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SAPRAN'S BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2026



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সকল প্রাণের নিরাপত্তা

Election-Time Risk and Violence Mapping

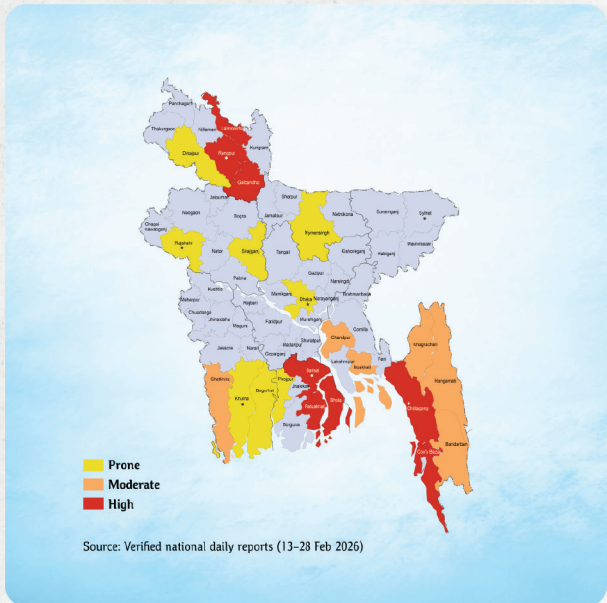


Image: Minority Violence Map

SAPRAN's longitudinal early warning analysis (2001–2024) demonstrates that election-time violence in Bangladesh—particularly against minority communities—follows recurring and geographically concentrated patterns. Northern and southeastern risk corridors consistently reappear across election cycles, shaped by structural vulnerabilities such as minority concentration, land-related disputes, rapid rumor escalation, and weak accountability mechanisms.

Documented violations include intimidation, physical assault, arson, destruction of homes and places of worship, forced displacement, and gendered violence. These incidents most frequently intensify during pre-election and post-election phases, when institutional oversight and preventive deployment are comparatively weaker.

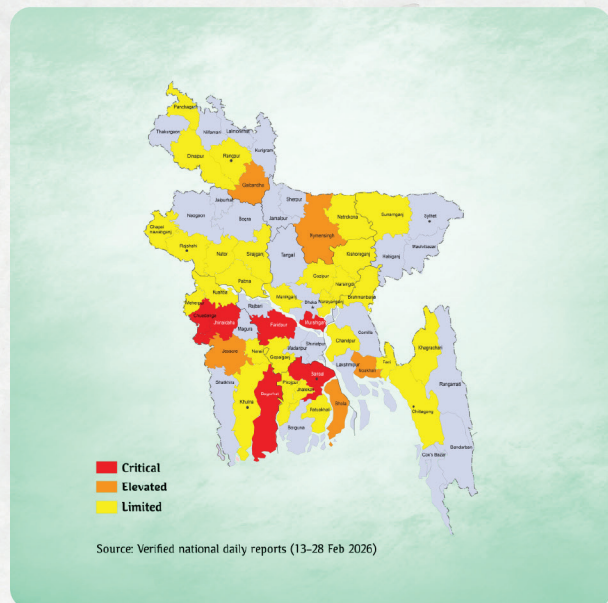


Image: Post Electoral Violence (Incidents) Map

Between 13–19 February 2026, SAPRAN recorded 62 election-related incidents nationwide, including clashes, arson, and vandalism. Violence was geographically concentrated in the southwestern belt (Khulna Division) and the central corridor around Dhaka. During this period, 5 deaths and more than 220 injuries were documented, with the most severe human impact observed in Bagerhat, Faridpur, Jhenaidah, Munshiganj, Noakhali, Gaibandha, and Mymensingh—indicating that while incidents were widespread, casualties were heavily concentrated in specific districts.

