



BCSM press release on Libya killing

30 May 2020

The following statement was issued by the Bangladesh Civil Society for Migrants, a coalition of organizations working on migrants' rights in Bangladesh.

“Bangladesh Civil Society for Migrants (BCSM) is deeply concerned on the recent killings of 26 Bangladeshis in Mizdha, closed to Tripoli, the capital city of Libya. We appreciate the Tripoli government's issuance of arrest warrants against the suspected killers. We also acknowledge the role of Bangladeshi embassy in Libya for taking measures to bring back the bodies of the deceased and the injured once the situation allows.

BCSM notes with deep regret that for quite a long time international human smugglers and traffickers and their Bangladeshi counterparts have been very active in recruiting aspirant migrants to Europe with the promise of facilitating their movement through the North African coast. Bangladeshis working in the Gulf who fear deportation due to COVID-19 are their recent targets. To reach the final destination the migrants are made to pass through rocky coast of Tripoli to board inflatable dinghies for crossing the Mediterranean Sea to Europe. Over the last couple of months more than 700 Bangladeshis have been apprehended by the Libyan coastguards and to send to detention camps where they are subjected to torture and abuse.

Human smuggling and trafficking is a complex phenomenon and addressing this problem requires strong and well coordinated international action that takes into cognizance both the demand and supply side of the labour market. However, we also feel at the Bangladesh end certain targeted actions need to be taken immediately.

We demand strong follow up by Bangladesh embassy on the process of prosecution of the perpetrators and mete out stern punishment. Human smugglers and traffickers to Europe in almost all cases use air route to take the aspirant migrants from Bangladesh. We demand that the home ministry, particularly the immigration police and other law enforcement agencies be more vigilant and accountable. They need to establish a system of rigorous scrutiny of those who depart for North African countries with travel visa and do not have prior travel record. We also demand that the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment collect information from those who attempted to cross to Europe in the past, were subsequently apprehended and returned to Bangladesh and indentify the *dalals*, travel agencies, and unscrupulous recruiting agencies who facilitated their travel pass and take stern action under the Overseas Employment and Migrants' Act, 2013. The Ministry of Home Affairs should also ensure judicious and effective prosecution of those who have been so far charged under the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act, 2012. The District Legal Aid Associations in collaboration with the civil society ensure legal support to the aggrieved migrants. We also demand repatriation of Bangladeshis who are still in detention camps and face major abuses after being apprehended by the coast guards of Libya”.

Key BCSM Recommendations

- a. Ensure repatriation of Bangladeshis who have been apprehended and detained in camps soon after the flights resume.
- b. Press Libyan government to bring the perpetrators to justice.
- c. Establish a system of rigorous scrutiny of those who depart for North African countries with travel visa by the Ministry of Home affairs.
- d. Expedite prosecution of those who have been charged under the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act, 2012.
- e. Ensure legal support to the survivors.
- f. Conduct immediate investigation of the cases of deceased, locate and prosecute the *dalals*, travel agencies and unscrupulous recruiting agencies involved under the Overseas Employment and Migrants' Act, 2013.



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