The Distribution of Political Violence in Bangladesh (2002-2013)

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Executive Summary

This report presents findings from a longitudinal dataset of political violence in Bangladesh. From four different newspapers 14187 single events of political violence were coded for the period 2002 to 2013 providing among others insights in the temporal and geographical distribution of violence, the actors involved and lethal and non-lethal casualties of violence. According to our conservative estimates over 126300 were wounded and over 2400 were killed in political violence over the 2002-2013 period.

Political violence in Bangladesh is a variegated phenomenon. Its role in democratic politics has been questioned and it has been considered a sign of an immature or even immoral political class. The endurance of hartal (general strikes) has been lamented in the press and by donors as not only a breakdown of normal politics, but also as a constraint on economic development.

This report does not support or denounce these perspectives on political violence in the country, but wants to offer a clearer basis to discuss the issue. This report provides basic data on the prevalence of political violence , its regional distribution, the actors involved and the specific shape of hartal violence for the period 2002-2013. Data presented focus on events of political violence, wounded and lethal casualties. This type of consistently collected basic data has been absent to the debate.

The data presented are the outcome of the first phase of a project to construct a dataset on political violence in Bangladesh for the democratic phase of Bangladesh politics (since 1991). It is based on scanning all issues of four newspapers (Daily Star, Inqilab, Ittefaq and Prothom Alo) for the 2002-2013 period.

The data partly reflects the known distribution of violence, with large-scale violence in 2006 and 2013, and a clear break in violence during the caretaker government in 2007-2008. Similarly, the dominance of Dhaka district, with around a 15 per cent of all violent events and wounded, is expected. While events and wounded are a good indication of the prevalence of violence, the data for lethal casualties show that the most intense violence is differently distributed. Khulna Division counts most lethal casualties with more than one fourth of casualties.

While districts with major cities, like Chittagong, Rajshahi, Narayanganj or Sylhet also rank high in the distribution of casualties and wounded, the data show the very diffuse nature of political violence in Bangladesh, with second ranked district Chittagong only accounting for around 5 per cent of wounded and casualties. Moreover, with regard to lethal casualties, Dhaka district accounts for less than a tenth of all lethal casualties. 'Rural' districts, like Kushtia, Pabna or Rangamati rank high. Although highly visible, violence in the city corporations accounts only for about a quarter of all violent events, and slightly under 15 per cent for lethal casualties. While for districts containing these city corporations shares are much higher - over 40 per cent – less than 30 per cent of all lethal casualties result from this violence.

Major political parties Awami League and Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and their student and youth wings dominate violent events. Jamaat-e-Islami and its auxiliary organisations follow. State actors are crucial players, with more than 50 per cent of lethal casualties coming from events in which they participate. (Former) rebel groups only take part in a very limited number of events, but these events are very lethal, with more than a quarter of all lethal casualties resulting from these few events. For many political groups factional violence plays an important role.

Hartal violence accounts for around a quarter of all violent events and wounded, but is slightly less lethal. Hartal has dominated political violence in a number of years. In 2005 hartal events accounted for about 30 per cent of all violence, in 2004 this was even about 40 per cent, and in 2013 about 50 per cent of all violence. In the latter year, about half of all hartal events recorded for the period 2002-2013 took place. Hartal, as expected, impacts more on the major cities, but again a district like Satkhira ranks very high in terms of lethal casualties. BNP, AL and state actors dominate hartal events, with JeI active in about half of the percentage recorded for the former actors. While BNP and AL record relatively less lethal casualties, more than half of fatalities occurred in hartal events in which JeI participated. More than 75 per cent of hartal fatalities occurred in events in which state actors participated.

The violence in 2013 was of a distinctive magnitude with over 30000 wounded and more than 750 lethal casualties. Violence in some districts like Satkhira greatly increased, yet to some extent existing trends were also aggravated. Before 2013, AL was the most prominent actor and JeI only participated in less than 10 per cent of events, with about 10 per cent of wounded, and less than 4 per cent of lethal casualties stemming from events in which they participated. In 2013, they were involved in a third of events, resulting in about 50 per cent of lethal casualties.

Acknowledgements

List of Acronyms

AL	Awami League
BCL	Bangladesh Chhatro League
BCP	Biplobi Communist Party
BCU	Bangladesh Chhatro Union
BJL	Bangladesh Awami Jubo League
BNP	Bangladesh Nationalist Party
CHT	Chittagong Hill Tracts
GMF	Gono Mukti Fouz
HuJI	Harkat-ul-Jihad-al Islami (Bangladesh)
ICS	Islami Chhatro Shibir
JCD	Bangladesh Jatyotabadi Chhatro Dal
JeI	Jamaat-e-Islami (Bangladesh)
JJD	Jatyotabadi Jubo Dal
JMB	Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh
JMJB	Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh
JP	Jatiya Party
PBCP	Purba Banglar Communist Party
PBSP	Purbo Banglar Sabrahara Party
PCJSS	Parbattya Chhattagram Jana Samhati Samiti
PIB	Press Institute Bangladesh
RF	Red Flag
UPDF	United Peoples Democratic Front
VDP	Village Defence Party

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

1. Introduction to the Study

The aim of this study is to provide an overview of the shape of political violence in Bangladesh from 2002 to 2013. The period under research includes one Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)-centric regime, one Awami League (AL)-centric and the period under the caretaker government in 2007-2008.

The report is based on a dataset on political violence in Bangladesh compiled from four Bangladeshi newspapers. It presents descriptive statistics focussed on four interconnecting axes: regional distribution of violence, actor-wise distribution of violence, casualties and wounded in violence and year-wise distribution of violence. It also includes specific reference to hartal violence and highlights 2006 and 2013 as dominant years for political violence in the country.

The larger project wants to address the lack of systematically collected data on the general pattern of political violence in Bangladesh. It was initiated in Dhaka in November 2012, the codebook was designed in spring 2013, training took place in early July 2013 and coding was started shortly after. The first phase of coding (2002-2013) ended in August 2014.

This report is the first outcome of the project. It is targeted specifically to a broader policy audience interested in Bangladesh, both in the country and beyond. Yet, it also hopes to provide a further basis to discuss political violence in Bangladesh, both in policy circles and in academia.

