



AI Index: ASA 13/7829/2024
25 March 2024

-Check against delivery-

ORAL STATEMENT
Item 6
Consideration of UPR reports: Bangladesh

UN Human Rights Council
55th session
26 February – 5 April

Mr. President,

Amnesty International welcomes the government's commitment to investigate and prosecute human rights violations by its security forces¹ and to uphold the principle of non-refoulement for Rohingya refugees².

Just ahead of its last review, Bangladesh replaced the controversial Digital Security Act 2018 (DSA) with the Cyber Security Act (CSA). The government has argued that the CSA 'addressed the apprehensions many had about its predecessor'.³ However, the CSA is largely a replication of the DSA with minor cosmetic changes, primarily related to sentencing and bail.⁴ It retains all but two of the offences from the DSA verbatim.⁵ Therefore, Amnesty International is disappointed that the government failed to accept any of the 11 recommendations specifically calling for the repeal or amendment of the CSA, in compliance with international human rights law.⁶ This failure severely undermines its pledges to respect, protect, promote and fulfil the human rights of everyone including critics, journalists and activists, and to end the intimidation, harassment, arbitrary arrest and detention of dissenting voices.⁷

Regrettably, the government has not accepted recommendations to abolish the death penalty,⁸ nor to

¹ Human Rights Council, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Bangladesh, UN Doc. A/HRC/55/13, 2 January 2024, Recommendation 144.75 (United States of America).

² Human Rights Council, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Bangladesh, UN Doc. A/HRC/55/13, 2 January 2024, Recommendation 144.298 (Switzerland).

³ Human Rights Council, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Bangladesh (Addendum: Views on conclusions and/or recommendations, voluntary commitments and replies presented by the State under review), 22 February 2024 (Advance Version).

⁴ Amnesty International, Bangladesh: Open letter to the government: Feedback on proposed "Cyber Security Act", Bangladesh: Open letter to the government: Feedback on proposed "Cyber Security Act", ASA 13/7125/2023, 22 August 2023, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa13/7125/2023/en/>

⁵ Chapter 6 (Offences), Digital Security Act 2018, read with Chapter 6 (Offences), Cyber Security Act 2023.

⁶ Human Rights Council, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Bangladesh, UN Doc. A/HRC/55/13, 2 January 2024, Recommendations 144.91 (Republic of Korea); 144.94 (Kingdom of Netherlands); 144.96 (Switzerland); 144.97 (Norway); 144.98 (Belgium); 144.99 (Germany); 144.100 (Denmark); 144.101 (Canada); 144.103 (Spain); 144.104 (Ireland) 144.105 (Australia).

⁷ Human Rights Council, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Bangladesh, UN Doc. A/HRC/55/13, 2 January 2024, Recommendations 144.67 (Slovakia) and 144.68 (Liechtenstein).

⁸ Human Rights Council, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Bangladesh, UN Doc. A/HRC/55/13, 2 January 2024, Recommendations 144.56-65.

ratify the Convention on Enforced Disappearances⁹ and the Refugee Convention.¹⁰ We are also concerned by the government's continued refusal to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture which would allow victims to file complaints directly to the UN Committee against Torture,¹¹ citing inadequate institutional capacity of national agencies.¹² It is precisely due to such capacity gaps in the national sphere that torture victims would benefit from having access to an international complaints mechanism.

Mr. President,

We welcome the government's commitment to remove obstacles to workers' unionisation.¹³ However, we are dismayed by its failure to accept recommendations on ensuring a minimum wage which guarantees a decent living wage for workers¹⁴ and preventing occupational accidents through more intensive labour inspections.¹⁵ The government has similarly refused recommendations on reducing the worst forms of child labour¹⁶ and removing legal inconsistencies which provide scope for employing children as labourers.¹⁷ We urge the government to reconsider its position on these fundamental components of labour rights.

Finally, we encourage Bangladesh to promptly and fully implement supported recommendations and urge the government to submit a mid-term report on progress towards implementation of supported recommendations and to use an Item 6 General Debate to bring this to the attention of UN Member States.

Thank you.

⁹ Human Rights Council, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Bangladesh, UN Doc. A/HRC/55/13, 2 January 2024, Recommendations 144.11-12, 144.14 and 144.56-65.

¹⁰ Human Rights Council, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Bangladesh, UN Doc. A/HRC/55/13, 2 January 2024, Recommendations 144.4 (Paraguay), 144.17 (Niger) and 144.18 (Luxembourg).

¹¹ Human Rights Council, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Bangladesh, UN Doc. A/HRC/55/13, 2 January 2024, Recommendations 144.6-10, 144.13.

¹² Human Rights Council, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Bangladesh (Addendum: Views on conclusions and/or recommendations, voluntary commitments and replies presented by the State under review), 22 February 2024 (Advance Version).

¹³ Human Rights Council, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Bangladesh, UN Doc. A/HRC/55/13, 2 January 2024, Recommendation 144.126 (Norway).

¹⁴ Human Rights Council, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Bangladesh, UN Doc. A/HRC/55/13, 2 January 2024, Recommendation 144.127 (Poland).

¹⁵ Human Rights Council, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Bangladesh, UN Doc. A/HRC/55/13, 2 January 2024, Recommendation 144.128 (Portugal).

¹⁶ Human Rights Council, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Bangladesh, UN Doc. A/HRC/55/13, 2 January 2024, Recommendation 144.242 (Peru).

¹⁷ Human Rights Council, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Bangladesh, UN Doc. A/HRC/55/13, 2 January 2024, Recommendation 144.245 (Uruguay).