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# NEWAGE

## 27 eminent citizens condemn BCL torture on IU female students

Staff Correspondent | Updated at 12:48am on February 26, 2023



The main entrance of the Islamic University, Kushtia. -- File photo.

Twenty seven eminent citizens in a statement on Saturday condemned the torture of students by the Chhatra League at Islamic University in Kushtia.

Signed by educationists, human rights activists, journalists, researchers, lawyers, filmmakers and writers, the statement blamed university authorities for downplaying the incident.

The signatories held responsible the hall authorities, central leadership of the Chhatra League, politicians, intellectuals, and a section of the media and women's rights organisations for diverting attention away from the incident through their rhetoric, or by their silence.

The statement salutes the victim and her family for their courage to speak out.

‘The courage her van-puller father has demonstrated is rare among the privileged sections of society. Four other students of Islamic University have already followed suit and recounted their horrific experience of torture to the probe committee. We salute them,’ the statement read.

The signatories observed that such torture was a common phenomenon in public higher educational institution in Bangladesh.

‘Here in Islamic University too, the Chhatra League reigns supreme and their male and female leaders and supporters represent the ruling party’s ideology,’ the statement read.

It added that morally bankrupt faculty members vied for the positions of proctor, provost, professor and vice-chancellor and so they connived at running a parallel administration by the Chhatra League.

Female Chhatra League leaders of the Islamic University have added a new dimension to the BCL list of crimes, according to the statement.

‘They not only hit, punched, slapped, kicked, stuffed a towel into the victim’s mouth and tried to throttle her with a towel, but also enacted a scene like that of a B-grade pornographic film to terrorise her,’ read the statement.

Given the severity of her allegations, the university administration and hall administration could have offered her legal advice and assistance in registering a case of assault and blackmail against her tormentors. Instead, it seems the authorities are harassing her in the name of conducting a probe, the statement read.

Among others, Dhaka University professor Gitiara Nasreen, Garment Sramik Oikya Forum president Mushrefa Mishu, indigenous rights activist and Chakma circle advisor Rani Yan Yan, writer and anthropologist Rahnuma Ahmed, photographer and labour leader Taslima Akhtar, writer Tahera Begum Jolly and journalist and researcher Saydia Gulrukh signed the statement.

BCL Islamic University vice-president Shanjida Chowdhury Ontora and other BCL activists at Deshratna Sheikh Hasina Hall on the night of February 12 tortured a newly admitted student, forced her to undress and filmed the incident on their mobile phones.

The accused threatened to spread the video on social media if the victim disclosed the matter to anyone.



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