴ *The Daily Purbokone*, https://www.edainikpurbokone.net/content/2019/2019-06-27/zoom_view/b13.jpg. Accessed 1 March 2020.

Figure 24: Monthly trends of gunfights between Rohingyas and law enforcement agencies regarding drug peddling/smuggling.¹⁹⁵



Reportedly, some Rohingyas are involved as key actors in the illicit drug peddling/smuggling and drug-related crimes within and outside the camp due to their exposure and impoverishment.¹⁹⁶ **Figure 24** illustrates monthly trends of the gunfight in 2019 that took place between the Rohingyas and the law enforcement agencies who were allegedly carrying drugs or meddling with the smuggling of contraband drugs and other prohibited items related to drugs during anti-narcotics drive. Most of the gunfight incidents took place in December; whereas in the beginning of the year fewer incidents were reported.

¹⁹⁵ Bangladesh Peace Observatory, <http://peaceobservatory-cgs.org/#/>. Accessed 29 February, 2020.

¹⁹⁶ "Rapid Action Battalion arrested three Rohingyas with one Lakh Yaba", *The New Age*, 2018, http://epaper.newagebd.net/images/21_10_2018/regular_36962_news_1540064455.jpg. Accessed 2 February, 2020.

Concluding Remarks

Illicit drug-related crimes poses a dark shadow on society's peaceful survival and is often considered a security threat to the country. The contraband drug associated crimes are like a double-edged sword where the perpetrators and victims both are equally responsible for the acceleration of the crime rate due to their involvement with the criminal activities. Over the years, the usage of contraband drug substances has increased globally. The drug trafficking cartels are fueled up with the new lab invented synthetic drugs, which generate a grave impact on human health and may create social disorder as well.

According to the BPO data 2019, the total number of contraband drug-related incidents (3233) and the total number of arrests (13573) throughout the year (both violent and non-violent) reflect the government's implementation of the law to control the flow of the narcotics across the country. BPO provides a robust database to understand the dynamics of crime and violence trends in Bangladesh perpetrated by drug traffickers and abusers. The analysis of the data also shows that most of the incidents took place in Dhaka, Chattogram, and Cox's Bazar district (455, 327, 269) and the highest number of drug seized by the law enforcement agencies is methamphetamine tablets (1,64,39,870 pieces) according to the BPO 2019 data and DNC 2019 annual report.

The existence of legal frameworks cannot reduce the crime and violence or abuse of drugs from the society by itself. Furthermore, the presence of different kinds of disarray in society need to be considered as a catalyst to drug-addiction, such as economic predicament of a certain class or distress in personal life. Therefore, social support and awareness are important factors to address such crimes. Youth are at the risk among others due to their involvement in drug related abuse and crimes. Policies must address the concerns of the youth in this regard.

Situation analysis: Mob violence

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Nasrin Jabin¹⁹⁸

Afnan Nur Bhuiyan¹⁹⁹

Mob violence refers to any violence done by a group of people who share common values and goals that results in ethnic, religious or social violence such as riots, looting of shops and houses owned by a religious minority. Bangladesh Peace Observatory (BPO) defines mob violence as one-sided violence by a mob or large group against an individual or a comparatively small and/or defenseless group such as lynching of a thief, looting of shops and houses owned by a religious minority.²⁰⁰ Such mob violence against an individual or a comparatively small and/or defenseless group in response to crime or moral offences is mostly referred to as lynching or mob lynching.

Lynching is an extralegal killing by a group or mob. As defined in Encyclopedia Britannica, lynching is a “form of violence in which a mob, under the pretext of administering justice without trial, executes a presumed offender, often after inflicting torture and corporal mutilation”.²⁰¹ From the perspective of American history of lynching the black people, Wood (2018) argued that lynching, even if it is the most perfunctory, were performative and spectacular to create terror and convey the message of social control of a dominant group over the inferior section.²⁰² As a form of collective cruelty, lynching shares some commonalities with other forms of collective violence like riots, uprisings, and communal killings.²⁰³ However, lynching is exceptional from other collective violence for its absolute inequality of power between its perpetrators and victims.²⁰⁴

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¹⁹⁹ Research Data Analyst (RDA), Bangladesh Peace Observatory (BPO), Centre for Genocide Studies, University of Dhaka

²⁰⁰ Bangladesh Peace Observatory (BPO) Codebook

²⁰¹ Geoffrey Abbott, “Lynching: Mob Violence”. *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 13 August 2019.

²⁰² Amy Louise Wood, “The Spectacle of Lynching: Rituals of White Supremacy in the Jim Crow South”. *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, Vol 77, Nos. 3-4 pp 757-788, May-September, 2018

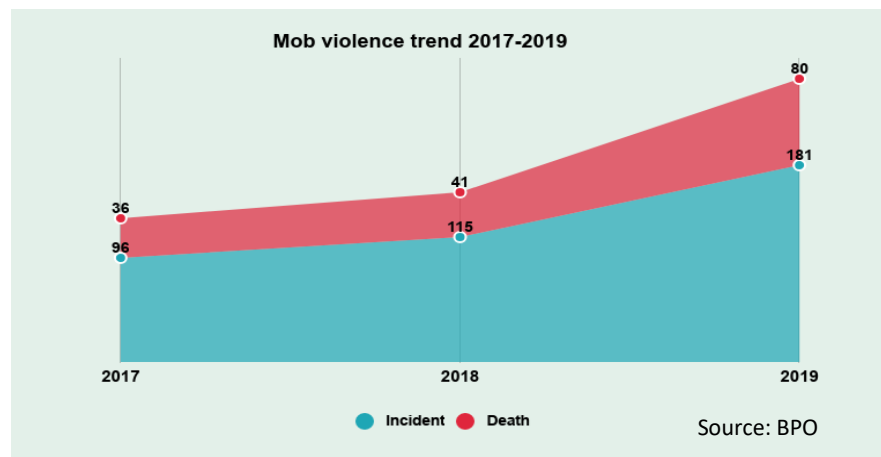
²⁰³ Yogesh Raj, “Making Sense of Lynching in Medieval Nepal”. in Michael Pfeifer, ed., *Global Lynching and Collective Violence: Volume I: Asia, Africa, and the Middle East* (Illinois: University Press Scholarship, 2017), pp. 103-125.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid*

In academic works, mob lynching is described as violent incident associated with poor economic conditions, transitional societies, social unrest and social and racial control.²⁰⁵ Most of the scholarly works in this area are on lynching of black people in the United States during 1882-1930, the period after the end of the American civil war and of the great depression. However, lynching is no more significant in modern western society, but pervasive in some developing and underdeveloped countries in Africa, Latin America, and Asia. There is a significant rise of mob lynching in neighboring India since 2014 after the BJP led alliance took the power.²⁰⁶

As found in academic analysis, lynching victims are the weaker people like poor, homeless, vagabond or stranger, petty criminal; ethnic or religious minorities like black people in America, Muslims and Dalits in India; women, particularly elderly women on witch allegation, and mentally challenged people.

In 2019, Bangladesh witnessed a spate of violent act of mob lynching. The hike in murders and injuries in mob action has drawn deep concern of the media, academics, activists and law enforcement agencies. Particularly in the month of July, when a rumour of human sacrifices for the Padma bridge construction led to increased incidents of mob beating on suspicion of child lifting. The fear of child kidnapping led the mob to such extreme cruelty that it did not exempt even innocent mother with her infant or another mother visited a school to get information for admitting her child. As recorded in BPO, a total of 181 mob violence incidents happened across the country in 2019 that killed 80 and left 230 people critically injured. In the previous two years, the number of incidents was 115 with 41 deaths in 2018 and 96 incidents with 36 deaths in 2017. The incident rose by 57% in 2019 compared with



²⁰⁵ Cornelius Christian, "Lynchings, labour, and cotton in the US south: A reappraisal of Tolnay and Beck". *Explorations in Economic History*, pp. 106-116, October 2017.

²⁰⁶ Rupa Subramanya. "Has India become 'Lynchistan?'" July 2017. <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/has-india-become-lynchistan/>. Accessed in 10 February 2020.

2018 and by 88% compared with 2017. The number of death rose by 95% and 122% compared with 2018 and 2017 respectively.

Although there is a gradual increase in the last three years, the situation was even worse in earlier years. Data provided by different rights organizations shows that an average of 138 persons were killed by mob beating every year between 2009 to 2015.²⁰⁷ The number started dropping down in 2016 with 51 death by violent mobs.²⁰⁸

In Bangladesh, a typical mob beating involved criminal accusations against the victim like thievery, hijacking, robbery, kidnapping, sexual abuse, extortion and even blasphemy that led the mob to taking the law in their own hands to ensure 'justice'. In most of the cases, the victims were killed over suspicion that they were involved in crimes such as child lifting, robbery or thievery.