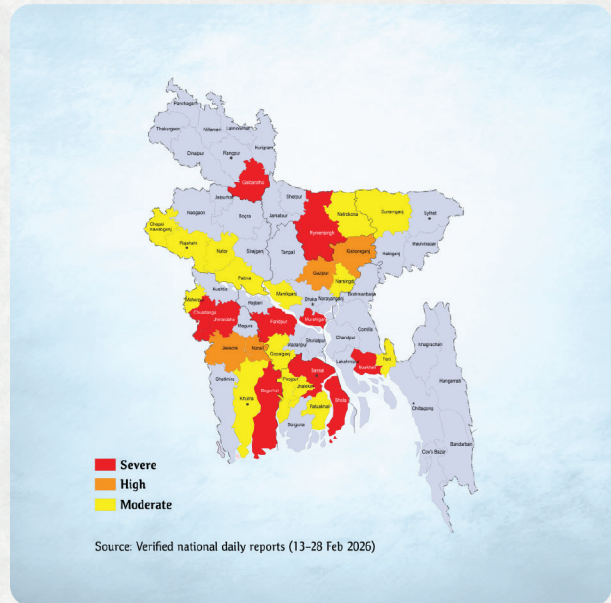


Image: Election Time Violence (Deaths and Injuries) Map

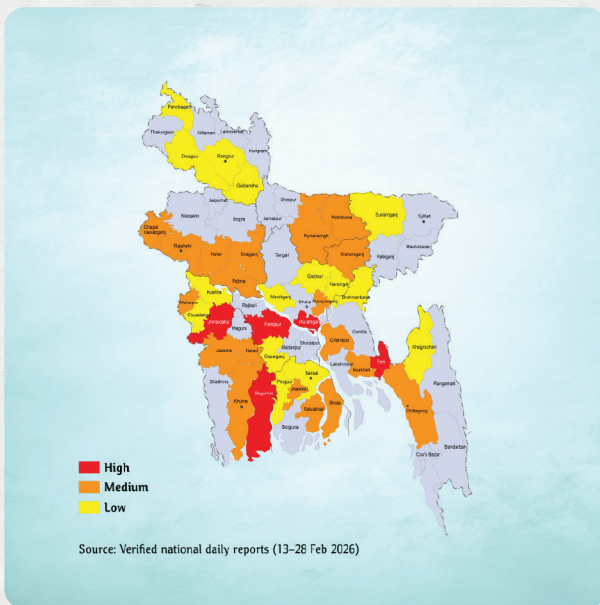


Image: Election Time Violence (Incidents and Arson/Vandalism) Map

A composite severity analysis—integrating incident frequency, fatalities, injuries, and property damage—identified Bagerhat, Jhenaidah, Munshiganj, and Faridpur as the most critical multidimensional hotspots. These findings reinforce a consistent pattern: election-time violence is geographically concentrated and structurally recurrent, underscoring the need for targeted protection, early warning mechanisms, and coordinated accountability beyond polling-day security measures.

Panel Discussion Named **Beyond The Barbed Wire**

Understanding Violence, Push-ins, and Accountability at the Bangladesh–India Border



Image: Minority Violence Map

On the occasion of Felani Day, 7 January, Sapran organized a panel discussion titled ***“Beyond the Barbed Wire: Understanding Violence, Push-ins, and Accountability at the Bangladesh–India Border.”*** The event explored how the Bangladesh–India border functions not merely as a security boundary, but as a lived social and political space where state policies directly shape mobility, livelihoods, and human rights.

Experts examined the realities of everyday life in border communities, the dynamics of informal border economies, and the persistent tension between security enforcement and human rights protections. The discussion highlighted patterns of border killings and forced push-ins as outcomes of long-standing structural impunity rather than isolated incidents. Speakers underscored the importance of sustained research, visual documentation, and cross-border civil society collaboration across South Asia to demand accountability and make border violence visible in the public sphere.



Image: Minority Violence Map

Participation in ODHIKAR's Press Briefing on 7 January, Martyr Felani Day

On 7 January 2026, SAPRAN's Research director Md. Zarif Rahman participate in a press briefing named ***"Bangladesh-India Blood-Stained Border - The killings, torture, enforced disappearances, and push-backs of Bangladeshi citizens, including Felani, by the Indian BSF must be investigated, and human***

rights violations must be stopped" where he stated that research should guide policymakers to formulate policies that improve the quality of life of people living near the border and ensure their safety. At the same time, he called on civil society across South Asia to unite and build a movement against such forms of domination and violence.

SAPRAN's research director participate in panel discussion at the Archive and Resist Conclave 2026



Image: Panelists

On 26 January 2026, SAPRAN's Research Director, MD. Zarif Rahman, participated as a panelist in the closing plenary of Day 1 of the Archive & Resist Conclave, hosted by Activate Rights at BRAC University, titled ***"When Journalism Becomes Documentation: Reporting as***

Historical Record." The session brought together journalists and human rights researchers to reflect on how reporting shapes collective memory, accountability, and historical records in an age of disinformation.

Activities

Mr. Rahman highlighted the importance of contextualized human rights documentation—capturing not only violations but also their social and economic impacts on victims, as well as examining state narratives, incentives, and strategies used to justify or normalize abuses. He discussed how media reports often serve as the starting point for documentation, while noting that journalism is not always value-neutral, particularly in cases involving human rights violations. The conversation raised critical questions about how cases are framed, who archives them, and how power dynamics influence what becomes part of the historical record.

The discussion underscored the need for rigorous research, responsible reporting, and stronger collaboration between media and human rights organizations to preserve credible historical records and strengthen accountability.



Image: Md. Zarif Rahman speaking

SAPRAN address a session in the Archive and Resist Conclave 2026 in BRAC University



Image: During the session

On 27 January 2026, SAPRAN participated in the Archive and Resist Conclave 2026 with a critical session addressing state-sanctioned violence. At the conclave, SAPRAN organized a session titled ***“Deadly in Disguise: The Hidden Lethality of Pellet Guns/Chhorra Guli”*** which examined the



harmful impacts and hidden lethality of pellet guns.

The session highlighted survivor testimonies and findings from SAPRAN’s research, challenging the state narrative that these weapons are ***“less lethal.”***

By centering victim perspectives, it underscored the severe and long-term consequences of pellet gun injuries, including permanent disability, blindness, organ damage, and death. Drawing on evidence from the July 2024 Uprising—during which pellet guns were reportedly used systematically to maim protesters and suppress dissent—the discussion questioned the legal, ethical, and political justification for their continued use and called for accountability.

The session was attended by Dr. Saira Rahman Khan (Professor, School of Law, BRAC University), Georgia Edwards (Program Coordinator,

WITNESS), Phurbu Dolma (Programme Officer, HURIDOCS), and Sadman Rizwan Apurbo (Lecturer, School of Law, BRAC University), alongside members of the SAPRAN team. On behalf of SAPRAN, Zeba Sajida Saraf presented key research findings and theoretical insights. By linking survivor testimonies with research and critical analysis, the session sought to dismantle the myth of “less lethal” weapons—not only pellet guns but other tools justified under similar frameworks—while centering survivors’ voices, amplifying their experiences, and strengthening networks of resistance.

Participation in the Archive and Resist Conclave 2026



Image: During the session

SAPRAN’s team members participated in the two-day **Archive & Resist Conclave 2026**, held on January 26–27 at BRAC University and organized by Activate Rights, Bangladesh Protest Archive, and WITNESS. The event brought together a diverse range of partners, including BJIM, HURIDOCS, SURGE Bangladesh, Omega

Research Foundation, and Collaborative Futures, with support from UNDP and the Archive & Resist Fund. The Conclave focused on advancing knowledge and skills for human rights documentation, ethical OSINT, and evidence-ready archiving in Bangladesh.

