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Hindus under attack in Bangladesh

By Vijayendra Mohanty on March 3, 2013

Conspicuous by its absence on Indian news television, the current crisis in Bangladesh is nothing less than history catching up with the young nation after war and ethnic cleansing at the hands of the Pakistani army in 1971 gave it wounds that have remained unhealed for more than four decades.

After Islamists amended the young nation's Constitution in 1977 and 1988 to make "absolute trust and faith in the Almighty Allah as the basis of all actions" its fundamental guiding principle, it was not until 2010 that a Tribunal was set up to provide justice to those who had been slaughtered by Rezakars in the aftermath of Bangladesh's war of independence. Awarding of life imprisonment to Jamaat leader Abdul Quader Mollah and death sentences to war criminals Abul Kalam Azad and Delawar Hossain Sayedee followed have triggered a fresh wave of attacks on Hindus in the country.

Bangladesh death toll rises to 57, crisis continues, Riots follow death sentence to Bangladesh war criminal, Bangladeshi children join Shahbag movement

Daily Star reports that on Saturday alone, members of the Jamaat-e-Islami and its student wing Islami Chhatra Shibir have attacked and destroyed six temples and set fire to several Hindu houses and business in Noakhali, Gaibandha, Chittagong, Rangpur, Sylhet, Chapainawabganj and Rajganj. These attacks of course, are in addition to the violence unleashed by Islamists in the last three days in which more than a dozen people have lost their lives.

The situation, perhaps not surprisingly, is reminiscent of the state of affairs that prevailed during the early days of the Bangladeshi Government's tryst with Islamists when Sheikh Mujibur Rahman declared a general amnesty for Islamists against whom trials had not yet been initiated. Rahman was assassinated in 1975, paving the way for a series of military coups and a general chaos that still lasts. The current Sheikh Hasina Government too, in its turn, seems unwilling to anger rioting Jamaatis and is in no mood to do anything about the riots that seem to be killing the country's Hindus. Political motivations that kept Mujibur Rahman from coming down hard upon Islamists in the beginning of the nation's history hold the Government hostage still.

The persecution of Bangladeshi Hindus in the wake of a setback to the Islamist cause is happening exactly as it did back in 1971. Back then, the reason was the Bangladeshi freedom movement. This time, the reason is justice catching up with the war criminals.

In Chittagong, Jamaati Islamists attacked Hindu majority localities at Jaldi union of Banskhali upazila and set fire to a Buddhist temple. Jamaat members also burned houses at Dhopapara and Mohajonpara and attacked people with sticks, iron rods and sharp weapons. The rioters also burned three shops belonging to Hindus at Kaliash union of Satkania upazila.

Members of Jamaat-e-Islami and its student wing Islami Chhatra Shibir attacked a temple and business establishments belonging to Hindus at Bhelkobazar in Sundarganj upazila of Gaibandha district. Rioters also vandalised some houses in Shovaganj union. Vandalism, arson and looting took place in temples, houses and business establishments of Hindus in Sylhet, Rangpur, Thakurgaon, Laxmipur and Chapainawabganj. Attackers had vandalised the central Kali temple at Mithapukur upazila in Rangpur and another at Kansat in Chapainawabganj.

(Source: Daily star) The situation wasn't very different in 1971. Delivering the death sentence to Sayedee, the judges said they had established that he "...took active part in the attacks directed against civilian population at Parerhat area, causing murder, deportation, rape, looting of goods, setting fire to the houses and shops of civilians, forceful religious conversion, inhuman acts and torture which fall within the purview of crimes against humanity."

Some of the charges against Sayedee, with regard to his crimes of 1971, are as follows.

On May 4, 1971, Sayedee and his accomplices, accompanied by the Pakistani army looted the houses of members of the Hindu community and opened fire indiscriminately on them in front of Dhopa Bari and behind the LGED Building in Pirojpur, leaving four persons killed. On May 7, 1971, Sayedee identified the houses and shops of Bangalees belonging to the Awami League, Hindu community and supporters of the Liberati on War at Parerhat Bazar under Pirojpur Sadar. Sayedee as one of the perpetrators raided those shops and houses and looted valuables, including 22 seers of gold and silver from the shop of one Makhanlal Saha. On May 8, 1971, Sayedee and his accomplices accompanied by the Pakistan army raided the house of one Manik Posari at Chitholia under Pirojpur Sadar and caught his brother Mofizuddin and one Ibrahim. Sayedee's accomplices then burnt five houses there. On the way to the Pakistani army's camp, Sayedee instigated the members of the occupation force to kill Ibrahim by gunshot and dump his body near a bridge. On the other hand, Mofiz was taken to the army camp and tortured. Sayedee directly participated in the abduction, murder and persecution of the victims. On June 2, 1971, Sayedee's armed associates under his leadership and accompanied by the Pakistan army burnt 25 houses of a Hindu Para in Umedpur village under Indurkani Police Station. At one stage, a victim, Bisabali, was tied to a coconut tree and was shot dead by Sayedee's accomplice. One day a group comprising 15-20 armed accomplices of Sayedee under his leadership entered the Hindu Para of Parerhat Bazar under Pirojpur Sadar and captured 14 Hindus, who were all supporters of Bangladesh's independence. The fourteen were then tied with a single rope and dragged to Pirojpur and handed over to Pakistani soldiers, who killed them. Their bodies were thrown into the river.

<http://www.niticentral.com/2013/03/03/hindus-under-attack-in-bangladesh-51684.html>

More information & a VIDEO on attacks on Hindus in the following link:

<http://www.niticentral.com/2013/02/28/jamaat-activists-wreak-havoc-in-bangladesh-kill-14-in-post-verdict-riot-51022.html>