

3 journalists killed, 150 injured in 6 days in Bangladesh

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The rising casualties of journalists while covering the ongoing government crackdown on the students' protest demanding quota reform in the civil service exposed the dangerous environment in which journalists work in Bangladesh.

Journalists' leaders came up with the observation after three of their colleagues got killed and about 150 others injured in the six days until Saturday since the ongoing movement turned violent.

'There is a clear motive behind the attacks on journalists – creating a fear of atmosphere,' said Dip Azad, Secretary General, BFUJ.

He argued that such a long list of casualties could not be an isolated incident but rather expressed the antagonism toward the profession of journalists.

The BFUJ confirmed that 150 journalists were injured so far, mostly in attacks by law enforcers and miscreants sabotaging the ongoing student movement.

He thanked students for showing utmost tolerance, for they never attacked a journalist.

A former videographer of the online news portal, The Report 24 dotcom, Tahir Zaman Priyo, 24, was shot dead on Friday afternoon. He resigned from his previous workplace six months ago.

The Report's human resource manager, Ms. Susmita Chakma, confirmed the death.

On July 19, journalist Mehedi Hasan of the online news portal Dhaka Times was shot dead in Dhaka's Jatrabari area while covering the protest.

On July 20, Md Torab Hossain, photojournalist of the local daily 'Jalalabad', died at Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital while undergoing treatment at the hospital after sustaining a bullet injury during a clash between police and BNP people in Sylhet city.

Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU) President Syed Shukur Ali Shuvo confirmed two attacks on journalists at Jatrabari on Saturday in which at least one vehicle was set on fire.

There are incidents in which journalists were singled out and attacked, with the attackers announcing that they do not want to miss the pleasure of beating up some journalists.

In some cases, journalists preferred hiding their identity as much as possible to avoid unwanted circumstances.

'We are concerned by realising how unsafe it is to become a journalist in this country,' said Shuvo.

Law Reporters' Forum, in a statement issued by its president Ashraf-ul-Alam and general secretary Moneruzzaman Mission on Saturday, condemned the killings of on-duty journalists and the attack on them and demanded exemplary punishment of those involved in the crimes.

On July 17, the Editors' Council expressed its concern and condemnation over journalists becoming targets of attack in the ongoing fierce movement that saw the death toll exceed 120 on Saturday.

Many of the injured journalists were receiving treatment at different hospitals.

Journalists also found themselves at the centre of verbal abuse as well.

The Editor's Council issued a statement saying that attacking news professionals while they were carrying out their duties was worrying and condemnable.

Journalists' leaders urged all parties and law enforcers to ensure the safety of on-duty journalists.

They explained that journalists gather information as part of their duty to reveal the news before people.

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