

# BANGLADESH

## OVERVIEW OF RESTRICTIONS TO CIVIC FREEDOMS



*(Photo Credit: Reuters/ Mohammad Ponir Hossain)*



## INTRODUCTION

In early July 2024, [mass protests erupted](#) in universities across Bangladesh, in response to the [reinstatement by the courts](#) of a 30 percent quota in government jobs reserved for the children and grandchildren of those who fought in Bangladesh's independence war in 1971. Although [Bangladesh's Supreme Court](#) scaled back the controversial job quota system, mass protests persisted and spilled onto the streets. In response, then Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's regime, which had been in power for 15 years, launched a [brutal crackdown](#). Hundreds were killed and thousands injured by security forces and the student wing affiliated with the then ruling Awami League party. Police subjected those arrested to ill-treatment and torture while in custody.

Unable to quell the protests, on 5 August 2024, Hasina [resigned](#) and fled to India. Three days later, Nobel Laureate Muhammad Yunus was picked to lead an [interim government](#) as Chief Advisor. He formed an [interim cabinet](#) that included student protest leaders and other civil society members. In his 25 August 2024 speech, Yunus outlined an [ambitious vision](#) for a 'new Bangladesh' centred on unity, transparency and democratic renewal.

As part of the transition, the interim government [replaced officials](#) who had allegedly engaged in political partisanship. In September 2024, Yunus announced the formation of [six commissions](#) aimed at addressing fundamental issues: anti-corruption, constitutional reform, the electoral system, judiciary, police and public administration. Five other commissions on health reform, labour reform, local government reform, media reform and women's affairs were [formed later](#). He also [invited the United Nations \(UN\)](#) to conduct an impartial and independent fact-finding mission into human rights violations committed during the protests.

One year on from the protests and fall of the regime, the interim government has introduced measures to end the persecution of human rights defenders, taken steps to ensure justice and accountability for the serious human rights violations that occurred during the mass protests and made efforts to address enforced disappearances. Despite this, [concerns remain](#) about the impacts of some legal reforms on civic space, the lack of protection for journalists and the targeting of the opposition.

In December 2024, Yunus announced that a [general election](#) will be held in late 2025 or early 2026. In January 2025, Professor Ali Riaz, who served as head of the Constitution Reform Commission in Bangladesh, [submitted the commission's report](#) to the interim government. The Commission recommended [sweeping constitutional changes](#), including that Bangladesh introduce a bicameral parliament, two-term limits for the president and prime minister and interim governments to conduct elections.

Bangladesh is a state party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which it ratified in 2000. The ICCPR imposes obligations to respect and protect civic freedoms, including freedoms of association, expression and peaceful assembly. These rights are also enshrined in Bangladesh's [constitution](#).

This brief assesses actions undertaken by the interim government over the past year, highlights issues of concern and makes a series of recommendations.

## ABOUT THE CIVICUS MONITOR

The [CIVICUS Monitor](#), an online platform that tracks threats to civil society in countries across the globe, rates civic space – the space for civil society – in Bangladesh as “**Repressed**”.

The data provides the basis for civic space ratings, which are based on up-to-date information and indicators on the state of freedom of association, peaceful assembly and expression. Countries can be rated as:

CLOSED

REPRESSED

OBSTRUCTED

NARROWED

OPEN



## PROTECTION OF CIVIL SOCIETY, HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS AND CRITICS

Under the previous government, the [CIVICUS Monitor documented](#) the systematic targeting of activists, critics of the government and human rights defenders. Restrictive laws, including the digital security law and blasphemy and defamation provisions in the Penal Code, were weaponised to criminalise human rights defenders and some faced ill-treatment and torture while others suffered enforced disappearances. The regime also targeted the families of activists in exile.



Activists Adilur Rahman Khan and ASM Nasiruddin Elan  
(Photo Credit: New Age BD)

Under the interim government, most activists have [reported](#) being able to operate without fear of surveillance or state reprisal. In August 2024, the High Court scrapped a verdict of the Dhaka Cyber Tribunal that jailed ASM Nasiruddin Elan and Adilur Rahman Khan, a human rights defender and former secretary of human rights organisation Odhikar, for two years, in a case related to alleged violation of the now-defunct Information and Communication Technology Act 2006. They had been charged following the 2013 publication of an Odhikar fact-finding report documenting extrajudicial killings during a protest.