It aims to offer the basic descriptive statistics resulting from the project. It does not aim to provide an analysis of causal relations or relate the data to other data sources, like census and election data. These results are part of our preliminary analysis of the data.

The rest of this report will be organised as follows. First, the background and context of political violence in Bangladesh is discussed. Second, the methodology will be explained and some caveats concerning to the results presented in this report discussed. Then we turn to the presentation of the data showing the yearly variations in violence as well as reported lethal casualties and wounded; We focus the regional variations in the incidence of political violence; And show which groups or organisations have been predominant in the violent events recorded in the database; we present a basic

understanding of the role of hartal as an important subtype of violent activity in Bangladesh; and focus also on 2006 and 2013 as the most violent years of the period. We conclude by reiterating some of the findings and offering insights in next steps.

Figure 1: Map of Bangladesh[1]

Source: United Nations 2004.

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[1] Rangpur and Sylhet Divisions are not yet indicated on this map.

2. Background and Context

2.1 Geography and administrative set-up

Bangladesh is a country in South Asia. It has a majority Muslim and ethnic Bengali population. The vast majority of its territory consists of the floodplains of two of South Asia's largest rivers: Padma (Ganges) and Jamuna (Brahmaputra), which confluence to form Meghna River which exits into the Bay of Bengal. Apart from these central floodplains the far Southeast is made up by vast tracts of hills, known as the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), with more hilly terrain in the Northeast in the greater Sylhet area.

Bangladesh is administratively divided into seven divisions (Barisal, Chittagong, Dhaka, Khulna, Rajshahi, Rangpur and Sylhet) and further into 64 districts (zila). The districts are then divided in Upazilas (former Thanas) and again in (rural) Union Parishads (see figure 1). There are over 4500 unions, each divided in nine wards. They are governed by a Union Council consisting of a Chairman and twelve members, of which three posts are specifically reserved for women.

(Semi-)urban agglomerations consists of two different types: city corporations and municipalities (pourashavas or towns). There are currently ten (large) cities: Dhaka (Capital), Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna, Sylhet, Barisal, Rangpur, Gazipur, Narayanganj and Comilla, with the latter three only gaining the city status in 2011. They all fall under an autonomous City Corporation – with Dhaka being divided in two, North and South, in 2011. There are 260 Municipalities, falling under a Municipal Corporation. Cities and municipalities also subdivided into wards, which allow for the election of municipal councillors per ward.

2.2 Politics of Bangladesh: History and actors

2.2.1 History and political parties

Bangladesh gained independence in 1971. After the end of British rule in 1947 and the partition of the subcontinent, the current territory of Bangladesh became part of Pakistan, known as East Pakistan. After repeated movements for cultural rights and more autonomy for the Eastern part of the territory, an independence movement gained momentum in the late 1960s. After Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's Awami League (AL) – first organised after Partition to defend the interests of the Bengali population in the new state of Pakistan - had won the 1970 elections (due to the demographic dominance of the Eastern over the Western wing), but was not allowed to

take power, the struggle for independence started. After nine months of struggle Bangladesh gained independence in 1971.

After Independence Mujib's AL won the general election of 1973. The party's ideology centred on Bengali nationalism, socialism and secularism. In 1975, after Mujib had moved towards a one-party socialist state system, junior and mid-level army officers assassinated him and many of his family members. Lieutenant General Ziaur Rahman, another main figure in the struggle for independence took power first as the chief Martial Law Administrator and then as President in 1977. He founded the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), one of the main contemporary political actors, in 1978. He was in his turn assassinated in 1981 by a part of the military. Lieutenant General Hossain Mohammad Ershad took power in 1982. He founded the Jatiya Party in 1986. He remained in power until 1990, when he was forced from power by a massive popular agitation (and a realignment of international forces with the demise of the Soviet Union).

Since then, Bangladesh has remained a parliamentary democracy, with its President having predominantly a ceremonial role. The first general elections after a return to democracy were won by the BNP in 1991. Khaleda Zia, BNP chair and widow of the assassinated Ziaur Rahman, took power. The next general elections of February 1996 were boycotted by the major opposition parties, including AL, over the refusal (since 1994) of BNP to organise the elections under a neutral caretaker government, to ensure free and fair campaigning and voting. After widespread agitations new elections were scheduled for June 1996 and organised under the caretaker government system.

The June elections were won by AL and Sheikh Hasina, AL chair and the daughter of the assassinated Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, became the new Prime Minister. After five years of AL rule, elections were duly held under the caretaker system and Khaleda Zia was returned to power, leading a four-party alliance of BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI), Jatiya Party (Manju) and Islami Oikya Jote.

After political unrest in the run-up to the January 2007 elections, the country's president Iajuddin Ahmed declared a state of emergency and a military-backed non-party caretaker government was installed, headed by senior civil servant Fakhruddin Ahmed. The caretaker government's tenure was marked by a major anti-corruption drive in which top politicians, including Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia, and senior civil servants were charged. Moreover all political party activities were banned, which also led in a marked reduction of political violence (see further). After almost two years in power, the caretaker government

stepped down and organised general elections in December 2008.

The AL centred Grand Alliance (14 parties), including also Ershad's JP, the Jatiyo Samajtantrik Dal and the Workers Party, won a two-thirds majority in parliament and Sheikh Hasina became prime minister for the second time. This second AL tenure was marked by the war-crimes tribunals that aimed to bring to justice those responsible for war crimes during the war of independence in 1971. Different leaders of the opposition JeI were tried, found guilty and some awarded the death penalty. While AL has defended the legitimacy of the special tribunals, several organisations (including Human Rights Watch) have been critical of the trials. The trials led to violent protests, predominantly by Islamist groups, including of course JeI, and clashes with state security forces and pro-government activists across the country.

Finally, as the AL government refused to reinstate the abolished (in 2011) caretaker system, the elections scheduled for January 2014 were boycotted by BNP and its alliance partners. AL won the elections virtually uncontested and Sheikh Hasina returned to power.

Apart from AL and BNP two parties deserve special mention: the Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI) and the Jatiya Party (JP). As mentioned the latter was part of an AL coalition while the former has been part of a BNP-led coalition.