Table 11: Allegations against mob violence victim, 2019

Allegations	Incidents
Thievery	41
Abduction	35
Other	28
Sexual Harassment	22
Hijacking	16
Robbery	14
Conflict Resolution	11
Killing	6
Extortion	5
Blasphemy	3

Source: BPO

On revealing the underlying causes of the increasing trend of lynching in Bangladesh, sociologists and experts indicate to a weak criminal justice system, lack of good governance and accountability, impunity

²⁰⁷ "1,164 lynched since 2009". *The New Age*, 25 July 2019.

http://epaper.newagebd.net/images/25_07_2019/regular_42526_news_1564001575.jpg. Accessed 12 February 2020.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid*

of law enforcement agencies, corruption and the lack of people's confidence in the relevant institutions.²⁰⁹ In addition, instigation of unholy quarters using the people's sentiment and belief are also responsible for people taking the law in their own hands to ensure 'justice' instantly out of frustration.²¹⁰

As a new trend, social media platforms become the medium of spreading misinformation triggering mob violence. The rumor of child lifting for Padma bridge manipulated through social media was accounted for at least 35 incidents of mob beating in 2019.²¹¹ All the mob violence around blasphemy or hurting religious sentiments are triggered by social media incitements. In a similar trend, social media propaganda also drives mob violence in India. The incitements were mainly around cow vigilantes to justify attacks on Muslim minorities.²¹² Like in Bangladesh, child lifting propaganda was also rampant in Indian social media causing numbers of mob beating.²¹³

The American history of lynching had a clear characteristic of racism. After the end of civil war and elimination of slavery, lynching emerged as a tool of racial domination to enact and reinforce white supremacy.²¹⁴ More than 4,000 African Americans were lynched across twenty states of the United States between 1882 and 1930.²¹⁵ In the same pattern, recent Indian lynching is associated with communal hate crimes and religiously motivated to instill fear in the minority Muslim community.²¹⁶ However, there are also economic and political reasoning behind this intolerance and hatred.

Studies on American lynching suggests that lynchings were more frequent in years when the cotton price was declining and inflationary pressure was increasing.²¹⁷ Thus, lynchings had labor market effects that benefitted white workers. During years of low cotton prices, wages turn low. That time lynching caused blacks to migrate out of a county, thus reducing labor supply and increasing wages.²¹⁸ Similarly in Japan

²⁰⁹ "Mob lynching paints grim picture of lawlessness". *The Independent*, 22 July 2019. <http://www.theindependentbd.com/post/208394>. Accessed 13 February 2020.

²¹⁰ "Mob Lynching and Cry for Justice". *The New Age*, 26 July 2019. <http://www.newagebd.net/article/79667/mob-lynching-and-the-cry-for-justice>. Accessed 13 February 2020.

²¹¹ Bangladesh Peace Observatory (BPO). <http://peaceobservatory-cgs.org/>

²¹² Pandey Nand Pandey, "Mob Lynching: A New Crime Emerging In Indian Society". *International Journal of Research and Analytical Reviews*, pp. 808-813, December 2018.

²¹³ *Ibid*

²¹⁴ Amy Louise Wood, "The Spectacle of Lynching: Rituals of White Supremacy in the Jim Crow South". *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, Vol 77, Nos. 3-4 pp 757-788, May-September, 2018.

²¹⁵ E. M. Beck and Stewart E. Tolnay, "The Killing Fields of the Deep South: The Market for Cotton and the Lynching of Blacks, 1882-1930". *American Sociological Review*, pp. 526-539, August 1990.

²¹⁶ Tanvi Yadav and Nagendra Ambedkar Sole, "Mob lynching in India: *Sine qua non* of legal intervention". *Asian Law and Public Policy Review*, pp. 298-311, August 2019.

²¹⁷ E. M. Beck and Stewart E. Tolnay. *op.cit*

²¹⁸ Cornelius Christian, "Lynchings, labour, and cotton in the US south: A reappraisal of Tolnay and Beck". *Explorations in Economic History*, pp. 106-116, October 2017.

during the great depression of 1930s, young gang patrolled the streets and beat up everyone with a Korean accent, this indicates the upsurge of racial tension during economic crisis.²¹⁹ In recent India, most of the minority lynching are maneuvered for the political agenda of Hindu nationalism. However, studies found economic reasons behind communal attacking in some parts of India. For example, in Jharkhand province, Muslim migrant workers are the victim of mob violence as the local tribes perceive them as a threat to their livelihood or competitor in labor market.²²⁰

In Bangladesh, mob attacks on racial hatred are not that evident. However, in 2019 several mob attacks occurred against Rohingyas or suspecting the victim as Rohingya. BPO recorded 12 such incidents that killed one and left 20 injured.²²¹ Two such mob beatings happened in Cox's Bazar and Bandarban and the rest were in Khulna division. In some cases, victims were alleged as Rohingya child lifter. Apart from the fearing of child kidnapping, negative propaganda in both mainstream and social media might have a role in inciting public anger against Rohingya that led to such violent mob attacks. Most of those negative propaganda are on how Rohingyas are damaging the local economy and livelihood. Whether it is racial or economic or both, it is a subject to reveal by social science study. Comprehensive multidisciplinary studies are also needed to define the underlying drivers behind mob violence in Bangladesh to avoid any perceived judgment.

²¹⁹ "Violence, Lynchings, Civil War, and Witch Trials with Cornelius Christian". 18 September 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eyleEOR3vdg&t=1116s>. Accessed 18 February 2020.

²²⁰ Mithilesh Kumar Choubey, "Mob lynching: A case study of Jharkhand". *Jamshedpur Research Review*, pp. 16-21, July-August 2019.

²²¹ Bangladesh Peace Observatory (BPO). <http://peaceobservatory-cgs.org/>

Fake News-Mob Violence Nexus

F. M. Arafat²²²

In July 2019, a woman named Taslima Begum Renu became victim to a fatal mob lynching at Badda in Dhaka by a violent mob comprising mostly of youths who dragged her out of the Head Teacher's room of Uttar Badda Government Primary School, after breaking down the main gate based on suspicion amid the 'child abductor' rumors in Bangladesh.²²³ Later it was found that the woman was the mother of two children who went to the school to inquire about the admission of her children in the school. The child abduction rumors started with a Facebook post, which claimed that a young man had been found allegedly carrying the severed head of a child in Bangladesh's northern district of Netrokona.²²⁴ Another Facebook post mentioned that, "child abductors are on the prowl to collect heads and blood for the construction of Padma Bridge".²²⁵ Both Facebook posts went viral and created widespread panic and fear among people, which later transcended into the larger population. Eight people were reportedly killed in vigilante mob violence throughout Bangladesh in 2019.²²⁶ Such incidents of mob violence derived from fake news or disinformation campaign by a so-called 'vested quarter' due to the mushrooming usage of social media and communication through cyberspace was a common occurrence in recent years especially in 2019 in Bangladesh. The child abduction rumors, that has triggered a series of mob attacks on unsuspecting victims originated from Facebook and WhatsApp also became contagious in India around the same period of time.²²⁷

²²² Research Data Analyst, Bangladesh Peace Observatory (BPO), Centre for Genocide Studies (CGS), University of Dhaka.

²²³ "No-one listened to what she said: Witnesses recount lynching of a mother in Bangladesh". *Bdnews24.com*, 24 July 2019, <https://bdnews24.com/bangladesh/2019/07/24/no-one-listened-to-what-she-said-witnesses-recount-lynching-of-a-mother-in-bangladesh>. Accessed 12 January 2020.

²²⁴ "Bangladesh lynchings: Eight killed by mobs over false child abduction rumours". *BBC*, 24 July 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-49102074>. Accessed 10 January 2020.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*

²²⁶ "Bangladesh: eight lynched over false rumours of child sacrifices". *The Guardian*, 25 July 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jul/25/bangladesh-eight-lynched-over-false-rumours-of-child-sacrifices>. Accessed 11 January 2020.

²²⁷ "Child-lifting rumours spark a series of mob attacks". *Times of India*, 29 August 2019, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/child-lifting-rumours-spark-a-series-of-mob-attacks/articleshow/70884459.cms>. Accessed 10 January 2020.

The write-up explores how fake news instigated incidents of mob violence in Bangladesh by connecting the trends of fake news dissemination and mob violence incidents. It also brings up the perspective of fake news-induced mob violence in India in order to contextualize and compare the phenomenon in the two countries.

The Fake News Phenomenon

Fake news, various forms of misinformation, disinformation has become a buzzword in the twenty-first century popular culture with the advent of social media platforms. The term commonly refers to false or misleading information made to look like a fact-based news story in order to influence public opinion.²²⁸ It creates an environment in which truth can be altered and post-truth based on so-called 'alternative facts' can germinate and thrive.²²⁹ Post-truth refers to a situation in which people are more likely to accept an argument based on their emotions and beliefs, rather than facts.

The easy accessibility of Internet and multimedia application via smartphones have amplified the number of news sources. By using social media platforms, any individual or group can produce and spread the news to the masses. As the purview of social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter is expanding, these applications through various electronic devices have turned into an integral part of people's daily lives. In fact, cyberspace especially the social media platforms have turned into the leading news sources in recent years by surpassing the conventional news sources for instance, television, radio, and newspaper. Due to the expansion of social media platforms, the process of news consumption has changed exceedingly.

A recent survey from the Pew Research Center found that some 52% of the United States adults get their daily dose of news from Facebook; followed by YouTube, Twitter, and a variety of other platforms like Instagram, LinkedIn, Reddit, and Snapchat.²³⁰ Facebook is the biggest social media network worldwide with more than 2.45 billion active users as of 2019.²³¹ It is the most popular social media platform in Bangladesh to the extent that it has become synonymous with the internet to many people who are the beginners of

²²⁸ Nelson, Jacob L Harsh Taneja, "The Small, Disloyal Fake News Audience: The Role of Audience Availability in Fake News Consumption", Research Gate Publication, pp. 1-18, January 2018.

²²⁹ Hendricks, Vincent F., and Mads Vestergaard. "Alternative Facts, Misinformation, and Fake News". In *Reality Lost*, pp. 49-77. Springer, Cham, 2019.

²³⁰ Lunden, Ingrid. "Bad News: Facebook Leads in News Consumption among Social Feeds, but Most Don't Trust It, Says Pew." *TechCrunch*, 2 October 2019, techcrunch.com/2019/10/02/bad-news-social-media/. Accessed 10 January 2020.

²³¹ "Number of monthly active Facebook users worldwide as of 3rd quarter 2019". Statista, 19 November 2019, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/264810/number-of-monthly-active-facebook-users-worldwide/>. Accessed 11 January 2020.

cyberspace. According to a recent statistic, there are 35.853 million active Facebook users in Bangladesh as of December 2019 which accounted for 21.1% of its entire population.²³² Among the vast contents generated by social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, or WhatsApp on a daily basis, a percentage is bound to be misinformation, disinformation, or fake news. The flexible rules of social media platforms (e.g., Facebook) regarding posting and uploading make it easier for its users to spread fake news. In many instances, absurd rumors, fear-mongering to communal contents are spread through social media by the vested quarters to instigate violence.

Fake News Phenomenon in Bangladesh

Fake news dissemination has led to dire consequences in Bangladesh. It has exposed the communal divide of the country in the line of religion and ethnicity. It signals the prowess of social media in terms of news consumption and dissemination. Overall, the phenomenon has created an environment of constant chaos in which, one fake news can only be replaced by another. In recent years, fake news has led to communal violence, mob violence, vigilante lynching, and gender-based violence (GBV).

Fake news can incite violence of any kind; communal mob violence, vigilante mob lynching, etc. by targeting the social fabric of an area. Violence based-on rumors is not a new phenomenon in Bangladesh albeit Indian subcontinent. Bengal was the hotspot of communal riots during the division of the British India. Many of those bloody riots were fueled by rumors of violent attacks in the line of religion. In case of Bangladesh, the impact of the dissemination of fake news is multifaceted.

First, fake news; social media posts from fictitious accounts were used to carry out multiple attacks against minorities such as Hindus and Buddhists in different parts of Bangladesh such as Rangpur, Brahmanbaria, Cox's Bazar, and Bhola in recent years.²³³

Second, numerous false and absurd rumors were spread in the social media platforms to halt a major construction project over the Padma river in July, 2019.²³⁴

²³² "Facebook users in Bangladesh December 2019". NapoleonCat, <https://napoleoncat.com/stats/facebook-users-in-bangladesh/2019/12> (Accessed 15 January 2020).

²³³ Minar, Matiur Rahman, and Jibon Naher. "Violence originated from Facebook: A case study in Bangladesh." 2018, <https://arxiv.org/pdf/1804.11241.pdf%20and%20https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/bangladesh>. Accessed 20 January 2020.

²³⁴ "Stern action for spreading rumour over Padma Bridge: Quader". *The Daily Star*, 11 July 2019, <https://www.thedailystar.net/politics/stern-action-for-spreading-rumour-over-padma-bridge-1769917>. Accessed 20 January 2020.

Third, a few incidents of mob violence have occurred recently in which the false accusation of ‘child trafficker’ was purposefully disseminated to provoke people to attack the accused to seek justice.²³⁵

Fourth, fake news or blatant wrong information was disseminated through the social media to have an impact on widespread student mobilizations like ‘Quota Reform movement’ or ‘Road Safety movement’.²³⁶

Finally, fake news is often used to create chaos and volatile environment as demonstrated in the rumors of child sacrifices. A few have died in the vigilante lynching in Bangladesh sparked by rumors in the social media platforms.²³⁷

Fake News and Communal Mob Violence in Bangladesh

Fake news instigated violence in the line of religion and ethnicity on many occasions, which is termed as ‘digital communalism’ by the commentators.²³⁸ In recent years, a number of such incidents occurred where mobs mainly comprising of religious fundamentalists attacked Hindu and Buddhist minorities and vandalized temples, religious symbols, and houses in Bangladesh. The very first incident with such characteristics was the Ramu incident in September 2012 that revealed how a Facebook post from a fictitious account with a pseudonym can lead to widespread violence, minority repression and destruction.²³⁹ Similar type of mob violence were repeated at Santhia, Pabna in 2013, Homna, Cumilla in 2014, Nasirnagar, Brahmanbaria in 2016, Gangachara, Rangpur in 2017, Joypurhat in 2017 and Borhanuddin, Bhola in 2019. Communal mob violence has regrettably been a feature of fake news dissemination in Bangladesh. A few commonalities of the aforementioned incidents may be observed. First, all the social media posts that had led to communal violence originated from fictitious accounts and were proven to be fake. Second, a vested quarter was involved in mobilizing the protests, which later turned violent. Third, a widespread campaign was launched in almost all cases, which continued for days prior to the incidents. Fourth, violent protesters looted valuables from the households during the riots. Fifth, all the personnel who allegedly wrote the social media posts and later detained by police were ultimately cleared by the police.

²³⁵ “Bangladesh: eight lynched over false rumours of child sacrifices”. *The Guardian*, 25 July 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jul/25/bangladesh-eight-lynched-over-false-rumours-of-child-sacrifices>. Accessed 22 January 2020.

²³⁶ “Spreading rumour: Online news portal official, 2 students detained”. *The Daily Star*, 9 August 2018, <https://www.thedailystar.net/country/student-arrested-in-bogra-spreading-rumour-on-social-media-over-student-protest-for-road-safety-demand-1618153>. Accessed 20 January 2020.

²³⁷ Op.cit, *The Guardian*.

²³⁸ Al-Zaman, Md Sayeed. “Digital Disinformation and Communalism in Bangladesh.” (2019).

²³⁹ “Three years after Ramu”. *The Daily Star*, 30 September 2015. <https://www.thedailystar.net/editorial/three-years-after-ramu-149155>, Accessed 20 January 2020.

Fake news-induced mob violence is not limited to communal violence. Rumors on child abduction created a havoc among the people in Bangladesh which resulted in a few incidents of mob attacks. Amidst rumors that the construction of the Padma Bridge required human heads, at least 14 people were lynched across Bangladesh while over 50 survived lynching attempts as rumors of child lifting spread in the month of July 2019.²⁴⁰

The Rohingya influx from Myanmar also complicated the trajectory of fake news-induced violence in Bangladesh in 2019. The Bangladesh Peace Observatory (BPO) database has enlisted a number of mob-related incidents in which rumors and Rohingyas were factored. The local dissatisfaction of Rohingyas juxtaposed with the trending rumors of child abduction, human sacrifice has led to a few mob violence and vigilante lynching in Bangladesh.

On 12 May, 2019, Daily Karatoa reported that locals had beaten a motor-cycle rider suspecting him to be a Rohingya kidnapper in Satkhira as listed in the BPO. On 21 May, 2019, Daily Jugantar reported that a mob consisted of villagers caught a man who was acting strangely. They suspected him as a Rohingya child abductor and beat him up brutally before handing him over to the police in Jhenaidah. Later they found the man was mentally challenged.²⁴¹

²⁴⁰ Das, Tapos Kanti. "Mob lynching and the cry for justice". *The Daily New Age*, 26 July 2019, <http://www.newagebd.net/article/79667/mob-lynching-and-the-cry-for-justice>. Accessed 12 January 2020.

²⁴¹ "A man was beaten in Jhenaidah as locals suspect him as Rohingya". *The Daily Jugantor*, 22 May 2019, https://epaper.jugantor.com/2019/05/22/23/details/23_r2_c4.jpg. Accessed 10 January 2020.

List of Incidents of Mob Violence over Fake News in Bangladesh, 2019

- ✚ A youth was beaten to death by a violent mob in Nilphamari where he found his lost bicycle but the mob suspected him to be a thief on 7th November 2019.
- ✚ A Facebook post that criticized Islam's Prophet Muhammad sparked a riot in the town of Borhanuddin, Bhola on 20th October 2019 that left at least four people dead.
- ✚ A man was beaten to death by people allegedly for stealing a mobile phone in Madhupur, Tangail on 22nd September 2019.
- ✚ A farmer was killed by a mob on suspicion of stealing fish in Jahosre on 22nd September 2019.
- ✚ A Hindu man was beaten up by a mob for allegedly posting derogatory comments about Islam on Social media in Kapasia, Gazipur on 21st September 2019. He was arrested under the ICT Act.
- ✚ A young man was beaten by a mob under suspicion of being a child abductor and handed over to the police in Gaibandha on 3rd August 2019.
- ✚ A mentally challenged woman was beaten by a mob as they mistook her to be a child lifter in Chattogram on 28th July 2019. Police rescued her immediately.
- ✚ A young man was beaten severely by a mob who mistook him to be a child lifter in Chuadanga on 26th July 2019.
- ✚ A garment worker was beaten to death by a mob as they mistook him to be a thief in Dhaka on 25th July 2019.
- ✚ A mentally challenged woman was beaten mercilessly by a mob who mistook her to be a kidnapper in Khulna on 22nd July 2019.
- ✚ Three youths were beaten by a mob who had mistaken them as child kidnappers in Chattogram on 22nd July 2019.
- ✚ A mentally challenged woman was beaten by a mob in Madaripur who had mistaken her to be a kidnapper on 22nd July 2019.
- ✚ A man was beaten brutally by a mob over the rumor of child abductor in Kalihati, Tangail on 21st July 2019.
- ✚ A woman was beaten to death by a mob in a school at Badda, Dhaka on 20th July 2019. She was mistaken to be a kidnapper as she went there to collect information about admission for her children.
- ✚ Mobs beat to death five people, including two women, and injured 10 others on suspicion of being child kidnappers at Savar, Dhaka on 12th July 2019.
- ✚ A mentally challenged man was beaten by a mob as they mistook him to be a kidnapper in Chattogram on 12th July 2019.
- ✚ A man was beaten severely by a mob who mistook him to be a kidnapper after seeing him with six children in a CNG autorickshaw in Chattogram on 12th July 2019.
- ✚ A youth was lynched in Netrokona city after he was found carrying a child's severed head in his bag on 18th July 2019.
- ✚ Three people including a woman were beaten by a mob in Thakurgaon who mistook them as kidnappers on 19th July 2019.
- ✚ A deaf man was killed by a mob who suspected him to be a kidnapper in Narayanganj on 20th July 2019.