Michael Chakma, an Indigenous rights activist who [disappeared](#) in April 2019 after being snatched off the street, was released in August 2025. He said he endured mental and physical torture during his captivity in a clandestine prison allegedly operated by the military intelligence directorate (DGFI). He said he was repeatedly interrogated about his criticisms of the Awami League.

Activists detained during the protests and other political prisoners, including some who were detained secretly, were also [released](#). They include student leader and protester Iftekhar Alam, who was sent to a notorious detention centre at DGFI headquarters in the capital, Dhaka.

Despite this, there are still reports of activists facing arrest, harassment and intimidation. According to Human Rights Watch, on 30 September 2025, army officers [raided the home](#) of Sanjida Islam, the leader of Maayer Daak (Mothers' Call), an organisation representing victims of enforced disappearances and their families. The officers took away her older brother, Saiful Islam Shamol, at gunpoint and without an arrest warrant, and held him for interrogation for over two hours at a nearby army camp.



Sanjida Islam at the Maayer Daak office (Photo Credit: CBC)

On 13 February 2025, writer Sohel Hasan Galib was [arrested](#) for allegedly 'hurting religious sentiments through his social media posts and poetry'. Authorities specifically cited a poem they deemed derogatory toward the Prophet Mohammad as evidence against him. Sent to jail on 15 February, Galib was later placed on a two-day remand.



[According to Front Line Defenders](#), Ringrong Mro was arbitrarily detained in Bandarban District Jail following his arrest on 22 February 2025, on the basis of a case filed by Lama Rubber Industries Limited in 2022, which local activists and Indigenous rights defenders say is a strategy to criminalise work to defend ancestral land. Ringrong Mro is a prominent human rights defender and Indigenous leader from the Mro community in Lama Upazila, Bandarban.

Human Rights Watch reported that on 3 March 2025, the Dhaka Cyber Tribunal ordered the Criminal Investigation Department to [investigate a case](#) brought by a citizen against Rakhal Raha, a human rights defender and member of the Textbook Revision Committee, for allegedly hurting religious sentiment in a Facebook post where he wrote a satirical poem.

There have been no reports of reforms to the NGO Affairs Bureau, which has been used in the past to monitor and harass critical civil society organisations (CSOs), or to the Foreign Donations (Voluntary Activities) Regulation Act 2016, used to [control CSOs](#) and restrict international funding.

## ACCOUNTABILITY FOR VIOLATIONS AGAINST PROTESTERS

In February 2025, a [report by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights \(OHCHR\)](#) found that Bangladesh's former government and security and intelligence services, alongside violent elements associated with the Awami League, systematically engaged in a range of [serious human rights violations](#) during the 2024 protests.

It also found there was an official policy to attack and violently repress anti-government protesters and sympathisers, raising concerns about potential crimes against humanity requiring urgent further criminal investigation.



Press conference by OHCHR 13 February 2025  
(Photo Credit: UN Web TV)

The report estimates that as many as 1,400 people may have been killed between 15 July and 5 August 2024 and thousands injured, the vast majority of whom were shot by security forces. The report indicates that as many as 12 to 13 per cent of those killed were children.

The UN also found patterns of security forces deliberately and impermissibly killing or maiming protesters, including incidents where people were shot at point-blank range. The report also documents cases in which security forces denied or obstructed critical medical care for injured protesters, interrogated patients and collected their fingerprints in hospitals, intimidated medical

personnel and seized hospital CCTV footage without due process, in an apparent effort to identify protesters and conceal evidence of the extent of violence by state forces.

[Human rights groups](#) have urged the interim government to take seriously the UN recommendation to consider referring the matter to the International Criminal Court. They also urge the government to implement other immediate and longer-term recommendations in the report, including guarantees of fair trial and due process in ongoing investigations, justice and security sector reform and repeal of draconian laws that restrict civic space.

In October 2024, the Bangladesh International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) [issued arrest warrants](#) for Hasina and 44 other people, including senior members of her cabinet. Mohammad Tajul Islam, the tribunal's chief prosecutor, said that Hasina presided over 'massacres, killings and crimes against humanity' during the 2024 protests.