JeI is the most important Islamist party in Bangladesh. Founded as part of the Pakistan JeI, it was accused of collaboration with Pakistani forces during the independence struggle and banned just after independence. It was allowed to operate again in 1979, under the regime of Ziaur Rahman. It has had a presence in Bangladesh democratic elections since 1991, being quite successful in the 1991 elections, and in 2001 becoming a coalition partner in the BNP-led government. As mentioned, several of its leaders have been tried and found guilty in the war-crime tribunals. Since 2013 the party's registration has been cancelled. Other Islamist parties include Bangladesh Khelafat Andolan, Islami Oikya Jote and Bangladesh Khelafat Majlish.

The JP was founded by (former) Lieutenant General Ershad in 1986. Since 1991 it has taken part in several elections. In the 1991 elections the party became third after BNP and AL. In 1996 it joined the AL government. After the release of Ershad from jail – where he was placed on corruption charges – the party split in a wing under Ershad and one under former minister and JP general secretary Manju. The Manju wing became part of the BNP four-party alliance, with the Ershad wing

staying a part of the AL alliance and joining the AL-led government in 2008.

Finally there is a group of left-wing parties often regionally based and frequently aligned to AL coalitions. These parties include: the Communist Party of Bangladesh, the Socialist Party of Bangladesh, the Jatiyo Samajtantrik Dal and the Worker's Party of Bangladesh.

2.2.2 Student, youth and other wings

Many political parties have a number of ancillary organisations, focusing on specific groups like students, youth, women, workers or farmers.

For AL, the most important organisations for our purposes are the Bangladesh Chhatro League (BCL), for students, and the Bangladesh Awami Jubo League (BJL) for a broader category of youth. Other organisations include the Bangladesh Awami Sramik (worker) League, the Bangladesh Awami Krishak (farmer) League and the Bangladesh Awami Swechchasebak (volunteer) League.

The student wing BCL was founded in 1948 and became a major driver of both the independence and pro-democracy movements. It is widely active in university and college campuses. The Jubo League, founded in 1972, is an organisation congregating a large category of non-student Youth.

For the BNP, a similar list of organisations exists, mostly organised shortly after the BNP was founded in 1978. The Bangladesh Jatyatabadi Chhatro Dal (JCD, Nationalist Students Front) was e.g. founded in January 1979, to nurture new potential political leadership. The Bangladesh Jayatabadi Jubo Dal (JJD) is BNPs Youth Wing. Other BNP organisations include the Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Sramik (worker) Dal, the Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Krishak Dal and the Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Swechchasebak (volunteer) Dal.

These organisations, both from AL and BNP are organised with a hierarchy of committees, under a president and a general secretary, starting from the Central level committee to Union and Ward committees or to University, College and Student Hall committees. Both organisations are divided into factions rallying under different leaders. Many of these leaders become important politicians later, depending on their position in the student and youth movements, at the local, the regional or the national level.

Apart from the two leading political parties' ancillary organisations, the student wing of JeI, the Islami Chhatro Shibir is quite active. Although it has it roots in pre-independence student politics, it was formally organised in 1977, when the pressure on the organisations of Islamist groups was

reduced after Ziaur Rahman took power. It has an outspoken Islamist religious ideology.

Finally, the left wing and communist political parties have a number of prominent student units of which Bangladesh Chhatro Union (BCU), Biplobi Chhatro Moitry (Revolutionary Student Unity) and Bangladesh Chhatro Federation (BCF) are the most prominent. BCU, established in 1952, contributed to the language movement of the same year. BCU also contributed to the independence struggle in 1971 by forming a guerrilla unit fighting against Pakistani military forces. Many of the today's politicians have been affiliated to BCU in the past. In the post-Independence period, Biplobi Chhatro Moitry and the Samajtantrik Chhatro Front (Socialist Student Front) contributed to the movement against military rule in the 1970s and 1980s.

2.2.3 Rebels, insurgents, terrorists

Three types of rebel, insurgent and terrorist groups are active in the country. Their specific denotation as 'insurgent' or 'terrorist' movements is of course highly dependent on the source, but many of them have been proscribed by the Bangladesh state.

The first type consists of (former) rebel forces in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), where a long-standing armed movement

has been operating rallying around more rights, autonomy or independence for the ethnic minorities in this area. The Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samiti (PCJSS) and its armed wing the Shanti Bahini emerged just after independence but were rooted in the Pakistan period when a large section of fertile farmland was flooded because of the building of the Kaptai Dam near Rangamati. The armed conflict was formally ended in 1997 with the signing of a Peace Agreement between the Bangladesh state and the PCJSS, with the latter movement transforming into a more mainstream regional political party. After the signing of the accord in 1997 the United Peoples Democratic Front (UPDF) emerged and opposed the signing of the peace accord and retained the demand for full autonomy for CHT. Like PCJSS, some of the leaders of UPDF have participated in elections. The relations between the two movements are strained

The second type consists of left-wing insurgent groups, the most important of which is probably the Purba Banglar Communist Party (PBCP), one of the splinter organizations emerging out of the Bangladesh Communist Party. Proclaiming a Maoist ideology, it is mostly active in Southwest Bangladesh. Other groups include Biplobi Communist Party (BCP), Purbo Banglar Sabrahara Party (PBSP), Red Flag (RF), Gono Mukti Fouz (GMF), and

Janajuddho. These groups are also often active in the South-western districts.

The final type consists of a number of radical Islamist groups, including Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), Harkat-ul-Jihad-al Islami Bangladesh (HuJI) and Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB). Although organized since the late 1990s, JMB became notorious after conducting a serial bombing campaign in 2005, affecting almost all Bangladesh' districts. The movement has been proscribed and many of its top leaders have been arrested in connection to trials and sentenced to be hanged. HuJI emerged in the early 1990s professing its intention to wage an armed struggle for an Islamic state. It was proscribed in 2005. In Bangladesh it is mostly active in the Southeast of the country, but seems to have an international outreach. JMJB operates mostly in the Northwest of the country, also professing to struggle for an Islamic state, while also specifically targeting activists of the left-wing PBCP. Many of its top leaders have been arrested and sentenced to be hanged.

2.2.4 State security forces

A final, important actor in the context of political violence is a wide array of state security forces. Most important is the regular police force. It maintains metropolitan, district and station units as well as special branches, like the Armed Police Battalion. Its Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) was founded in 2004 and specializes in anti-terrorism and organized crime. It is a, highly recognizable elite force and consists of members of police, paramilitary and army.

There are a number of less important groups regarding our purpose: First, the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB, former Bangladesh Rifles) is a paramilitary unit predominantly deployed to protect Bangladesh borders. They are also sometimes deployed in the streets during political unrest. BGB was negatively affected by a mutiny that took place in its Dhaka headquarters in 2009.

Second, the Bangladesh Ansars and Village Defence Party are an auxiliary force assisting the police in maintaining law and order. They are mainly deployed during elections and for specific security functions, like the security management of banks or other companies. They also have been involved as auxiliary forces in CHT and in special operations in South-western Bangladesh.

Finally, the Bangladesh army has a mandate to assist the Bangladesh government in times of emergency but has predominantly been deployed in the CHT conflict, where it still maintains a presence.

It will be clear from the discussion of the data (see below) that state security forces are often an actor in political violence. Yet,

their role is of course relatively different as they are the representatives of the holder of the (Weberian) monopoly over the legitimate exercise of violence.

2.3 Contentious politics, hartal and political violence

Bangladesh politics is considered highly contentious, with little scope for the opposition to make its voice heard within the formal political system. Bangladesh politics is dominated by a winner-takes-all mentality, which in the influential 2006 State of Governance report of the Dhaka-based Institute of Governance Studies has been dubbed partyarchy:

'In the Bangladeshi system where the winning party enjoys the monopoly of power for the duration of their electoral term, […] the ruling party and its innermost circle have emerged as the unrivalled centre of political power. This innermost circle has de facto command over the entire party, legislature, parliamentary committees, procurement policies, development allocations, bureaucracy and law and order enforcement agencies. Its unbridled power is only limited, to a certain extent, by the occasional interventions of the higher judiciary and public scrutiny of its actions by the private media and other civil society organisations' (Hasan 2006: 20).

As there is limited scope for the opposition to operate within the formal system – with opposition parties often boycotting parliamentary sessions -, confrontational politics has often become the norm in Bangladesh since the return to democracy in 1991. These confrontations are of course highly visible around election times, as e.g. witnessed by the ever-returning discussions about the imposition of the caretaker systems. Many commentators of Bangladesh politics agree that political violence has become one of the defining factors of Bangladeshi politics (see e.g. Moniruzzaman 2009; Islam et al. 2005).

Hartal, the general strike and total shutdown, is one of the main elements of this confrontational type of politics. It has been one of the defining features of Bangladesh politics since independence. Originally a form of collective action devised during the anti-colonial struggle against the British, hartal is considered to have played a major role during the independence struggle from Pakistan and against the autocratic and military rulers of the country since 1971. Also in the democratic period, since 1991, hartal has remained one of the preferred weapons of the opposition parties to voice their concerns vis-à-vis the ruling party (see also Suykens & Islam 2013).

The winner takes all form of politics in Bangladesh is considered one of the main reasons why opposition parties take to the

streets to voice their concerns, rather than using the parliament. At the same time, both the international donors and national middle classes are resenting this form of action, which disrupts day-to-day routines. It is seen as detrimental to the economy, by disrupting both production of goods and the transport of them, and as an example of the immorality of the political classes in Bangladesh. Yet despite this resentment hartal persists. Opposition parties claim it is one of their only tools to voice discontent.

While inter-party confrontational politics is the most obvious type of political rivalry, intra-party and intra-group violence is also highly important to understand the shape of political violence in Bangladesh (see also further). Factionalism exists on all levels, from the central to the local level. Groups organize predominantly around a specific leader, either of a party or of one of their wings. These different factions vie for power, resources and positions.

3. Methodology

3.1 Scope of the study

The research project aims to better understand the shape of political violence in Bangladesh. It uses four newspapers to construct a database of events of political violence. It wants to provide a general overview of political violence in Bangladesh and (in this phase) descriptive statistics enabling to explore some common explanations of this violence. The study focuses on the post-democratic period, from 1991. This report presents the findings of the first research phase (2002-2013), which aimed to provide an understanding of both a period of BNP rule, one under AL rule and the period under the caretaker government. In the next phase the goal is to extend the database to the period 1991-2001.

3.2. Definitions

The project identifies and codes events of political violence. To be included in the database a coded event must be 1) violent: resulting in at least one injured/ death/raped/abducted/held hostage or in property destruction and 2) explicitly political: involving members of at least one clearly delineated political group: political party and all its allied organizations, Islamist organization, or rebel group.

Secondly, not only can one newspaper issue contain multiple events, one article can also contain multiple events. Each violent event is coded separately. A violent event is coded as a single event if: 1) It takes place on the same day 2) It takes place at the same place, 3) It involves the same actor (if only one actor is involved) or at least two of the same actors throughout. Unless all of the above hold, an instance is coded as multiple, separate events, with an entry of each of these events. For instance, if the event lasts more than 24 hours, the event is coded anew for each following day. This allows for the most precision and detail in the coding of events, but also poses a number of challenges in the coding of articles containing many events, like those on hartal.

3.3 Source material

Events have been coded from four different newspapers: Daily Star, Dainik Inqilab, Dainik Ittefaq and Prothom Alo. They have been chosen for a combination of circulation, reputation, ideological position, network of correspondents and language.

The first, Daily Star, is a leading English and progressive daily, aimed predominantly at an upper middle and upper class, at students willing to improve their English skills and at an international audience. It was founded in 1991.

The second newspaper, Inqilab, is a more conservative newspaper, and certainly in the last few years having a more Islamist outlook (although it has also drawn inspiration from the Ba'athist movement). It is widely read and specifically wants to address a Muslim audience. Although it supported Jatiya Party early on, it has also supported and opposed both BNP and AL regimes. The newspaper was founded in 1986

The third newspaper, Ittefaq, is the oldest running newspaper in the country and one of the most circulated. It was founded in 1953 and supported Bengali nationalism in the pre-independence period. It is currently regarded as politically neutral or slightly progressive. It is known for having a very extensive focus on local news.

The final newspaper, Prothom Alo, is published by the same publishing house as the Daily Star. The scope of both newspapers is quite different. Prothom Alo is considered to be progressive and liberal and has one of the highest circulations. It is considered to be always critical of the government. It was first published in 1998 and is thus the youngest of the four newspapers used.

All newspapers have regional correspondents, with the latter three often having correspondents up to the Upazila, or even Union level. This enables them to cover a wide range of local events. The latter three newspapers also have different regional versions, which provide region-specific news. For this database, the Dhaka versions have been used (see caveats).

Newspapers have been mainly sourced from the Dhaka University library. Missing copies were traced in the Press Institute Bangladesh (PIB) and in some rarer cases (mainly 2007-8) from the newspaper offices itself.

3.4 Procedure

The process of making the database is based on designing a standardized procedure of turning newspaper articles into data, into events.

3.4.1 Codebook

The main starting point for the whole procedure is a detailed codebook. This codebook lists all the different variables which have to be entered in the database, as well as specifying the codes which have to be used to denote specific places, actors, types of violence etc. The codebook has been designed to minimize the scope for interpretation by the coders.

The codebook was designed by Bert Suykens. It was reworked over several phases, for instance after a test phase revealed a number of flaws in the codebook design (see further). Of course, the codebook was not further adapted after the

coding started to ensure homogeneity across the database.

While many codes/categories are included for each variable, an 'other' category has been consistently included, which could be specified by the coders in a comments section; This will allow adding categories in the database later if necessary.

3.4.2 Coders

The coders, who check the newspapers and enter the data in the database, were recruited from students studying at Dhaka University. All coders needed to have a good knowledge of both Bengali and English. Five coders were recruited and trained initially. Later on two more coders joined after one had dropped out.

3.4.3 Training

Training took place under the direction of Aynul Islam. The three-day training focused on a clear understanding of the codebook, the procedures to be followed and the necessity for close attention to the often-detailed information contained in the individual articles. Specific attention was given to the coding of multiple events from the same newspaper article. A follow-up training was organized after the testing phase.

3.4.4 Testing

Testing took place in two different rounds. First, the codebook and the procedures followed were tested by using a non-knowledgeable audience (about politics in Bangladesh) consisting of a number of PhD students and post-docs at the Department of Conflict and Development Studies. This allowed to further updating the codebook and track major inconsistencies or contradictions.

Second, the coders tested the coding procedure. Their initial coding efforts provided useful insights on the difficulties and anomalies contained in the codebook.

After these two rounds of testing the codebook was revised to its final version.

3.4.5 Coding

Coding was conducted over a period of about 12 months. Coders were assigned a specific paper and a specific time period, rotating between newspapers after every three-month period (see below). No sampling procedure was followed to select the newspapers issues. All (paper) newspaper issues for the four newspapers were checked for the full 2002-2013 period; This to ensure a maximum of information covered by the database. Only news articles were coded, not opinion articles or columns. 18309 events were coded in total.

3.4.6 Post-Processing

The most important part of post-processing was the identification and merging of duplicates (events reported by more than

one source). The following procedure was followed to identify and merge duplicates:

(1) All observations for which date and district was non-missing and for which at least one actor was recorded to be involved were considered (17569).

(2) For these observations, events taking place on the same date and in the same district were initially considered as a potential set of duplicates. 10424 events were marked as part of a potential set of duplicates.

(3) From the sets under (2), events were dropped that did not have at least half of the actors recorded in common with other observations within the set. 8397 events remained as part of a potential set of duplicates.

(4) From the sets under (3), subsets of observations stemming from different newspapers sources were taken. Given that data stemmed from four newspapers, the maximum size of such a subset is 4 and the minimum size is 1. Where the sets under (3) contained more than one event stemming from the same newspaper, this implied creating more than one subset. Where more than one subset was possible, observations were grouped in order of declining number of casualties, or in order of declining number of wounded, if two or more observations in the same set stemming from

the same newspaper recorded the same number of casualties.

(5) Observations in the same subset were considered duplicates. 6872 observations were marked as part of a set of duplicates.

(6) To merge duplicate events from different sources into one event, different procedures were followed for different individual variables used in this report. For number of casualties and wounded, the average was taken. An event was recorded as hartal-related (see section 4.4) if at least half of the sources considered this to be the case. If characterization of police involvement (see table 14) differed between sources, a code from a random source was chosen.

All unique actors recorded in all duplicates were coded as an actor in the final unique event. However, the data allowed more than one 'side' to an event, and classified actors on either 'side' as actors in category Actor A and category Actor B. When merging events, it is then possible that one source reports a fight between group 1 and group 2 - which means that group 1 is recorded in under category Actor A and 2 is recorded under category Actor B, whilst a source reporting a duplicate event registers a fight between group 2 and group 1, recording 2 under category Actor A and 1 under category Actor B. Keeping all unique actors in both categories when merging duplicates, would

26

mean recording both group 1 and group 2 under both category A and B. The event would then be recorded as a clash within group 1 and a clash within group 2, which is not commensurate with either source. To avoid this, the following procedure was followed:

(a) For an event reported by multiple sources, the source reporting the maximum number of actors was taken as the reference source. If more than one source reported the same maximum number of actors, a random source was picked as the reference source from among those sources reporting the maximum number of actors.

(b) For other sources also reporting the event but not the reference source, it was counted how many actors in category A and B respectively the non-reference source and the reference source had in common (count 1). Conversely, it was counted how many actors in category A the non-reference source had in common with actors in category B in the reference source and vice versa (count 2). If count 2 was higher than count 1, the categories for the non-reference source were 'switched', so that for the non-reference source, actors in category A became actors in category B and vice versa.

(c) Then, all unique actors in both categories were marked as actors in the event. This aimed to reflect as accurately as possible the distribution of actors over

different sides, whilst retaining the maximum amount of information from the set of duplicate events (most important for tables 12 and 13).

This exercise resulted in 14.194 unique events. Of these events, 1699 were reported by two different sources, 758 were reported by 3 different sources and 300 were reported by all four sources.

It should be noted that this method underestimates the number of duplicates (overestimates the number of unique events) if reports on the actors involved differ markedly by source (see step 3 above). Not taking the actors reported to be involved into account at all when determining which observations are duplicates would result in 13.327 unique events. This number could credibly be considered a lower bound to the number of unique violent events in Bangladesh over the research period: by classifying all events in the same district at the same date reported by a different newspapers as a duplicate, the method otherwise errs on the side of overestimating the number of duplicates (underestimating the number of unique events).

Alternative ways to deal with duplicates would on one extreme be to ignore the possibility of duplicates altogether or on the other extreme, assume all events are duplicates and average all summary

statistics over the four newspapers. It should be noted that the authors also generated all descriptive statistics in this report in the latter way (not shown in this report), which resulted in qualitatively similar trends to the ones presented here, although with of course lower counts for events, wounded and lethal casualties.

Other types of post-processing of the data were kept to a minimum. One check was run for unusually high numbers for lethal casualties and wounded resulting from single events. Yet only in less than 10 instances an adjustment was made after rechecking the newspaper report. Secondly, to be able to provide data on violence within city corporation limits (see section 4.2.3 below) all data for urban districts (around 45 per cent of all events) was checked manually (using Google maps as a reference source) to ascertain and code whether the violence took place within city corporation limits, outside, or whether it was not possible to know for sure. Given that in most cases upazila, thana or ward level data were recorded in the original dataset this was feasible.

3.4.7 Data analysis

Data were entered by the coders in Microsoft Excel and analysed using SPSS 22. The analysis for this report focused on descriptive statistics and the generation of crosstabulations. No formal modelling has been included in this phase of data analysis.

3.5 Safeguards

The aim of the database is to capture to the best possible extent as many instances of political violence and information as reliable as possible about those instances. This poses a number of challenges, both regarding the source material and with regard to coding events.

Table 1: event-distribution newspapers

	Number	Per Cent
Daily Star	3880	21,2%
Prothom Alo	4627	25,3%
Ittefaq	4686	25,6%
Inqilab	5115	27,9%
Total	18308	100,0%

With regard to the source material we have, as mentioned above, used four newspapers to code events from. We have chosen widely circulated newspapers, with a large network of correspondents, but also with different ideological positions; this to safeguard to some extent that all different political actors and causes are also reflected in the database. As can be seen from table 1, the distribution of events coded from the different newspapers (before post-processing) is quite even, with Daily Star, as expected, recording slightly less events. This helps to exclude the (ideological) bias of one of the newspapers. As mentioned, from the 14194 unique events, 1699 were reported by two different sources, 758 were reported by 3 different sources and 300 were reported by all four sources.

We know that using newspapers as a data source is potentially controversial. Yet there are limited other data sources providing wide ranging coverage of events. Moreover, while watchdog institutions like Freedom House are critical of press freedom in Bangladesh, they also state that print media is given relatively more scope to publish freely.

With regard to the coding, the first safeguard is the codebook, which has been designed to minimize the interpretation by the individual coders; This not only through delineating specific variables, but also by offering specific coding protocols in the case of uncertainty. This is also the reason (see above and below) why we have chosen a quite narrow definition of political violence.

Secondly, as is common practice with many of these coding exercises, the coding protocol was also designed that no coder would code the same time period across the different newspapers, or would code the same newspaper across a long time period. Coders were regularly shifted from one newspaper to the next. In practice this means that a coder would code e.g. January-March of newspaper 1, April-June of newspaper 2, July-September of newspaper 3 and October-November of newspaper 4. Given the fact that we had 5-6 coders this meant a lot of variation in the newspaper-time period distribution.

3.6 Caveats

A number of caveats apply to accurately interpret the results, both of the research project in general and of this report in particular.

First, as has been mentioned, we have taken a quite narrow definition of political violence, focusing predominantly on 'organisational' violence (see definition). This to minimize the interpretation of what connotes 'political'. This has of course the major drawback that instance of violence in which the involvement of political actors, as defined, is not mentioned in the articles are not coded. Secondly, it means that violence, which does not have organizational involvement, but is political in the sense that it e.g. alters the power relations between groups are not coded. For instance, one specific type of violence: clashes between indigenous and settlers in CHT, is likely to be underrepresented in the database.

Secondly, with regard to the lethal and non-lethal casualties of violent, it should be mentioned that our estimates are expected to be conservative. The coding protocol specifies that, in the case of uncertainty, the lowest possible number of casualties should be recorded. E.g. if an article states that 'more than 100 people got wounded', it would be coded as 101 wounded. If an article states that an unknown number of people got wounded, this is coded as

unknown in the database, but recorded as 1 person wounded for this report.

Third, while we have aimed to select a representative sample of newspapers to be included in the study, we have unfortunately a regional bias. As mentioned, three of the newspapers have regional editions that include additional news about a specific region, e.g. Sylhet or Chittagong. While instances of political violence are usually covered in the general newspaper sections, it is not unthinkable that smaller events are only recorded in the regional editions. Our database has used the Dhaka editions of the four newspapers. Not only for practical reasons, but this is also the largest circulated edition and, with Dhaka as the political centre, also probably the one with most influence on policy and policy makers. Notwithstanding, the inclusion of regional editions could have resulted in more events being covered.

With regard to the results presented here a number of caveats also apply. This report aims to present almost 'raw' data; this to be able to disseminate the results as quickly as possible. One of the downsides is that only a limited effort is made to complete (admittedly very rare) instances of missing data. That also means that no data sampling procedures have been applied, for instance in making a 'new' year, alternating weekly or monthly data of the different newspapers.

As 2013 has been marked by very high levels of political violence (see further), the findings, taking into account the whole period of 2002-2013 are also to some extent influenced by this 'exceptional' year of 2013.

Finally, and as mentioned, this report aims to present the descriptive statistics. While in earlier work we have discussed some of the mechanisms involved in the making of political violence in Bangladesh (see references and further reading), this report does not intend to 'explain' (the persistence of) violence in Bangladesh. Its aim is to provide a (quantitative) overview of political violence in Bangladesh, not to test a number of hypotheses regarding this violence. Some of these will be mentioned in the conclusion by way of next steps.

3.7 Presentation of data

Data presented here is organized around three main elements: events, wounded and lethal casualties. Events correspond to single cases in our database. We present mainly counts (Number) and column percentages of the total (Per Cent)

With regards to the groups involved in political violence we make a difference between actors and targets. Targets are those actors who become victim to an attack, while actors are the ones who participate in violence. Although the

separation between actors and targets is often not that straightforward in reality, we could say that actors are active and targets passive. In both cases, we try to remain as true as possible to the newspaper reports.

Data are both presented for political organisations and political families. This division is most important for the political parties and their respective wings. The former are disaggregated and distinguish between a political party and the different wings. Political families represent the (aggregated) groups counting political parties together with their wings.

With regard to the political organisations we have aggregated a number of individual organisations. (Former) rebel groups both include left-wing insurgents and groups involved in the CHT conflict (both past and present, like PCJSS and UPDF. Islamist group (non-JeI) includes both a number of smaller Islamist political parties and their wings and more radical Islamist groups. Finally, Left-Wing party organisation includes both political parties and their wings.

In some cases (e.g. tables 8-11) we have used multiple response sets as more than one actor is often involved in one event. As must be clear, the sum of (column) percentages in this type of table does not add up to 100%, but the percentages rather reflect the share of a particular political group in the events, or in the number of wounded, keeping in mind that in the same event more than one group can be active.

4. The Distribution of Political Violence in Bangladesh

4.1 Overall trends

As expected, violent events are not distributed evenly across time periods, but a number of key years can easily be discerned. When combined with the data for wounded and lethal casualties one gets a picture of the overall scope and intensity of the violence across the time period (see table 2 and figure 2).

First, a number of years record quite limited numbers of violent events. 2002 and 2003,

the beginning of the BNP regime, were relatively quiet. Yet the single most important time-period for low levels of violence was the caretaker government (2007-8). Although some of the newspaper personal interviewed mentioned a possible self-censorship in those years it is quite apparent that the curbing of open political party activity put a substantial hold on political violence.

Table 2: Violent political events, wounded and lethal casualties 2002-2013

	Events		Wounded		Lethal Casualties	
	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
2002	668	4,7%	6015	4,8%	113	4,7%
2003	639	4,5%	5833	4,6%	116	4,8%
2004	910	6,4%	9433	7,5%	170	7,0%
2005	989	7,0%	7896	6,2%	271	11,2%
2006	2051	14,5%	21607	17,1%	330	13,7%
2007	274	1,9%	1689	1,3%	90	3,7%
2008	379	2,7%	2413	1,9%	84	3,5%
2009	985	6,9%	5975	4,7%	105	4,4%
2010	993	7,0%	8542	6,8%	139	5,7%
2011	1096	7,7%	12159	9,6%	124	5,1%
2012	1333	9,4%	14442	11,4%	109	4,5%
2013	3870	27,3%	30353	24,0%	765	31,7%
Total	14187	100,0%	126355	100,0%	2418	100,0%

Secondly, the events are relatively uniformly distributed over the years, with the exception of two years. The former record shares between 6,4 and 9,4 per cent of all events (2004-5-9-10-11-12). The two years recording very high levels of violent events are 2006, the final year of the BNP regime and the period in the run-up to the caretaker government takeover and 2013, the final year of the last AL regime, with both the discussion about the installation of a caretaker government to organize elections, and the protests related to the war crime tribunals.

If we take into account the wounded and the lethal casualties, a more diverse picture emerges: 2006, emerges as violent in terms of events (14,5 per cent), slightly less lethal (13,7 per cent), but resulting in more wounded (17,1 per cent); 2012 accounts for a relatively average number of events (9,8 per cent), with a higher share of wounded (11,4 per cent), while recording a relatively low percentages of lethal casualties (4,5 per cent); 2013 finally, is highly violent, but accounts for a slightly lower percentage of wounded (24 per cent), but also almost a third of all lethal casualties (31,7 per cent).

Overall our dataset of 14187 single events records over 126300 wounded and over 2400 lethal casualties across the 2002-2013 period.

Figure 2: Percentage of events, wounded and lethal casualties by year (2002-2013)

34
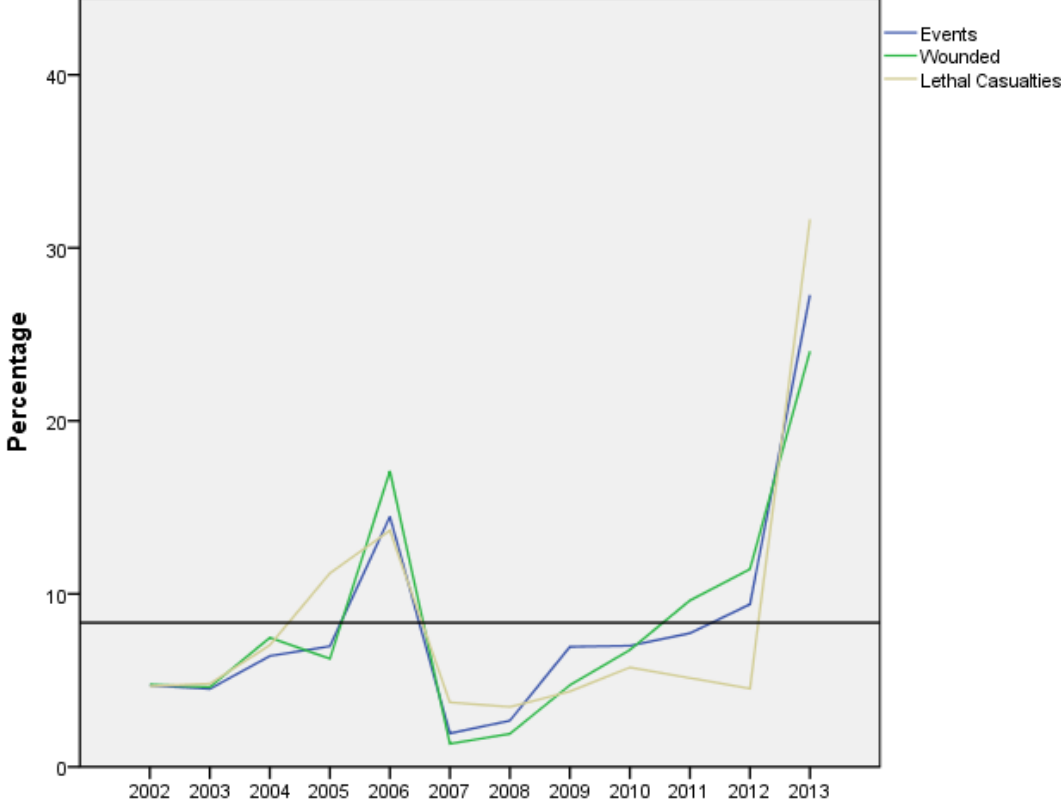
Figure 2 show the same trend with only two years (2006 and 2013) emerging above the mean line, with regard to all three elements of events, wounded and lethal casualties; 2012 being above for events and wounded, 2011 being above for wounded and 2005 being above for lethal casualties alone.

4.2 Geographical distribution of violence

4.2.1 By division

The regional variation in events of political violence is quite extensive (see table 3). Dhaka division, containing the capital district of Dhaka, is the most affected by political violence with about a third of all events being recorded in this division. Next, a group of three divisions (Chittagong, Rajshahi and Khulna) are a middle group, with Chittagong division, with the second largest city of the country as capital clearly being affected most. Finally, a third group of divisions (Rangpur, Barisal and Sylhet) are substantially less affected. Finally, reports that explicitly state to have affected multiple divisions, without specifying particular events in particular divisions only make up about 1 per cent of all events.

The numbers for wounded (non-lethal casualties) of political violence, partly indicating the intensity of violence, follow a similar pattern, with Dhaka being clearly most affected, followed by Chittagong, Rajshahi and Khulna, with Rangpur, Barisal and Sylhet being the least affected. Interestingly, while only 1% of all events are indicated to take place in multiple divisions, these intensive events account for 10,6 per cent of wounded (see also further).

Table 3: Divisional distribution of violent events, wounded and casualties

	Events		Wounded		Lethal Casualties	
	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
Dhaka	4755	33,5%	40433	32,0%	438	18,1%
Chittagong	2642	18,6%	20882	16,5%	402	16,6%
Rajshahi	2073	14,6%	15546	12,3%	440	18,2%
Khulna	2010	14,2%	12991	10,3%	696	28,8%
Rangpur	891	6,3%	9156	7,2%	106	4,4%
Barisal	881	6,2%	6895	5,5%	45	1,9%
Sylhet	635	4,5%	5768	4,6%	58	2,4%
Multiple divisions	177	1,2%	13445	10,6%	221	9,1%
Unspecified	123	0,9%	1238	1,0%	11	0,5%
Total	14187	100,0%	126355	100,0%	2418	100,0%

Finally, the figures for lethal casualties offer the most diverse pattern, with not Dhaka, but Khulna Division recording the most lethal casualties (28,8 per cent), and Rajshahi (18,2 per cent) recording a similar share as the Capital (18,1 per cent). Chittagong only takes the fourth position (with 16,6 per cent). Rangpur records slightly higher lethal casualty shares than the other 'quiet' divisions of Barisal and Sylhet. Finally, violence in multiple division again registers quite a high share with 9,1 per cent.

4.2.2 By district

The statistics for violence by district allow understanding better these divisional variations (see tables 4-6).

Dhaka District is again most affected by violent events (see table 4), followed by different districts containing major cities: Chittagong, Rajshahi, Narayanganj and Sylhet. Khulna, Barisal and Gazipur take more middle position in this list of most affected districts, with Rangpur being comparatively less affected (see table 4). Of the districts not containing a major city, Noakhali, Pabna, Comilla, Kushtia and Bogra top the list of districts highly affected by events of political violence. What should also be noted is the relatively even distribution of violent events among the top-twenty most affected districts. These account for about two thirds of the total events, but apart from Dhaka districts (with

15,7 per cent of all events) rates of between 5,1 and 1,5 per cent of all violent events are recorded for all of these top twenty districts.

Table 4: Most affected districts (events)

	Events	
	Number	Per Cent
Dhaka	2230	15,7%
Chittagong	728	5,1%
Rajshahi	570	4,0%
Narayanganj	518	3,7%
Noakhali	423	3,0%
Sylhet	410	2,9%
Pabna	357	2,5%
Barisal	353	2,5%
Comilla	350	2,5%
Khulna	348	2,5%
Kushtia	347	2,4%
Bogra	345	2,4%
Gazipur	306	2,2%
Mymensingh	300	2,1%
Sirajganj	296	2,1%
Jessore	268	1,9%
Jhenaidah	247	1,7%
Satkhira	236	1,7%
Feni	222	1,6%
Natore	216	1,5%

a. Other Districts in order of frequency (high to low): Rangpur, Munshiganj, Lakshmipur, Patuakhali, Jamalpur, Chandpur, Multiple districts, Bagarhat, Brahmanbaria, Dinajpur, Tangail, Natrakona, Magura, Gaibandha, Narsingdi, Bhola, Khagrachchari, Cox's Bazar, Unspecified, Nilphamari, Faridpur, Rangamati, Pirojpur, Nawabganj, Kishoreganj, Joypurhat, Lalmonirhat, Chuadanga, Meherpur, Habiganj, Kurigram, Mankganj, Madaripur, Naogaon, Maulvibazar, Sunamganj, Thakurgoan, Gopalganj, Narail, Barguna, Shariatpur, Jhalokati, Sherpur, Rajbari, Panchagarh, Bandarban

We find a similar pattern for wounded from violence (see table 5). As mentioned, this offers an indication of the overall intensity of the violence. Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, and Narayanganj again top the list, with Rangpur also appearing relatively high in the list. Again we see that the number of wounded is quite uniformly distributed

over districts. With the exception of Dhaka (14,4%), all top-twenty districts having between 3,8 and 1,5 per cent of wounded.

Table 5: Most affected districts (wounded)

	Wounded	
	Number	Per Cent
Dhaka	18150	14,4%
Chittagong	4825	3,8%
Rajshahi	4801	3,8%
Narayanganj	4271	3,4%
Noakhali	3448	2,7%
Sirajganj	3428	2,7%
Sylhet	3233	2,6%
Rangpur	2881	2,3%
Comilla	2862	2,3%
Mymensingh	2436	1,9%
Kushtia	2325	1,8%
Bogra	2259	1,8%
Barisal	2203	1,7%
Munshiganj	2185	1,7%
Gazipur	2166	1,7%
Brahmanbaria	2126	1,7%
Patuakhali	2068	1,6%
Khulna	2062	1,6%
Pabna	2037	1,6%
Chandpur	1869	1,5%
Multiple districts	13445	10,6%

a. Other districts in order of number of wounded (high to low): Jhenaidah, Narsingdi, Jamalpur, