

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
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,
Ever walk these streets
Afraid to exist.

Citations:

1. Butler, Gavin. *Bangladesh: Fierce Protests as Eight-Year-Old Rape Victim Dies*. 14 Mar. 2025, www.bbc.com/news/articles/ce30k9g6x2eo.