However, there have been concerns that the tribunal, which was established under Hasina's government in 2010 to address crimes against humanity committed during the 1971 independence war, has been [fraught with violations of fair trial standards](#). The interim government has issued important amendments to the International Crimes (Tribunal) Act, the law that established the tribunal, including provisions for transparency by allowing the presence of international observers and broadcasting of trial proceedings. Amendments also included important requirements for victims and witness protection. Nevertheless, according to the [OHCHR](#) and human rights groups, additional amendments are necessary to ensure that trials are fair and carried out in accordance with international standards and the rights enshrined in the constitution. The amended law also retains the death penalty.

On 2 July 2025, the ICT [sentenced](#) Hasina in absentia to six months in prison for contempt of court. The contempt charges stem from an audio recording in which Hasina was allegedly heard saying, 'There are 227 cases against me, so I now have a licence to kill 227 people'. A government forensic report confirmed the tape's authenticity.

On 10 July 2025, the ICT [indicted](#) Hasina and two senior officials – former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal and former police chief Chowdhury Abdullah al-Mamun – over alleged crimes against humanity linked to the deadly crackdown on 2024 protests.

## **SLOW PACE OF POLICE REFORM**

The interim government established a [Police Reform Commission](#) that has presented 108 recommendations to transform the police into an accountable, impartial and transparent institution. Key proposals made in January 2025 include revising outdated laws such as the colonial-era 1861 Police Act and the 1898 Criminal Procedure Code, creating an independent commission to oversee the police and enhancing police training and human rights practices. The Police Reform Commission also [recommended](#) reassessment of the necessity of the notorious Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) by reviewing its past activities and allegations of human rights violations. The RAB has a [track record](#) of committing extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances and torture with impunity.



*Security forces during the anti-quota protests in Dhaka July 2024. (Photo Credit: REUTERS/Mohammad Ponir Hossain )*

However, there has been [pushback](#) from the Home Ministry on proposals to reform laws and establish an independent police body. Further, the National Consensus Commission, which was tasked with reviewing and implementing various reform proposals, notably [excluded](#) the recommendations of the Police Reform Commission from its structured framework.

The lack of reforms has led to continuous instances of police violence. In July 2024, at least four people were killed, allegedly from bullet wounds, and around 50 injured in the southern town of [Gopalganj](#), when Awami League members tried to disrupt a rally by the National Citizens Party, a new political party.

Further, it is believed that the lack of the rule of law and distrust of public institutions has led to the intensification of [mob violence](#) against women, minorities, houses of worship and the media. Attacks have become [disturbingly routine](#), sometimes taking place even in the presence of the police. Human rights groups say the state's failure to act swiftly and decisively has to some extent emboldened mobs and contributed to a climate where vigilante justice is becoming commonplace. [According to Ain o Salish Kendra](#), a human rights group, at least 179 people were killed in mob attacks between August 2024 and 23 June 2025.



## INVESTIGATIONS INTO ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES

Following the fall of the regime in August 2024, Bangladesh [signed](#) the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances on 29 August 2024 and announced the formation of a [Commission of Inquiry](#) on all cases of enforced disappearances under Hasina.

According to Bangladeshi human rights monitors, [security forces](#) had carried out over 600 enforced disappearances since 2009, when Hasina first took office. While some people were later released, produced in court, or said to have died during armed exchanges with security forces, around 100 people remain missing.

In October 2024, it was [reported](#) that the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances had received around 400 complaints of enforced disappearances from the victims and their families. The commission chief, Justice Moyeenul Islam Chowdhury, said that the incidents of these enforced disappearances occurred during Awami League rule between 6 January 2009 and 5 August 2024.



*Ayna Ghar aka Mirror House prison in Dhaka where individuals were secretly imprisoned (Photo Credit: Netra News)*

Moyeenul said that most of the victims of enforced disappearances accused the police's Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime Unit, Dhaka Metropolitan Police's detective branch, DGFI and RAB for their enforced disappearances.

In December 2024, the Commission of Inquiry stated in a provisional [report](#) that it has found evidence of Hasina's [direct involvement](#) in alleged incidents of enforced disappearance. In January 2025, it reported that [several children](#) were among hundreds of people held in secret detention centres. The commission recommended disbanding the RAB, a recommendation that has been ignored.