Source: Bangladesh Peace Observatory (BPO) * Only selected incidents are listed

Fake News-induced Mob Violence in India

Social media spearheaded a massive shift in the political culture, especially the electoral politics of India as it has become a vital medium to propagate political views, campaigning for elections, or even smearing the opposition candidates. The social media has exponentially enhanced the public image of key political leaders such as the current Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, Congress leader, Mr. Sashi Tharoor, and Amit Shah, President of the ruling party in India, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Discussions in various online forums, comments, shares, and tweets in social media platforms have emerged as important components in electoral politics. WhatsApp and Facebook are the popular social media platforms in India. Seemingly both platforms are frequently used to spread fake news. In terms of instigating violence, WhatsApp is mostly preferred than Facebook because of its accessibility.²⁴² On many occasions, manufactured or distorted fake videos depicting violence against individuals of majoritarian religion or ethnicity are used to target minorities by mobilizing people of majoritarian faith. Sometimes contents carrying anti-religious messages are shared on Facebook and Twitter. Many people tend to believe this propaganda without verifying and form their perception about the 'other religion'. This tendency is related to peoples' habits of news consumption. People tend to follow the news content congenial to them.²⁴³ Usually, social media platforms, like Facebook or Twitter gives its users options to choose the sources of news. The users tend to like or follow the pages of the news sources they are familiar or ideologically accustomed to. This habit creates an 'online echo chamber' or 'filter bubble' in which people consume news familiar to their political congeniality.²⁴⁴ For instance, a conservative only receives news from conservative outlets and a liberal consumes news from liberal outlets.

Many symptoms related to fake news-induced mob violence Bangladesh is currently facing, is similar to India's cow-related mob violence and WhatsApp vigilante lynching. Cow-related mob violence definitely has a communal undertone same as fake news-induced communal mob violence in Bangladesh. Also, mob violence sparked by rumors or suspicion of child abduction circulated on social media platforms is also a common phenomenon in India. According to IndiaSpend, between January 2017 and July 2018, 33 persons have been killed and at least 99 injured in 69 reported cases of mob violence over child abduction rumors.²⁴⁵ One of them was a young woman who was chased through a crowded market and disrobed in

²⁴² Banerjee, Amila, and Mehrazun Neesa Haque. "Is Fake News Real in India?" Research Gate (2018).

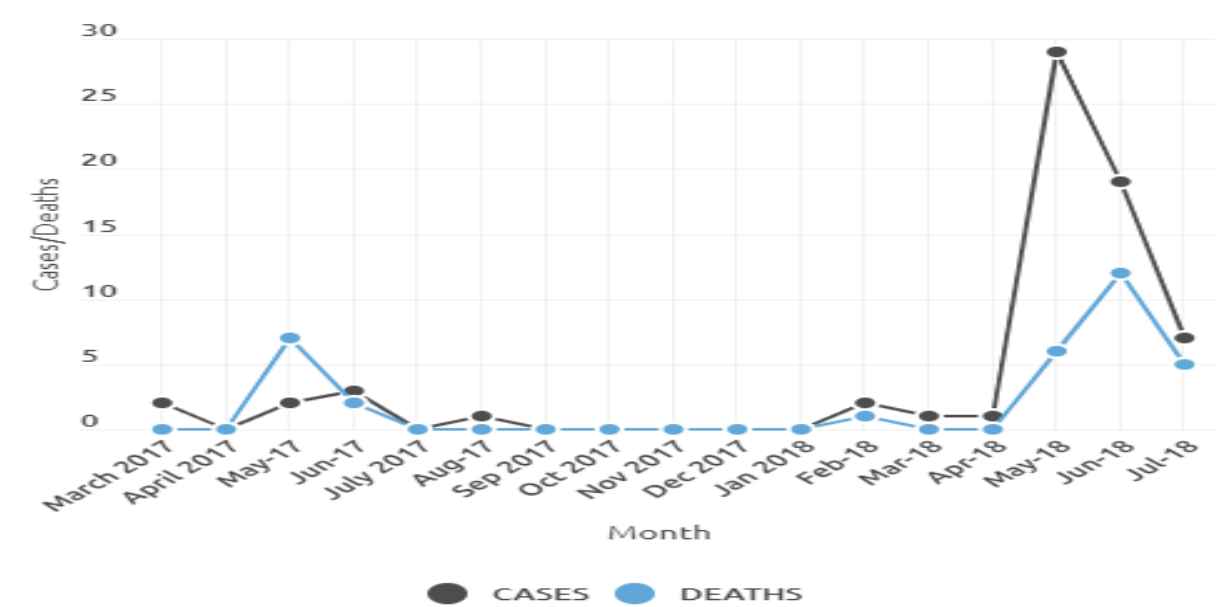
²⁴³ Arafat, F.M. Fake News Phenomenon in Bangladesh (CGS: Dhaka), CGS Peace Report, Volume 3, Issue 3, May-June 2019, p. 11-23, <http://peaceobservatory-cgs.org/#/peace-report-viewer>, Accessed 20 January 2020.

²⁴⁴ "Why fears of fake news are overhyped". CNBC, 12 February 2019. <https://www.cnbc.com/2019/02/11/why-fears-of-fake-news-are-overhyped.html>, Accessed 20 January 2020.

²⁴⁵ Saldanha, Alison, Pranav Rajput & Jay Hazare. "Child-Lifting Rumours: 33 Killed In 69 Mob Attacks Since Jan 2017. Before That Only 1 Attack in 2012". *Indiaspend*, 9 July 2018. <https://www.indiaspend.com/child-lifting-rumours-33-killed-in-69-mob-attacks-since-jan-2017-before-that-only-1-attack-in-2012-2012/>. Accessed 10 January 2020.

front of a jeering crowd at Meerut on 28th August 2019. The mob had started following her after someone spread the rumor on social media that a suspected child-lifter matching the description of the victim had been seen in the area.²⁴⁶ Incidents of similar characteristics also occurred in other states such as Bihar, Rajasthan, Chattisgarh, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, and Kerala as listed in IndiaSpend database.²⁴⁷

Mob Lynching Related to Rumors of Child Abduction in India, 2017-18²⁴⁸



²⁴⁶ “Child-lifting rumours spark a series of mob attacks”. *The Times of India*, 29 August 2019. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/child-lifting-rumours-spark-a-series-of-mob-attacks/articleshow/70884459.cms>. Accessed 10 January 2020.

²⁴⁷ IndiaSpend Database; <https://www.indiaspend.com/>. Accessed 10 January 2020.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid*

The phenomenon of fake news-induced mob violence in both Bangladesh and India has some unique similarities. Many components of the phenomenon such as rumors on child abduction, WhatsApp vigilante incidents emerged in India and later shifted to Bangladesh. In terms of the incidents related to child abduction rumors, in almost all of the lynching locations, no child abductions and organ harvesting had been recorded in both countries. Minorities; Hindus and Buddhists in the case of Bangladesh and Muslims in the case of India were predominantly targeted and victimized. Fake messages or videos via WhatsApp or Facebook and leaflets with screenshots of manufactured Facebook posts customized with locally specific details were circulated among the potential perpetrators to organize the mob and carry out the

List of Incidents of Mob Violence over Child Abduction Rumors in India, 2019

- 📅 On 19th October 2019, a 37-year old man was killed by villagers in Bhagalpur, Bihar on suspicion of being a child lifter. According to the district senior superintendent of police. the victim was attacked by villagers when they confronted him while he was talking to a child,
- 📅 On 9th October 2019, three police officers from Gujarat and a civilian were mistaken for child lifters and beaten by a mob in Rajasthan.
- 📅 On 8th October 2019, two youths were tied to an electric pole and beaten by a mob on suspicion of being child lifters.
- 📅 On 8th October 2019, an unidentified elderly man who offered biscuits to a group of children was thrashed by local villagers who accused him of being a child lifter.
- 📅 On 6th October 2019, Mohammed Asif Hanif Multani, a 24-years-old cloth salesman was chased and beaten by a mob in KK Nagar area of Ghatlodia in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, who accused him of being a child lifter.
- 📅 On 6th October 2019, Sunil Yadav, a 32-year-old daily wage laborer from Hazaribagh was locked in a room and beaten by a mob who accused him of being a child lifter in Koderma in Jharkhand.

Source: IndiaSpend's database Child Lifting Rumors

*** Only selected incidents are listed**

attacks. Many of the incidents instigated by fake news had serious consequences in both countries. It was found out later in case of both countries that vested quarters comprising of religious fundamentalists were involved behind many of these incidents.

