

# A Nation Vulnerable

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*“Bangladesh does not have specific laws or provisions which address the added vulnerabilities of socially excluded communities in relation to crimes of rape/sexual assault.”*

– Equality Now

*“To create a society where every child can grow up free from fear and violence, the interim government and all stakeholders need to take immediate and decisive actions to strengthen and invest in child protection systems.”*

– Rana Flowers

I recall the streets of Dhaka,  
my mother’s grip tightening  
“Keep your head down,” she whispered  
as we walked through the bazaar —  
passing men who leered,  
elongated shadows.  
the silence that engulfed my fear.

Yet silence does no good

For an eight-year-old girl from Magura  
who had to face a battle she never asked for  
Sadly, had little chance in winning

People grieved and moved on

For a second grader in Sirajganj  
For the ever-rushing women  
trying to make it back home  
before the sun sleeps  
Aggressively moving towards their home

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as if there were no shadows by the wall

A nation that once shouted loudly  
now chokes on its own cries  
The streets down in rage  
Citizens stifle a final plea

The borders of Dhaka, rumbling with animosity  
But the ones in uniform stand still.  
Hands idle. Eyes averted.  
When did their duty turn to dust?

Mob justice is raging  
Assailants roaming the streets  
Their beatings persist  
More names buried, more faces lost

294 lives lost in January  
69% rise in robbery and mugging  
Women's voices are strangled

Yet the law sleeps

The fall of government  
The fall of safety  
Of dignity  
Of broken promise  
The crimes never stop  
These losses of names and voices  
Never stop

No more.

Let the streets tremble with our voices.  
Let the courts open their ears  
Let the police remember who they serve  
And let no child, no girl, no woman,

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Ever walk these streets  
Afraid to exist.

## Citations:

Butler, Gavin. Bangladesh: Fierce Protests as Eight-Year-Old Rape Victim Dies. 14 Mar. 2025,  
[www.bbc.com/news/articles/ce30k9g6x2eo](http://www.bbc.com/news/articles/ce30k9g6x2eo).