In May 2025, civil society groups [raised concerns](#) about Bangladesh's draft Enforced Disappearance Prevention and Redress Ordinance 2025. While welcoming the law, the groups expressed concern that the current draft contains provisions that fail to adhere to international standards. They were also alarmed by reports that the draft ordinance was progressing without adequate public consultations.

On 26 June 2025, experts from the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, who met the relatives of victims who are still missing, issued [technical advice](#). In all its meetings, the Working Group heard that victims are deeply afraid to report cases of enforced disappearances or present themselves before the relevant authorities to provide their testimony. This fear is rooted in several factors, but most notably in the fact that many of the alleged perpetrators of enforced disappearances remain employed in the army and police.

Victims stated that it is impossible for them to testify in buildings where the perpetrators may still be present. This concern was also acknowledged by some of the government institutions the Working Group met with. There is also a lack of effective protection mechanisms for victims and witnesses who come forward to testify. Further, there appears to be a lack of acknowledgement of the police's responsibility in implementing protection and prevention measures.



## CYBERCRIME ACT REFORMS FALL SHORT OF INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS

Prior to 2018, the Hasina regime used the [Information and Communication Technology \(ICT\) Act 2006](#) to [target](#) activists, human rights defenders and journalists and restrict freedom of expression, with section 57 of the law most frequently used. The section authorised the prosecution of any person who publishes, in electronic form, material that is defamatory, fake or obscene, prejudices the image of the state or a person, 'tends to deprave and corrupt' its audience, or causes or may cause 'deterioration in law and order' or 'hurt to religious belief'.

In September 2018, the Digital Security Act replaced the ICT Act. The new law incorporated section 57 of the ICT Act and contained other measures that were overly broad and vague and that imposed disproportionate sentences and lengthy prison terms on offenders. The Cyber Security Act passed in September 2023 [retained](#) most of the Digital Security Act's repressive language.

On 7 November 2024, the interim government announced it would [repeal the Cyber Security Act](#). To replace the law, it drafted a Cyber Protection Ordinance (CPO) that has removed some of the act's restrictive provisions. However, according to ARTICLE 19, the interim government failed to hold meaningful consultations with relevant stakeholders. The interim government's advisory council approved the CPO on 24 December 2024 and it [came into effect](#) on 21 May 2025.



Judge gavel on laptop keyboard (Photo Credit: Wikipedia)

Civil society groups and human rights defenders have raised concerns that some of the repressive provisions of the previous acts have been retained and these could be used to stifle online expression, making them inconsistent with Bangladesh's international human rights obligations under the ICCPR.

Section 25 of the CPO contains provisions that make it an offence to 'transmit, publish or disseminate any information through digital media with intent to insult, harass or defame' a person. These are vague and overly broad terms that pose a threat to freedom of expression and could deter legitimate comments or criticism of individuals, particularly those in power.

There are also concerns about CPO section 26, which allows the prosecution and jailing of people who 'hurt religious sentiments'. This is an impermissible restriction, as under relevant international standards the right to religion or belief does not include the right to be free from criticism and ridicule.

CPO section 8 empowers the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission to remove or block online content that may undermine defence, economic activity, national unity, public order, religious values, or security at the request of law enforcement agencies and the director-general of the National Cyber Security Agency. There are concerns about the vague and undefined reasons that could be used to remove or block content and excessive powers provided to the commission without any judicial oversight.

CPO section 35 permits searches without warrants, seizures and arrests, requiring reports to be submitted to a tribunal, but without a defined timeline. This absence of a reporting deadline increases the risk of harassment and abuse by authorities. CPO section 46 refers to offences classified as 'bailable' and 'non-bailable'. For non-bailable offences there is no recourse for defendants awaiting trial.

There are also concerns that past cases of individuals charged under section 57 of the ICT Act and Digital Security Act for their online expression remain [ongoing](#), despite the repeal of these laws.



## JOURNALISTS REMAIN AT RISK

Bangladesh's ranking on the 2025 Reporters Without Borders press freedom index, published in May 2025, [improved](#) from 165th place to 149th out of 180 countries. According to Reporters Without Borders, under Hasina's government there were assaults by ruling party militias, censorship, cyber harassment, judicial harassment, police violence and pressure from military intelligence services. Given these conditions, newsrooms carefully avoided challenging the government and practised self-censorship.

