

MONTHLY *REPORT*



October, 2024

***FIGHT FOR
RIGHTS***

BANGLAR MANABADHIKAR SURAKHSA MANCHA
(MASUM)

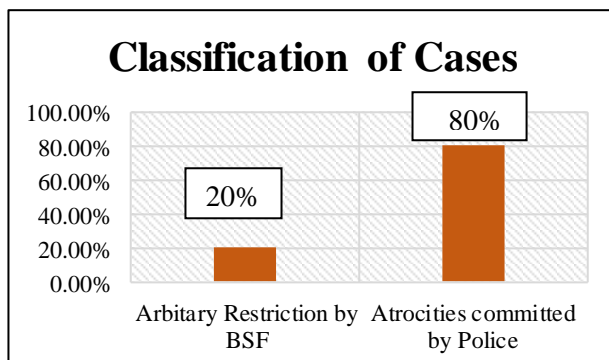
www.masum.org.in



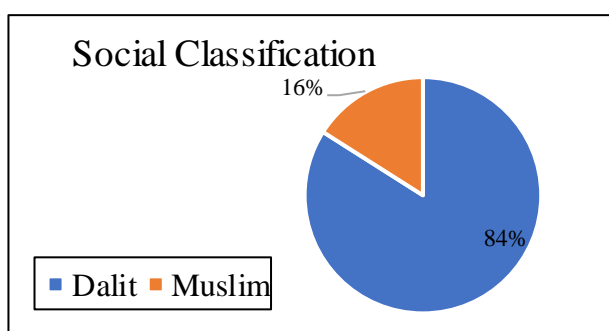
MILES TO GO.....

Banglar Manabadhikar Suraksha Mancha (MASUM) lodged five complaints during the month of October 2024 on incidents of grave human rights violation before the human rights institutions; especially National Human Rights Commission, different state authorities and international human rights agencies.

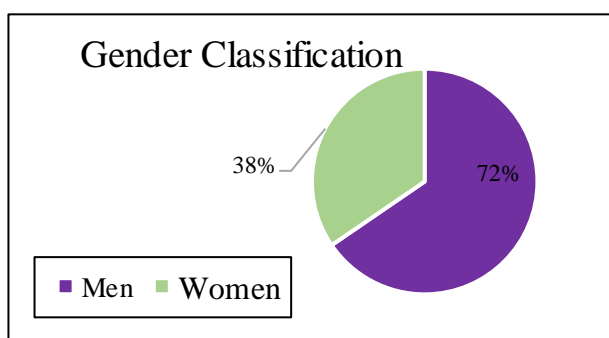
Out of five complaints, four cases on arbitrary restriction by BSF and one case on atrocities committed by police officer were lodged through MASUM.



Type of Cases	No of Cases
Arbitrary Restriction by BSF	4
Atrocities committed by police officer	1
Total	5



Social Classification	
Religion	No of complainants
Dalit Complainants	1243
Muslim Complainants	237
Total	1480



Gender Classification	
Gender	No of Complainants
Male Complainants	918
Female Complainants	562
Total	1480

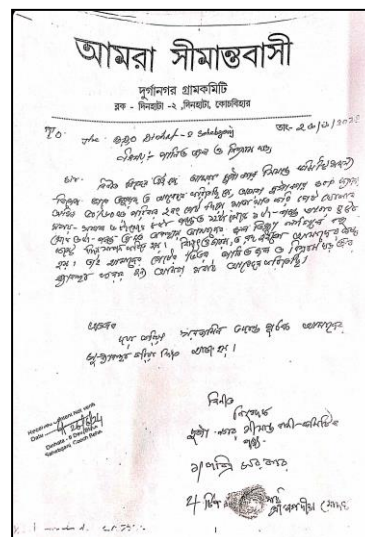
- In case of arbitrary restriction at India Bangladesh bordering area, total number of victims are 1480 villagers, among them 1243 are Dalit and 237 are Muslim complainants.
- Banglar Manabadhikar Suraksha Mancha (MASUM) lodged five complaints to provide justice to total 1480 victims. Among them 72% are male victims and 38% are female victims.

Case Brief October-2024:

1. Arbitrary Restrictions by BSF:

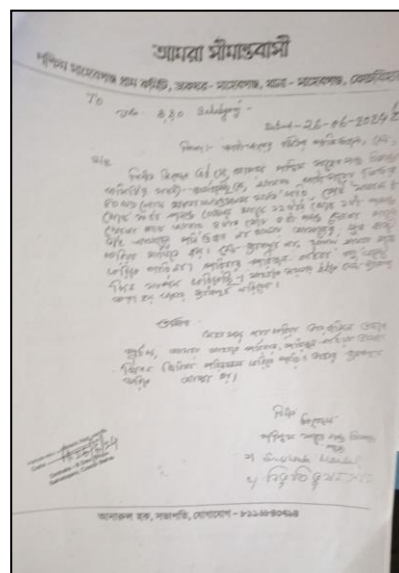
Irrigation, drinking water facility denied, government policies are challenged by BSF:

The residents of Durganagar II, an Indo-Bangladesh border village under Sahebganj Gram Panchayat in Dinhata II Block, Cooch Behar, face severe hardships due to restrictions on their agricultural lands inside the barbed wire fencing along the border. The population, comprising over 80% Hindu General Category and 20% Muslim OBCs, relies heavily on agriculture, with an average income of just ₹36,000 per household annually. This meagre income is at risk due to inadequate irrigation infrastructure, as fields lack electricity and reliable water sources, forcing farmers to rely on costly diesel pumps for irrigation. However, BSF restrictions and high diesel costs make this method unsustainable. As a result, villagers' livelihoods are critically endangered, pushing them toward starvation or migration as they struggle to maintain their primary income source.



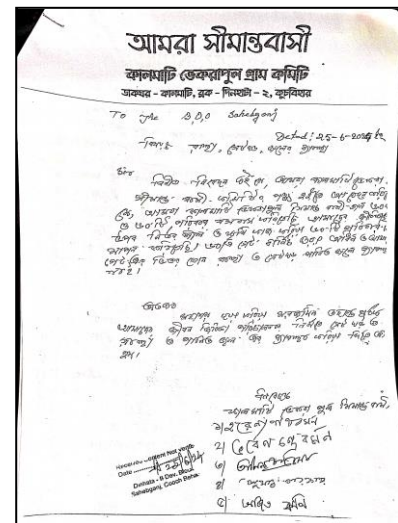
2. People have to cultivate their land without water, sanitation and without irrigation, for how many days?

The farmers of West Sahebganj in Dinhata II Block, residing along the Indo-Bangladesh border, face severe difficulties in cultivating their lands located within the barbed wire fencing near Dhorola BOP, under constant BSF monitoring. Access to their 380 bighas of farmland is restricted to three brief, one-hour sessions daily, during which the farmers must register in and out, often facing delays that prevent access for the day. Additionally, they lack basic amenities: irrigation is limited to expensive diesel pumps, which are difficult to transport within the restricted time frame, and there is no access to drinking water on the fields. Farmers must walk a kilometer to the Dhorola River for water, as they are not allowed to bring food or water through the gate. Their livelihood, with an annual household income averaging only ₹36,000, is at risk, leaving them vulnerable to starvation or forced migration as agriculture becomes increasingly unsustainable.



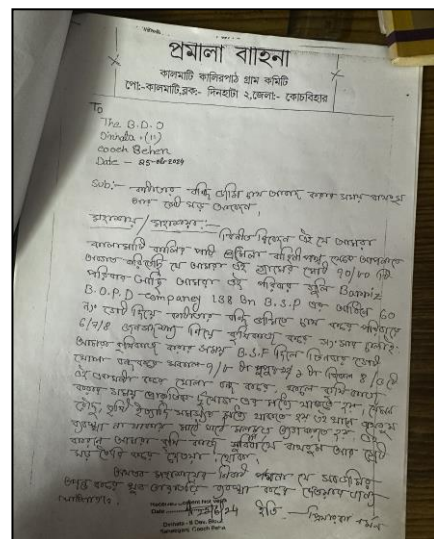
3. Scheduled Caste people having no right to water.

The 60 families of Kalmati Bhekrapul village in Dinhata, Cooch Behar, primarily Scheduled Castes, face a dire livelihood crisis as their agricultural lands lie beyond the barbed wire fencing at Gate 60/A of Burmese BOP, under stringent BSF control. The gate, controlled by D Company, 138 Battalion, only opens for three one-hour sessions per day, severely limiting farmers' access to their lands where they cultivate paddy, jute, corn, tobacco, and vegetables. Additionally, there are no facilities for drinking water, irrigation, or shelters, nor proper connectivity to the fields. These restrictions have forced at least one member from each family to migrate for work. Despite appeals, including a recent meeting with Dinhata-II BDO and officials, no solutions have been offered, as authorities cite restrictions imposed by the Bangladesh government.



