



AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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STOP EXTRAJUDICIAL EXECUTIONS OF ROHINGYA REFUGEES AND END RESTRICTIONS TO THEIR FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

Amnesty International is deeply concerned about what appears to be a series of recent extrajudicial executions of Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazaar refugee camps. Since the killing on 23 August 2019, of a local Bangladeshi youth leader from the ruling political party Awami League, at least seven Rohingya refugees have been [killed](#) by Bangladesh police in alleged 'gunfights' in the span of just three weeks.

On 23 August 2019, Omar Faruk, 30, a local leader of the ruling party's youth wing, was [shot dead](#), allegedly by a group of Rohingya men. The incident shocked the locals who at once [blocked](#) a highway in protest of the murder and vandalized a couple of shops and houses inside Jadimura Rohingya camp. Since then, at least seven Rohingya men, reportedly suspects of the murder, have been killed in alleged "gunfights". While recourse should have been made to the legal and judicial measures to arrest and prosecute the killers, the suspected extrajudicial executions of the so-called 'accused' Rohingya men violate their right to life, as well as the principle of presumption of innocence and right to a fair trial. Bangladesh has committed, and is legally bound under international law, to respect and protect the right to life – a key, non-derogable human right – as well as uphold the presumption of innocence and the right to a 'fair, public hearing by a competent, independent and impartial tribunal established by law'.¹

On 24 August, a day after Faruk's killing, two Rohingya men, Muhammad Shah and Abdur Shukkur, 28, of Jadimura Rohingya camp, were [killed](#) in a 'gunfight', as claimed by a police officer. On 27 August, another Rohingya man from Jadimura camp was [killed](#) in what was described as similar fashion—a 'gunfight' between the police and the victim. Nur Mohammed was [killed](#) in another 'gunfight' on 01 September. According to police, Nur Mohammed was the prime suspect of Omar Faruk's murder. Despite the fact that the prime suspect was killed, the number of Rohingya falling victim of 'gunfights' continue. On September 13, Rohingya men Abdul Karim, 24, and Nesar Ahmed, 27, were [killed](#) in a 'gunfight' with police. The last victim (as of 18 September 2019) of the so-called 'gunfights' was Habib Ullah, 40, of Nayapara refugee camp, who was [shot dead](#) on September 15.

All seven killings have been officially described using the same narrative of 'gunfights' between the police and the victim and bear similar patterns: the victims were arrested, and then they were taken to a location to 'recover' illegal substances—then a so-called 'gunfight' took place that claimed the lives of one or more victims. The stories [resemble](#) other allegations of extrajudicial executions. Police statements reported by media sources in every instance [mentioned](#) that the killed Rohingya men were 'suspected' of Omar Faruk's murder.

The killings of the alleged suspects are a serious violation of human rights and reflects disregard for the rule of law. All persons, irrespective of whether or not they are suspected of crimes, have basic human rights guarantees under international human rights treaties binding on Bangladesh. These include the right to a fair trial and to be presumed innocent until proven guilty. Human rights are completely disrespected and violated by extrajudicial executions. We

¹ Article 14 of the ICCPR

demand that such killings must be stopped immediately and urge the authorities to immediately initiate an independent, impartial and efficient investigation into all seven cases of ‘gunfights’. Where sufficient, admissible evidence is found, those suspected of committing crimes in these incidents – including persons with command responsibility - should be brought to justice in fair trials, without recourse to the death penalty.

Recently, Bangladesh authorities have also [imposed](#) punishing restrictions to the Rohingya refugees’ freedom of movement and limited their communications including by banning the use of mobile phones and networks. The authorities also barred certain NGOs from operating in the refugee camps.

On 25 August 2019, the Rohingya refugees [gathered](#) for a large rally to mark what they call a “Genocide Day”—the second anniversary of the military operations that involved widespread and systematic attacks on the civilian Rohingya population and forced them to flee from Myanmar. The rally [demanded](#) citizenship and other rights from the Myanmar authorities. Angered by the rally, the government took a series of punitive measures against not only NGOs allegedly helping Rohingyas organize the event but also [against its own officials](#) for “allowing” the gathering. The organizers came under increased scrutiny and questions.. Following the rally, the authorities imposed a curfew in the camps, banned and confiscated mobile phones, and [shut down 3G and 4G mobile internet networks](#). They also [formed two commissions of inquiry](#) to find out those persons and organisations responsible for organizing and helping the rally. Consequently, the authorities [withdrew 41 NGOs’ authorization](#) to operate in the camps for so-called ‘malpractices’, questioned and harassed the organizers of the rally, and [removed high-ranking government officials](#) working on Rohingya refugees, relief and repatriations.

Bangladesh authorities must respect and protect the human rights of Rohingya, including the right to freedom of peaceful assembly, expression and movement, as well as their other rights as refugees, while not abandoning efforts to bring about their voluntary return to their homes in safety and dignity.

The recent punitive measures Bangladesh authorities have taken against the Rohingya refugees undermine the serious and commendable works Bangladesh has done for the past two years for the benefits of the Rohingya refugees. We call on Bangladesh authorities to adhere to its commitments to refugee rights guaranteed under international law.