Following the fall of the regime, there was hope among media outlets and journalists for increased press freedom. On 14 August 2024, the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court in Dhaka [ordered the acquittal](#) of journalist and women's human rights defender Rozina Islam, who had been charged in 2021 under the Official Secrets Act. In November 2025, the government established a media reform commission.



Attack on Prothom Alo media outlet office in Rajshahi in November 2024 (Photo Credit: New Age BD)

However, Human Rights Watch has reported there has been a crackdown on alleged pro-Awami League media and police have [pursued criminal charges](#) against journalists for their perceived support for the Hasina regime in their reporting during the mass protests. [According to a report](#) by journalists and activists in July 2025, at least 412 journalists have been implicated in various cases, including murder charges. Thirty-nine journalists have been arrested and travel restrictions have been imposed on over 300. Authorities have frozen bank accounts of over 100 journalists.

In November 2024, it was [reported](#) that the interim government had cancelled press accreditations for 167 journalists. No reason was given in the notices by the interim government other than that the decision was made under the provisions of a 2022 Press Accreditation Policy. The [Editors' Council said](#) the cancellation of accreditation risks 'fostering a climate of exerting control, including censorship, over the media' while [Reporters Without Borders said](#) the decision 'encourages self-censorship' and was 'incomprehensible'.

In the same month, protesters [attacked the headquarters](#) of the Daily Star and Prothom Alo in Dhaka and several of their regional offices, notably in the city of Rajshahi, where 200 people tried to enter Prothom Alo's office and vandalised its signboard. According to Reporters Without Borders, the aim of these violent demonstrations, orchestrated by radicalised anti-India religious groups, was to denounce these newspapers as 'agents of India'.

February 2025 saw a [spate of violent attacks](#) on journalists. On 5 February 2025, three journalists were attacked on the premises of the Supreme Court, reportedly by members of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). The journalists were covering the acquittal of 46 people found guilty in 2019 in a case related to a 1994 attack on a train carrying Hasina. On 9 February 2025, police baton charged, kicked and punched five journalists while covering a protest in Dhaka. On 25 February 2025, a journalist was reported to have been assaulted in Thakurgaon after publishing an article claiming a BNP politician was implicated in extortion.

In March 2025, the Media Reform Commission [delivered](#) its report to the interim government. That report set out to address long-standing threats to media freedom.



Recommendations included the establishment of an independent oversight body, the National Press Commission, be set up to handle complaints from journalists and members of the public against media outlets or any state or non-state actors. It also called for laws – such as criminal defamation laws, the Cyber Security Act and the Official Secrets Act 1923 – to be repealed or amended to bring them into line with international standards. It recommended a Journalists' Protection Law to allow journalists to use a public-interest defence in court, overriding legal objections from state and non-state actors in cases where they can prove they acted in the public interest.

## TARGETING OF THE OPPOSITION

According to a January 2025 [Human Rights Watch](#) report, police have returned to the abusive practices that characterised the previous government, this time targeting Awami League supporters and perceived supporters. For instance, in the first two months since the interim government took office, police field over 1,000 cases against tens of thousands of people, mainly Awami League members, accusing them of murder, corruption and other crimes. Over 400 Awami League ministers and leaders are facing investigations. In some of these cases, complainants were not even aware of who was being named as accused.

In February 2025, the government [launched](#) Operation Devil Hunt, a sweeping crackdown against what officials have referred to as 'evil forces' who 'destabilize the country'. As of 27 February 2025, more than 11,000 had been arrested and detained, many affiliated with the Awami League. [According to Fortify Rights](#), the lack of due process risks turning the operation into yet another politically motivated purge rather than a legitimate effort to uphold justice.



Awami League office (Photo Credit: WikiData)

There are concerns that in some [cases](#), the police have used the 1974 Special Power Act to target the opposition. The law overrides safeguards against arbitrary detention and allows the government to detain anyone without having to justify the detention before a court and keep the detainee in prison for an initial four-month period or, in some cases, indefinitely, without charge.

In May 2025, the interim government [banned all Awami League activities](#) under the Anti-Terrorism Act on what it said was a temporary basis. The [ban](#) includes, among other actions, meetings, publications and online speech supporting the party. The ban will remain in place until

the trial of the party leadership over the deaths of hundreds of protesters under the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act is completed. After the suspension was announced, the Election Commission stripped the Awami League of its registration.