- ✚ On 2nd October 2019, a woman in her twenties was thrashed by a mob in Charan Singh colony in Vijay Nagar, Ghaziabad after two female relatives of a man with whom she was in a relationship spread rumors about her being a child lifter.
- ✚ On 1st October 2019, a mentally-challenged man was beaten by a mob at Kuarmunda panchayat under the Biramitrapur police station in Sundargarh district on suspicion of being a child-lifter.
- ✚ On 27th September 2019, two men were beaten by a mob in Purulia, West Bengal based on child-lifting rumors. The mob torched the victims' car and attacked police officers when they rushed to the spot to rescue them.
- ✚ On 26th September 2019, local mob in Menmena panchayat beat two men on suspicion of child lifting, and handed to the police. The second suspect has been admitted to Hatibari Community health center.
- ✚ On 25th September 2019, a mentally unstable youth from Jharkhand's Parba village was beaten up by few locals at Kokerama bazaar. The locals suspected the youth of abducting children.
- ✚ On 25th September 2019, a mentally unstable woman was tied to an electric pole and beaten by a mob on suspicion of being a child lifter in Uttar Pradesh.
- ✚ On 20th September 2019, A 70-year old unidentified man was beaten to death by a mob on suspicion of being a child lifter in Sahibganj of Jharkhand.
- ✚ On 16th September 2019, two men were attacked by a mob of 40 people in Vazakkad, Kerala on suspicion of child-lifting.
- ✚ On 11th September 2019, a 1000-strong mob chased a man in Kalyaneswari, in West Bardhaman based on child lifting suspicion. He hid behind a bush till the police rescued him.
- ✚ On 11th September 2019, a middle-aged man was lynched in Dendua village in West Bardhaman on suspicion of being a child-lifter. He was tied to a lamp post and beaten up severely by several people.

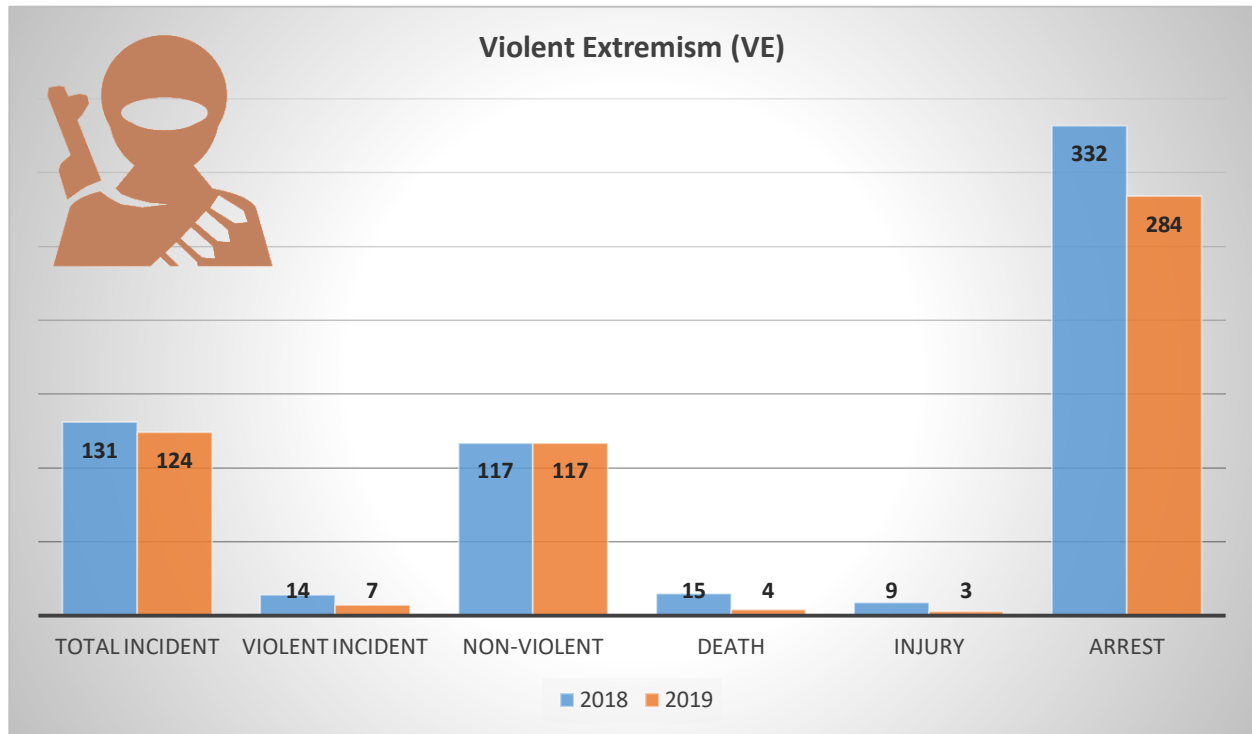
The scope of fake news due to the mushrooming of social media platforms is second to none. Sadly, it has transformed from a source of late-night comedy to the instigator of violence. As a result of the failures of tech giants like Facebook and Google and mismanagements of the governments to tackle the issue, fake news-induced mob violence is a rude awakening for many. It is impacting upon the peace and stability of

Bangladesh and its peers in many ways. In most instances, fake news is spread to instigate violence and create chaos and panic, which happened so in the aforementioned incidents. Fake news essentially alters the truth and enables the 'post-truth reality' in which truth or objective facts do not carry the weight or believability as it used to do. Truth itself has become more malleable with the innovation of social media and the outbreak of the fake news phenomenon.²⁴⁹

Although violence originated through rumors is a common occurrence throughout history, fake news circulation through social media platforms in Bangladesh is fairly a new phenomenon. Therefore, it has impacted the daily conversations of public discourse. Different unsuccessful yet dangerous remedies of deadly COVID-19 (the newest and latest form of coronavirus originated from China) and dengue epidemic from many fictitious social media has become viral in recent months. Vigilante mob violence, child abduction, and human sacrifice rumors were also discussed repeatedly in the public discourse as a result of the sensational nature of the issue. As the number of fictitious accounts or websites, which create and disseminate fake news is increasing, so does the plausibility of the fake news. In other words, fake news undercuts or delegitimizes the real news or objective facts to some extent and enables the 'post-truth' reality to take ground. Additionally, fake news is deemed more believable than real news as the real news lacks the necessary sensationalism that people want to hear. The lethal consequences of the usage of fake news demand a new set of legislation that will be compatible with the ever-changing landscape of social media.

