

ORAL STATEMENT
Item 6: UPR of Bangladesh
Delivered by: Milan DAS – March 2024

Thank you, Chair. I am reading this statement for Parittran and the International Dalit Solidarity Network.

I will focus on the issue of caste discrimination and Dalit rights in Bangladesh. ‘Dalits’ are those outside of the caste system, and face discrimination in almost every part of our lives.

We would like to thank the States that engaged with the UPR and made caste recommendations, like Peru, Costa Rica, Germany and Mexico. We ask Bangladesh to accept these recommendations and ask States to raise Dalit issues in the next cycle.

Just days after the January elections, a Dalit family in Jashore was attacked. An employee of a publicly elected representative drove a tractor into their house and the disagreement led to the employee assaulting the Dalit family with 10 other men. This was reported to the police, but no action has been taken. In Keshabpur Upazila, a dominant caste man made improper suggestions to a Dalit woman. When her family protested, they were attacked. The case is still pending in court.

Such attacks on Dalits are a daily occasion, and are escalating due to a culture of impunity.

We ask that Bangladesh accept the U.P.R. recommendations and adopt the legislation necessary to protect Dalits. Caste discrimination must be a punishable offense. Bangladesh should ensure Dalit political participation by reserving at least 5% seats in local and national governments. To guide this process, the Government should create a milestone and strategy paper for Dalit mainstreaming and development, in consultation with Dalit communities.

Thank you.