

Bangladesh should probe recent allegations of disappearances, torture: HRW

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Online Desk: Human Rights Watch has said Bangladesh authorities should investigate recent allegations of enforced disappearances and torture including by police members of the Detective Branch (DB) of police. “Bangladesh’s Detective Branch has previously been implicated in allegations of grave human rights abuses by local human rights groups, including enforced disappearances and torture,” Meenakshi Ganguly, South Asia director at Human Rights Watch, said on Friday.

The New York-based rights watchdog said allegations of torture in Bangladesh are rarely investigated or prosecuted. Following a review in July 2019, the UN Committee against Torture described the Bangladesh police as a “state within a state,” asserting that “in general, one got the impression that the police, as well as other law enforcement agencies, were able to operate with impunity and zero accountability.” Only one case of torture has ever been convicted under Bangladesh’s Torture and Custodial Death (Prevention) Act since it was passed a decade ago, it said citing Bangladesh media reports.

Bangladesh has ignored repeated requests from the UN Committee Against Torture to follow up its recommendations, as required, it said adding that the Committee’s recommendations included independent monitoring of all detention sites and investigation of all allegations of torture or ill-treatment by law enforcement officials. Bangladesh security forces are under increased scrutiny following the designation of human rights sanctions by the US government and in the lead-up to general elections slated for early 2024. Bangladesh authorities should implement the recommendations by the Committee Against Torture, investigate allegations, and hold perpetrators to account, it added.