While those accused of committing crimes under Hasina's government should be appropriately prosecuted, [human rights groups](#) believe imposing a ban on any speech or activity deemed supportive of a political party is an excessive restriction on fundamental freedoms that mirrors the previous government's abusive clampdown on political opponents.

The authorities have also targeted the leaders of the Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal party and the Workers Party of Bangladesh, [prominent left parties](#) that were both part of the Awami League coalition. Both parties have complained that the arrest of their leaders and the charges brought against them are the result of a political vendetta.



## NEED TO STRENGTHEN THE NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS BODY

The Bangladesh National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) was established in 2009 but has failed to address human rights violations. Although legally defined as an independent body, the NHRC suffers from [serious institutional limitations](#). Its appointment process is heavily influenced by government representatives. Section 12 of the National Human Rights Commission Act, 2009 that established it deprives it of any binding enforcement authority; it can only make non-mandatory recommendations to the government. The government is not legally bound to comply with these recommendations and has discretion to ignore them.



*Roundtable on reforming the national human rights body, November 2024 (Photo Credit: The Daily Star)*

Section 18 of the act curtails the NHRC's ability to independently investigate abuses by law enforcement agencies, restricting it to merely requesting government reports, often from the agencies accused of violations. Section 17(3)(b) prohibits the NHRC from intervening in any matter already before the courts, which severely restricts its scope in addressing issues such as arbitrary detention and unfair trials.

The NHRC currently stands vacant, following the mass resignation of its commissioners in November 2024. Human rights groups have called for [amendments](#) to be made to its founding legislation to bring it in line with international standards on human rights institutions, as set out in the [Paris Principles](#) on national human rights institutions.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

The interim government of Bangladesh should:

### PROTECT CIVIL SOCIETY AND HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

- Remove legal and policy measures that unwarrantedly limit freedom of association and amend the Foreign Donations (Voluntary Activities) Regulation Act 2016 and laws and regulations on the operations of civil society groups to remove undue restrictions on freedom of association.
- Provide civil society members and human rights defenders with a safe and secure environment in which to carry out their work, conduct impartial, thorough and effective investigations into all cases of killings, enforced disappearances, attacks, harassment and intimidation against them and bring the perpetrators of offences to justice.
- Ensure human rights defenders are able to carry out their legitimate activities without fear or undue hindrance, obstruction, or legal and harassment of themselves or their families.
- Systematically apply legal provisions that promote and protect human rights and establish mechanisms that protect human rights defenders, including by adopting a specific law on the protection of human rights defenders in accordance with Human Rights Council resolution 27.31.

### UNDERTAKE REFORMS OF LAWS, INVESTIGATIONS AND ESTABLISH INSTITUTIONS TO ENSURE ACCOUNTABILITY

- Ensure the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act is further amended in line with international standards to guarantee fair trials for all alleged perpetrators.
- Ensure impartial investigations into all instances of extrajudicial killing and excessive force committed by security forces in the context of protests and bring the perpetrators to justice in trials that meet international fair trial standards.
- Review outdated laws such as the 1861 Police Act and the 1898 Criminal Procedure Code, disband the RAB, as recommended by the OHCHR's report and Bangladesh's Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances, and establish an independent police accountability body, as recommended by the Police Reform Commission.
- Ensure adequate support to the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances and effective protection mechanisms for victims and witnesses who come forward to testify and ensure the draft Enforced Disappearance Prevention and Redress Ordinance 2025 is consistent with international law and standards.
- Review the Cyber Protection Ordinance, criminal defamation provisions under the Penal Code and other laws and provisions that criminalise freedom of expression in order to bring them into line with ICCPR article 19 and other international law and standards on freedom of expression.
- Suspend the use of the 1974 Special Powers Act and take steps towards its repeal.
- Undertake reforms of the law related to the NHRC to make it consistent with international standards, as set out in the Paris Principles.

### HALT HARASSMENT OF JOURNALISTS AND THE OPPOSITION

- Ensure journalists may work freely and without fear of retribution for expressing critical opinions or covering topics the government may deem sensitive and unequivocally condemn and promptly investigate attacks against journalists and other media workers.
- Implement recommendations made by the Media Reform Commission on an independent oversight body and a law to protect journalists.
- Halt all forms of intimidation, harassment, or unjustified restrictions against the opposition in the lead up to the next general election.