Activities

During the event, SAPRAN researchers engaged in multiple interactive workshops and discussions covering themes such as community-led human rights documentation, archiving and verification of protest-related materials, ethical OSINT and visual investigations, monitoring police use of force, and building database systems for sustained resistance. Notable sessions included “Level Up Your Archiving, Starting from the Basics”, “Tools and Skills to Build Visual Investigations Using OSINT”, **“July Persist: Community-Led Archiving & OSINT in Bangladesh”**, and **“Monitoring and Documenting Police Use of Force, Firearms,**

and ‘Less-Lethal’ Weapons in Protests”. These sessions emphasized ethical documentation practices, risk awareness, and practical strategies for ensuring evidence can support legal, advocacy, and journalistic work.

The Conclave underscored the critical role of archiving, visual documentation, and knowledge-sharing in promoting human rights, transitional justice, and accountability in Bangladesh, while providing SAPRAN with opportunities to strengthen collaborations with national and international partners in evidence-based advocacy.

Participation in Archiving and Documentation Workshop



Image: During the session

On 21–23 January 2026, Sapran’s researchers Opshora Islam Tondra and Durdana Chowdhury participated in the workshop **“VERIFY & RESIST: Building Capacity for Ethical OSINT and Evidence-Ready Documentation in Bangladesh,”** organized in collaboration with WITNESS, Activate Rights, and Airwars. The

workshop aimed to provide participants with a clear understanding of the legal and accountability framework for digital evidence in Bangladesh and equipped them with core OSINT and visual investigation techniques applicable to protest-related videos, images, and social media content.

They have also learned to document verification steps in a structured manner to support future legal, advocacy, and journalistic use, including recording essential metadata such as who captured the material, where and when it was recorded, how it was corroborated, and how it was stored and preserved. The program emphasized recognizing risks of erasure, misrepresentation, or mishandling of

documentation, while promoting ethical and protective practices, including Do No Harm, informed consent, and security-conscious approaches. Overall, the workshop focused on strengthening documentation skills, preserving records, and enhancing knowledge-sharing practices among researchers and rights-based organizations.

SAPRAN Researcher Participates in High-Level Discussion at British High Commission on FoRB and Pre-Election Religious Tolerance



Image: During the session

On February 1, SAPRAN researcher, Opshora Islam Tondra, attended a discussion meeting at the British High Commission focusing on the broader context of Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) and the overall state of religious tolerance during Bangladesh's pre-election period.

Representing SAPRAN, the researcher emphasized the importance of identifying geographical

hotspots of risk, drawing on research into patterns of violence against minority communities across multiple election cycles over the past decades. The discussion also highlighted the recurring dynamics of pre- and post-election violence, the role of institutional fragility in enabling repeated violations, and the emerging trends shaping the current pre-election landscape.

Sapran's Recent Publications

Election Time Violence Against Minority Communities (2001-2004)

A structural Review and Analysis of
current Risks

Published: January 2026

Mapping Electoral Violence in Bangladesh

Evidence from Polling Day and its
Aftermath, 2026

Published: February 2026



Sapran's Current Projects

From Weapons to Wounds
Understanding the Impact of Torture Methods on Victims in Bangladesh
(Supported by Omega Research Foundation)

Documentation and Archiving of Electoral Violence

Documentation and Archiving of Border Violence

Environmental Issues Monitoring

Opinion Pieces from *Sapran*

COUNTERPOINT

Why Minority Safety is Essential for Fair Elections and Democratic Bangladesh

Publication Date: 6 January 2026

Author: Md. Zarif Rahman, Opshora Islam Tondra

The Daily Star

**From fear to trust:
Why policing must change now**

Publication Date: 25 January 2026

Author: ASM Nasiruddin Elan, Md. Zarif Rahman

কালের কণ্ঠ

Why Human Rights Must Become a Key Political Agenda

Publication Date: 28 January 2026

Author: Md. Zarif Rahman, Opshora Islam Tondra

**the
deltagram**

**From Memory to Resistance,
Toward Healing: Remembering as an Act of Defiance**

Publication Date: 6 February 2026

Author: Nusrat Jahan Nisu

NEWAGE

**How fear was engineered by
kneecapping dissent**

Publication Date: 25 February 2026

Author: Nusrat Jahan Nisu, Md. Zarif Rahman

LIVES

Published by
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