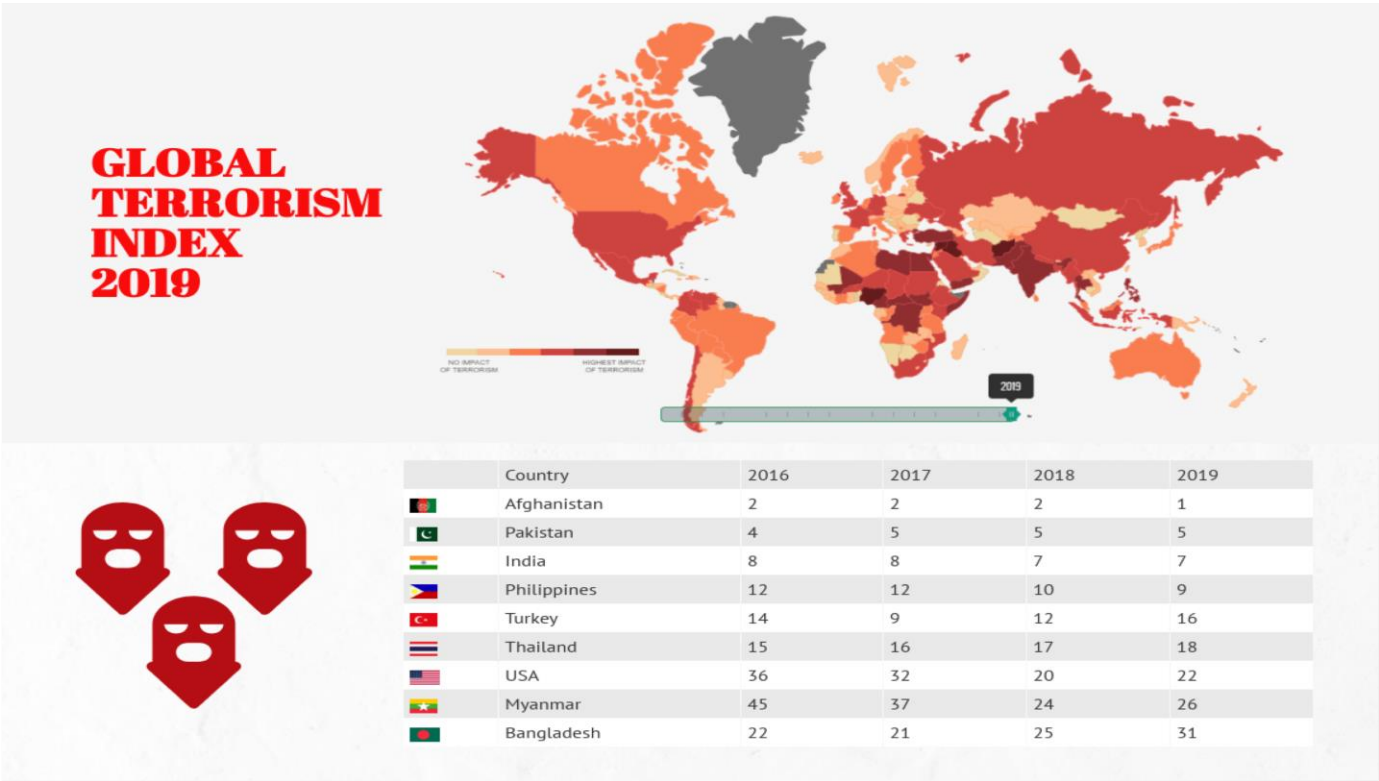
²⁴⁹ *Op.cit.* Arafat

Appendix I



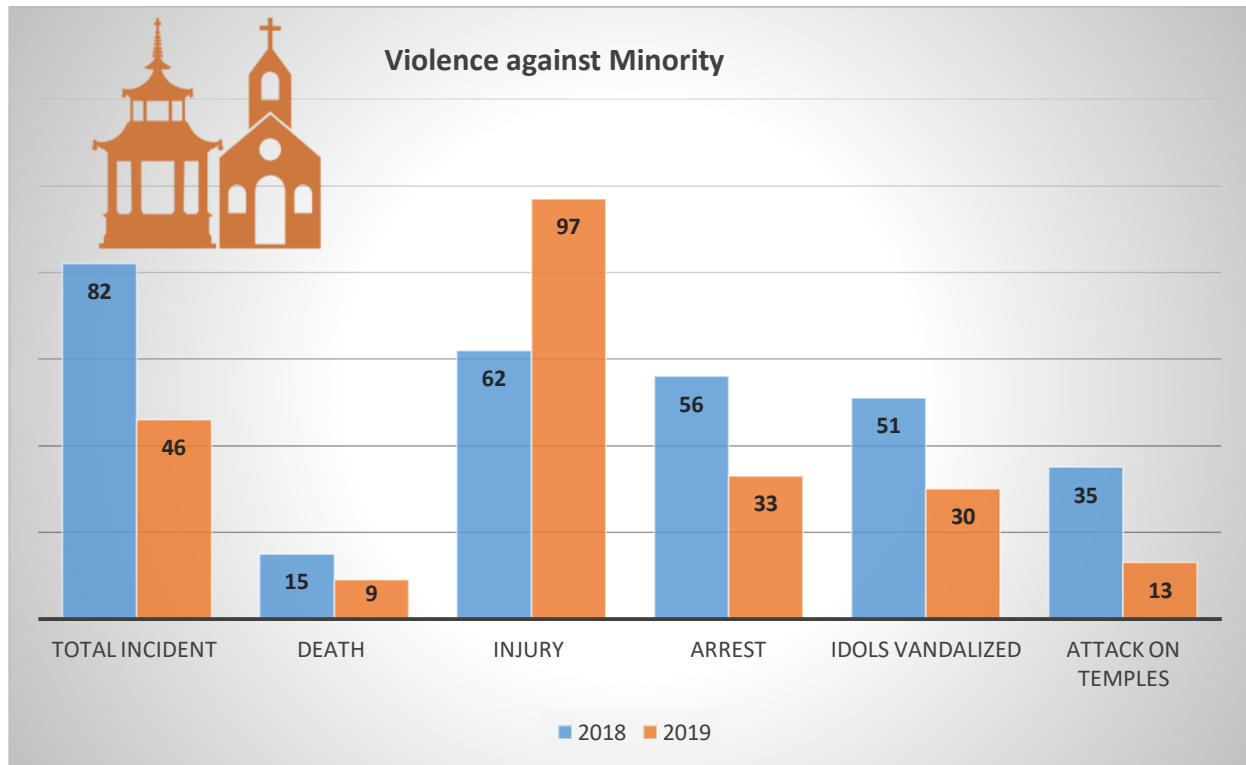
Source: BPO

Appendix II



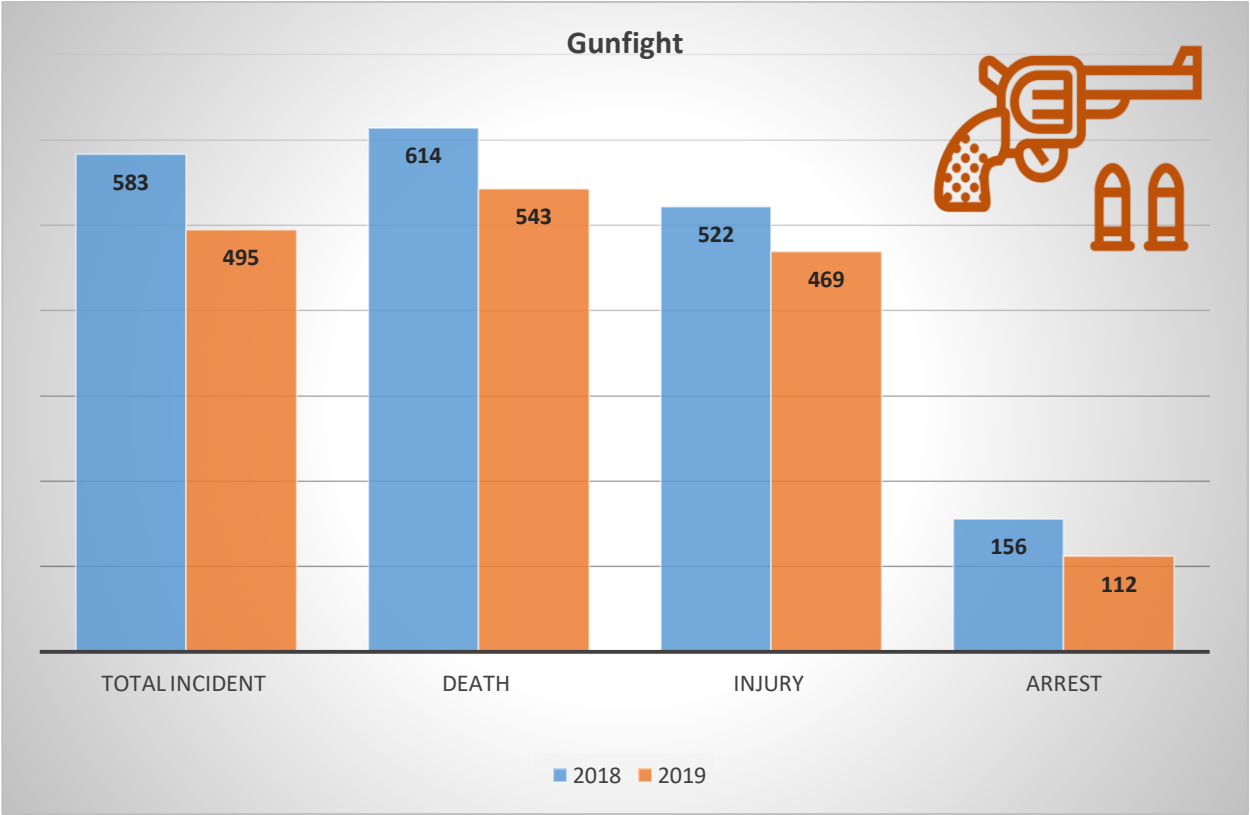
Source: Institute for Economics and Peace, Sydney, Australia.

Appendix III



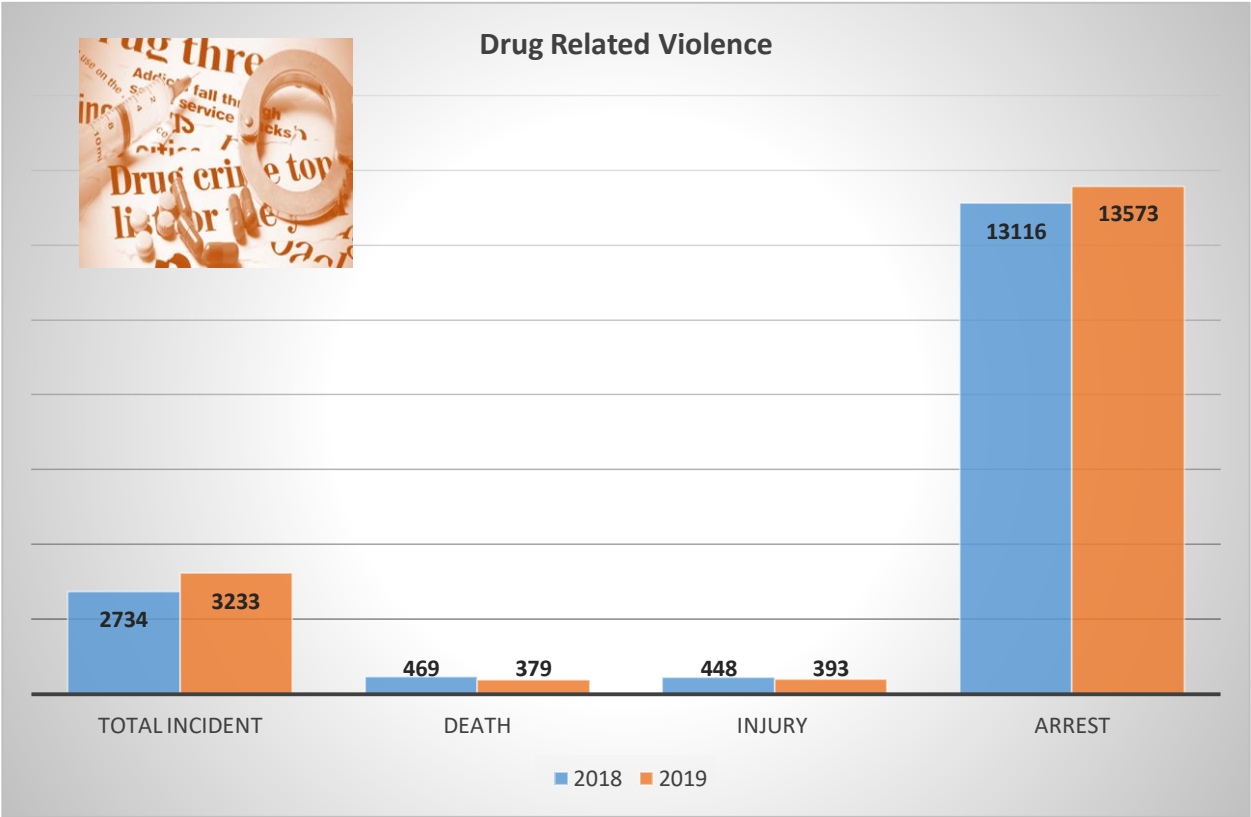
Source: BPO

Appendix IV



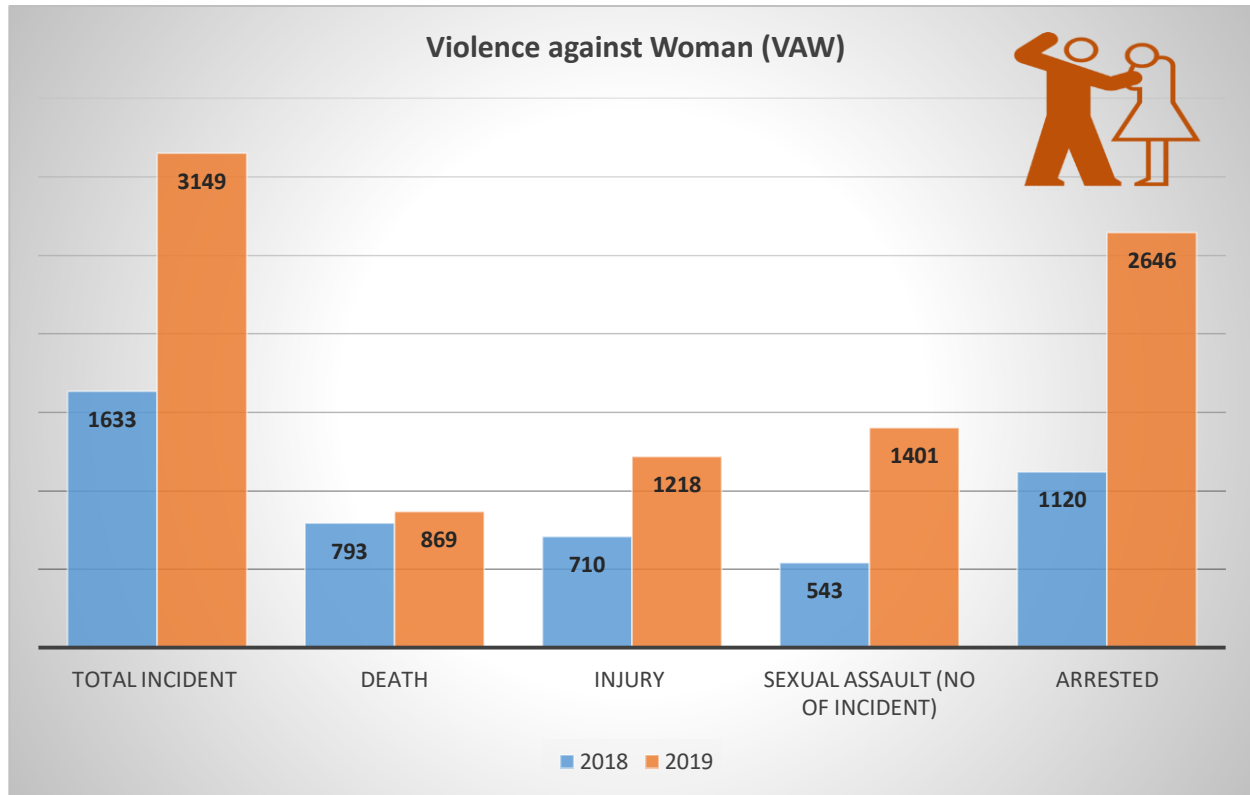
Source: BPO

Appendix V



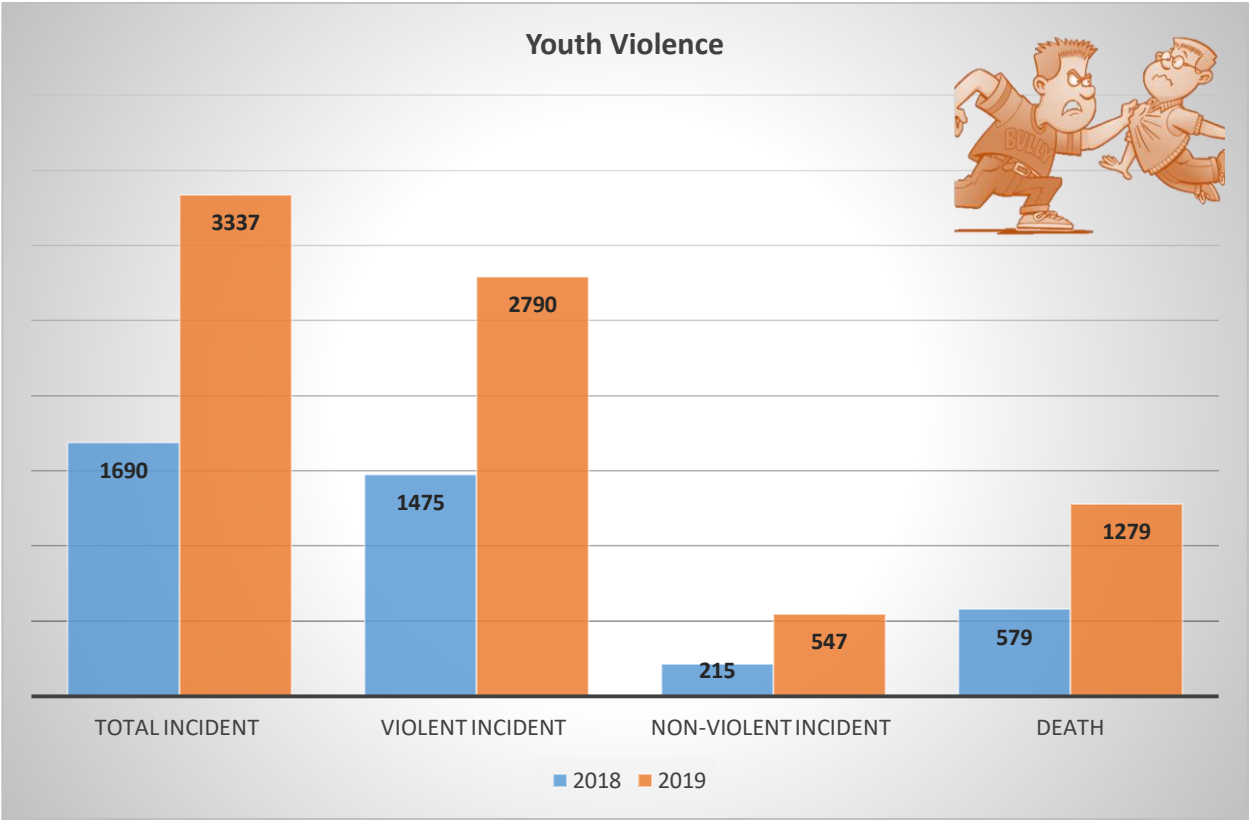
Source: BPO

Appendix VI



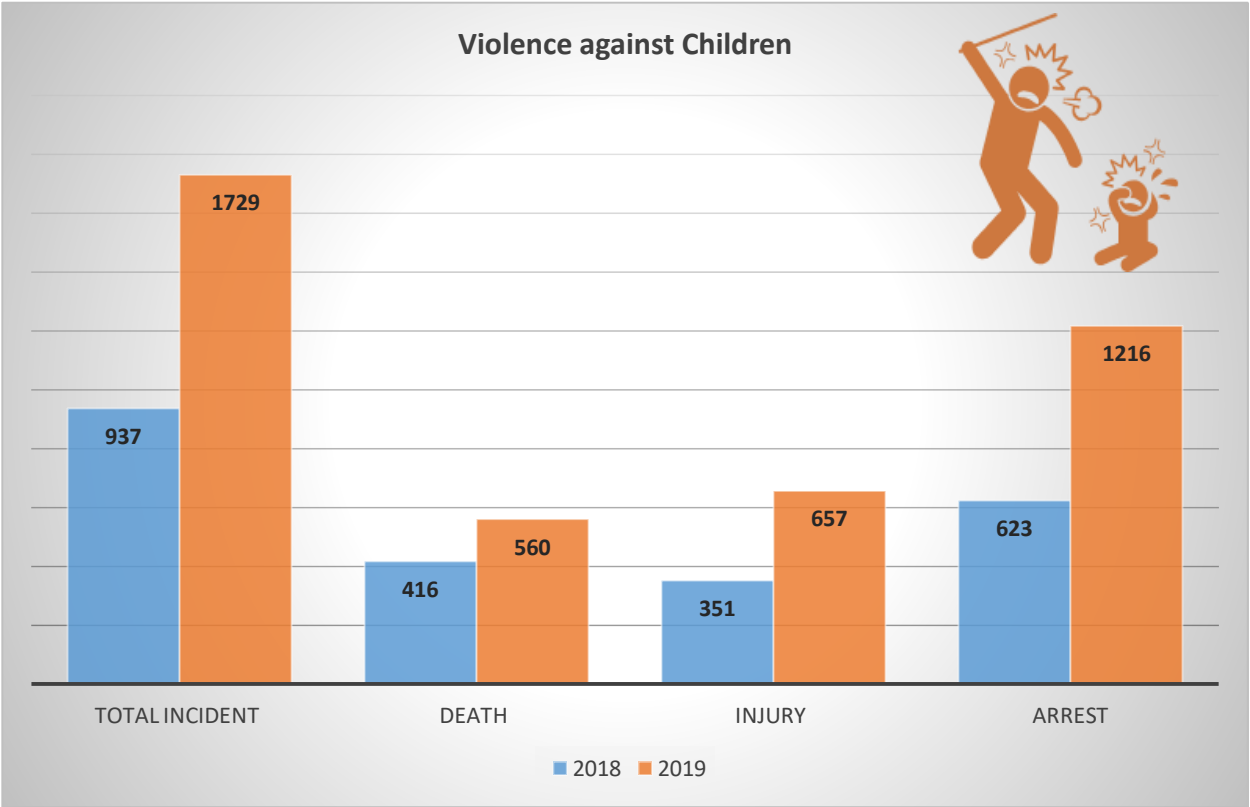
Source: BPO

Appendix VII



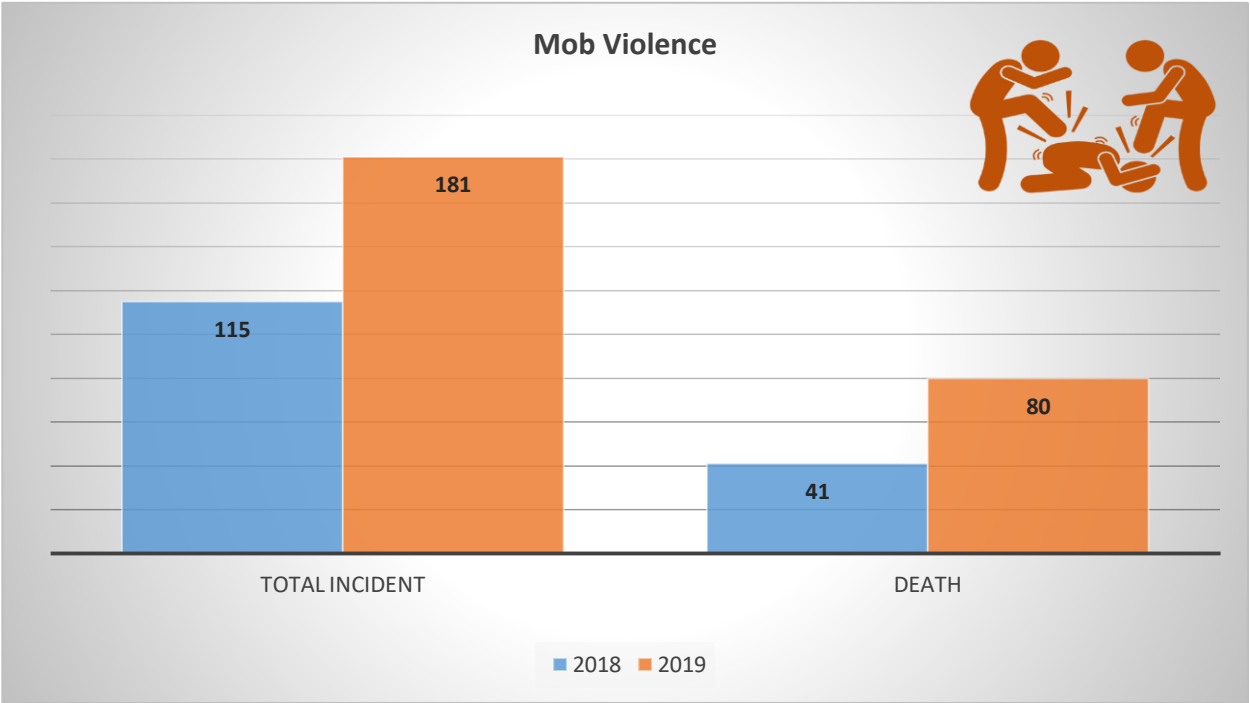
Source: BPO

Appendix VIII



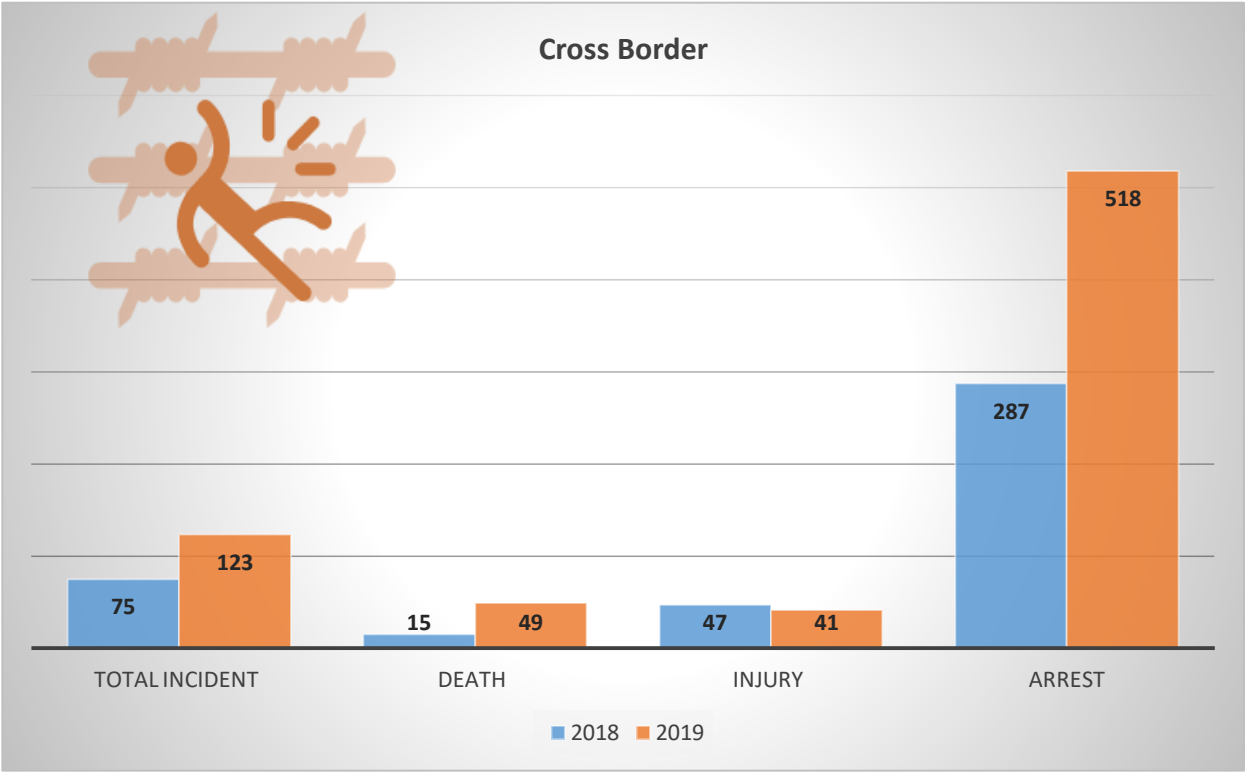
Source: BPO

Appendix IX



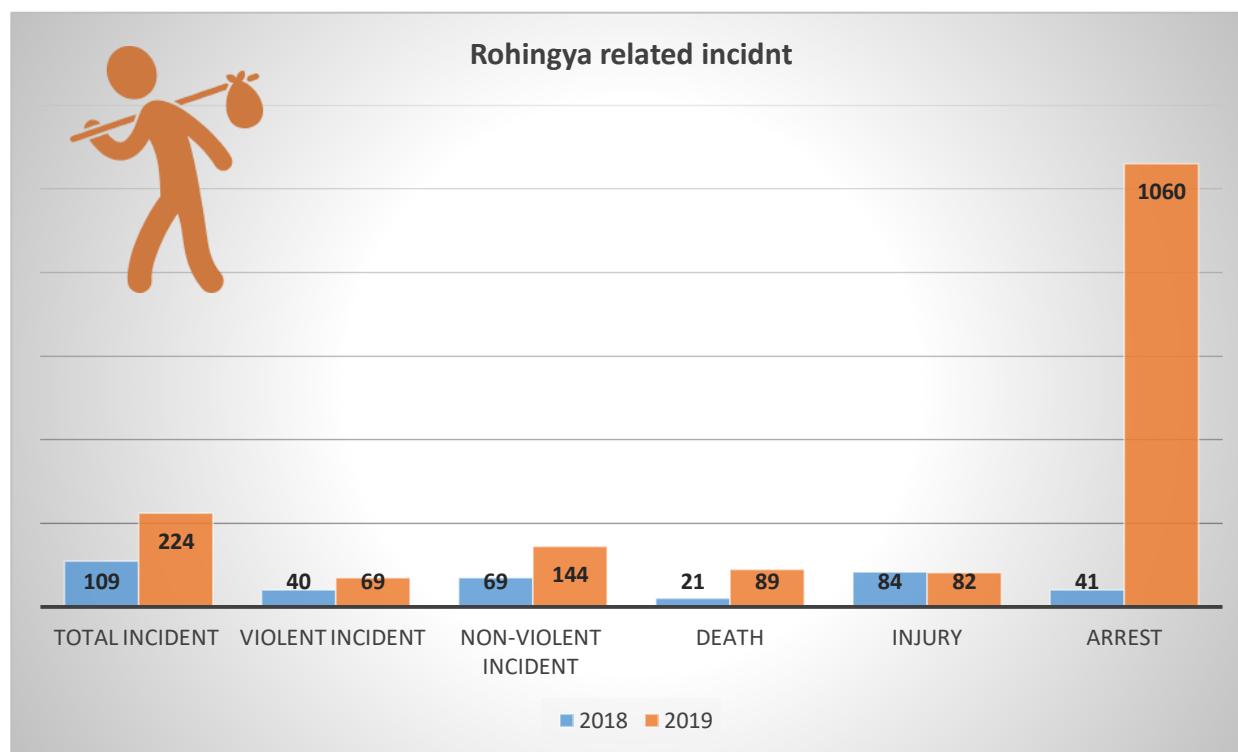
Source: BPO

Appendix X



Source: BPO

Appendix XI



Source: BPO



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