4. Scheduled Caste people are forced to drink inedible water.

The farmers of Kalmati Kalirpath, primarily Rajbangshi women from the Scheduled Caste community, face serious challenges accessing their farmland situated beyond the barbed wire fencing near Gate 60, controlled by Barriz BOP, D Company, 138 Battalion BSF. With approximately 380 bighas of land under BSF surveillance, they can only access their fields through the gate, which opens three times daily for one hour per session. This restricted time frame, coupled with mandatory sign-ins and delays, often prevents them from reaching their fields. The farmers lack essential facilities on their lands, such as electricity, water, and latrines, and have no shelter during adverse weather. Tragically, a farmer lost his life in a lightning strike due to this lack of protection.

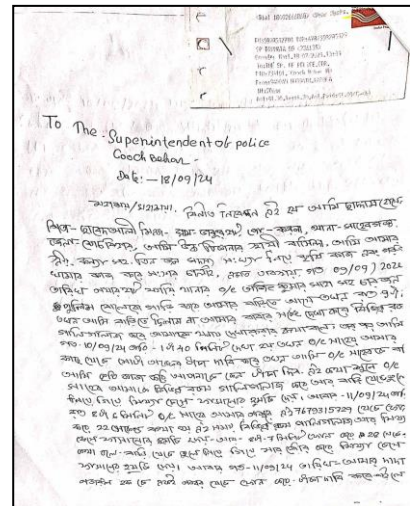


Atrocities committed by Police Officer:

1. Police are extorting money.

Mr. Saddam Hossain has been living an honest life for the past nine years after his involvement in smuggling activities till 2015. He has since focused on agriculture and animal rearing to support his family, which consists of his wife, Mrs. Jannati Khatun, and their daughter, Sumaiya Akhtar Sumi.

On 09.09.2024, SI Ajit Kumar Saha, along with four civic volunteers, visited Mr. Hossain's house with one Bolero car, verbally threatened and abused his wife, and demanded that Mr. Hossain should report to the police station. Accordingly Mr. Hossain met with SI Saha the next day on 10.09.2024, where the SI demanded ₹1 lakh per month for facilitating smuggling operations. He further threatened to frame Mr. Hossain in a narcotics case if he refused and asked him to provide a list of others involved in smuggling. Mr. Hossain, who has not been involved in illegal activities for nine years, refused to comply. SI Saha later called from his mobile phone number (7679315729) both Mr. Hossain and his elder brother, Mr. Najrul Haque, on 11.09.2024, repeating the threats (9635459177 & 9932627381).



Victim, Mr. Saddam Hossain lodged a written complaint through a registered post on 18.09.2024 to the district Superintendent of Police narrating all details. The victim's family possesses CCTV footage of the police visit on 09.09.2024 and call recordings from Mr. Hossain's and his brother's phones. Despite clear evidences, no legal action has been initiated against the perpetrator. Mr. Hossain and his family are living in fear of further harassment and false charges, making it impossible for them to continue their livelihood peacefully. The repeated threats have caused immense mental stress and financial strain on the family. This case clearly highlights an abuse of power by law enforcement officials, demanding immediate intervention to ensure justice for Mr. Hossain and his family.

MASUM in Media

Harassment on local train: Woman threatened, companion beaten at Sealdah strn

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 21 OCTOBER

Three youths were arrested allegedly after forcefully capturing a woman's photographs on a running train.

Police said the woman attempted to stop them from taking her picture, which led to her male companion being physically assaulted.

The Railway Police (GRP) arrested the three youths from Sealdah station in connection with the incident.

However, the woman claimed at the police station that the accused persons threatened to harm her.

She also alleged that the GRP officers mistreated her.

The complainant said, "I boarded the train from Dhakuria. A few youths boarded from Park Circus and started taking my pictures. When I protested, they responded, saying they could do whatever they wanted. Unable to control my anger, I slapped one of

The GRP officers arrested the three accused youths when the train arrived at platform 21 of Sealdah station. The complainant's father also alleged that when they went to file the complaint, they were threatened with arrest

them. They then surrounded my friend and started beating him. This happened in front of passengers on the moving train."

The GRP officers arrested the three accused youths when the train arrived at platform 21 of Sealdah station. The complainant's father also alleged that when they went to file the complaint, they were threatened with arrest.

He said, "Even in front of the duty GRP officer, the accused were threatening

my daughter. The officer first threatened to arrest me. This raises the question of whether women are truly safe in this state."

Regarding the matter, Sealdah GRP IC Basudev Malik said, "We have received the complaint. We have arrested three people and started an investigation."

Everyday thousands of women travel by local trains. However, allegations of harassment have surfaced regarding incidents on these local trains leading to questions of women passenger's safety.

"First, the young woman was threatened and harassed inside the train, and later, her companion was mercilessly beaten and left on the platform at Sealdah, one of the busiest stations. We are concerned that GRP police tried to threaten the woman complainant," said Kirity Roy, an Indian civil rights activist.

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE of UNVFVT

October, 2024

In this month of October 2024, MASUM organised 2 medical and psychological camps in districts of North 24 Pargana. The medical camps were organised for the treatment of physical and psychological well-being on the aegis of United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture and meant for victims of torture and family members of extra judicial execution and enforced disappearance victims.

North 24 Pargana District:

At North 24 Parganas medical camp was held at Noor Medical Hall, Swarupnagar on 16th October, 2024 for physical treatment. Dr. Anusuyak Roy treated 33 patients for physical wellbeing. On 7th October, 2024 Psychological Camp was held at the same place under the supervision of Dr. Debshankar Mukhopaddhaya who provided psychological treatment to 6 persons.



North 24 Parganas Medical Camp for Physical Treatment



North 24 Parganas Medical Camp for Psychological Treatment

In this month of October 2024, MASUM organized 1 psychological camp in districts of Coach Behar. The medical camps were organized psychological well-being on the aegis of United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture and meant for victims of torture and family members of extra judicial execution and enforced disappearance victims.

Coach Behar District:

On 29th October, 2024 Psychological Camp was held at Wonder Medical under the supervision of Dr. Banhiman Sarkar who provided psychological treatment to 4 persons. At Coach Behar medical camp was held at Utsab Hotel on 30th October, 2024 for physical treatment. Dr. Shaukat Ali treated 47 patients for physical wellbeing.



Coach Behar Medical Camp for Psychological Treatment



Coach Behar Medical Camp for Physical Treatment

ACTIVITIES OF THE MONTH:

On October 4, 2024, MASUM took part in a preparatory meeting for upcoming Public Hearings on Gender-Based Violence at the Workplace, held at the *Udayani Social Action Forum* in Kolkata. During this meeting, MASUM representatives highlighted the ongoing struggles of marginalized women residing in Indo-Bangladesh border areas who face frequent sexual harassment, often at the hands of BSF personnel and local authorities. These women face significant barriers in seeking justice under the POSH Act. Recognizing the urgency of the issue, the meeting concluded with a unanimous commitment to addressing undocumented cases of sexual harassment at workplace across West Bengal, with MASUM joining hands with other organizations to spearhead this vital, collective effort.



Murshidabad:

- On 03/10/2024, a meeting was held at the Gram Panchayat in Sahib Nagar, GP Block, Jalangi, under Sagarpara Police Station, focusing on border issues and solutions related to the BSF outposts and their positioning at the zero point along the border. While there was general agreement among the attendees about the BSF's role and presence, it was reported that some smugglers and political leaders were creating obstacles, driven by unlawful greed and vested interests. Due to these interference, the BSF company commander was compelled to leave the border and patrol within the village, indicating a shift from their intended duty of securing the international boundary.
- On 04/10/2024, a discussion was held with the residents of the Bamanabad area. The people there expressed concerns that due to fear of being falsely implicated in several fabricated cases, they are reluctant to file complaints or seek any remedies for their issues.
- 05/10/2024, a discussion was held with the residents of the Char Rajapur Gram Panchayat area. The locals blamed the BSF for causing difficulties in their livelihood. They expressed that due to a sense of insecurity, they are unable to take any action to address their grievances. Although they want to raise complaints, they fear being falsely implicated in cases, which has discouraged them from speaking up.
- On 06/10/2024, a discussion was held with the residents of Mohanganj Katlamari Gram Panchayat regarding the need for security for farming on border lands. The villagers raised multiple complaints against BSF jawans attached to the India Camp No. Checkpost, under the 73rd Battalion. Although some remedial actions have been taken in response to earlier grievances, the locals reported that the BSF jawans continue to harass them in various ways.

- 08/10/2024, a meeting was held in Harurpara where recommendations were made to ensure the provision of arsenic-free drinking water. The participants also discussed the need for security and sustainable livelihoods for those living near the border. A decision was taken to pursue legal measures to ensure proper arrangements for the safety and livelihood opportunities of the border residents. Additionally, complaints were filed regarding obstacles faced in transportation and livelihood activities, seeking remedial action. It was further inquired whether any steps had been taken to address these issues.



Meeting with BDO,
Raninagar-II Block



Char Sibnagar “Amra
Simantabasi”



Meeting at Village
Bamnabad

Coach Behar:

- On 21/10/24, a written application was submitted to the BDO office regarding the cultivation of barbed wire land and the cutting of bamboo trees, in collaboration with the Sangarbari Amra Simanta Basi Committee under the Khalisamari GP in the Shitalkuchi block.
- On 03/10/24, an assessment was conducted for 15 families living in barbed wire confinement in the Tharai Khana village under the Sukarukuti GP in the Dinhata II block.
- On 28/10/24, a meeting was organised by Kalmati-Bhekraful “Amra Simantabasi” committee of Bamonhat GP under Dinhata-II block to discuss the current situation of agricultural activities in lands situated within barbed wire fencing, which is frequently interrupted due to lack of irrigation facility, electricity etc. They decided to submit a written application to BDO regarding this problem on 30th October, 2024.
- On 29/10/2024 a meeting was held by the “Aamra Seemanta Basi” committee under the jurisdiction of Dinhata to Block Bamanhat to GP (Gram Panchayat) Kalmati Begunbari, the members discussed the new identity card issued by the BSF (Border Security Force). It was mentioned that with this card, residents have to travel within the barbed-wire fencing. Voter ID and Aadhaar card hold no significance to the BSF. Additionally, the matter of farming on land enclosed within the barbed-wire fence was also discussed. Yesterday, the BDO (Block Development Officer) visited and held discussions with the border residents on this issue. It was decided that a written application would be

submitted to the BDO tomorrow, demanding the cancellation of the ID card issued by the BSF.

- On 29/10/2024, on behalf of the “Aamra Seemanta Basi” committee of Purba Sahebganj, Durganagar, and Paschim Sahebganj, we went to the BDO (Block Development Officer) in Dinhata regarding the final resolution for cultivating land enclosed within the barbed-wire fence. The BDO provided some forms and instructed us to fill them out and submit them to the Assistant Engineer of PHE in Cooch Behar.



Kalmati-Bhekraful “Amra Simantabasi”
Committee meeting



Sangarbari meeting with villagers

LEGAL ACTIVITIES OF THE MONTH

☐ Murshidabad (Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate Court at Lalbag)

1. SSL No.- 25/2020, State Vs. Jabar Sk. & Ors.
2. C.R. No.- 7408/2014, Faruk Kamran Sarkae (Complainant) Vs. Police personnel Raninagar police station Murshidabad.
3. C.R. No.- 865/2015, Rubina Bewa (Complainant) Vs. BSF Personnel.
4. SSL No.- 272/2018, State Vs. Rejaul sk @ islam & nur islam sk @ nur islam

☐ North 24 Parganas. (Sub-Divisional Judicial Magistrate at Bongaon)

1. GR 1643/2016 - STATE VS MOMENA BIBI & 02 OTHERS.
2. GR- 4965/2021-STATE(OSMAN SARDAR) VS B.S.F Personnel.
3. EX-194/2023 - Jharna Dhabok VS Aatur Rahaman Dhabok.
4. GR 4076/2022 -STATE VS ALAMGIR GAZI.
5. GR 4480/2020-STATE (MONIRUL MONDAL) VS B.S.F Personnel.
6. GR 4808/2017 STATE (SUBRATA MONDAL) VS PALAS MONDAL & OTHERS.

☐ Cooch Behar (Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate Court at Dinhata)

1. .G.R 524/2023- Mahitan Bibi. Vs BSF Personnel.
2. GR. 700/2022- Mamata Barman Vs. BSF Personnel.
3. GR. 965/2014- State (Badiyar Ali) Vs. BSF Personnel.

ACHIEVEMENT OF THE MONTH

On May 21, 2024, Mr. Surajit Barman, a daily wage worker from a Scheduled Caste community in Cooch Behar, West Bengal, was brutally assaulted by BSF personnel. Accused of cattle smuggling, he was shot in the face and subjected to severe torture. Despite his critical injuries, Surajit's medical treatment was delayed, and his family, already struggling financially, is now facing immense challenges in affording his care. A complaint has been filed with the police, yet they have also charged Surajit following the BSF's allegations.

Following MASUM's intervention through a formal appeal to the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) regarding Mr. Surajit Barman's case, the NHRC issued a directive on October 17, 2024. The Commission emphasized the need for accountability, reminding the Superintendent of Police in Cooch Behar, West Bengal, to submit an Action Taken Report within four weeks, as no report had been provided since the initial directions on July 8, 2024.



Mr. Surajit Barman, after a critical operation on his face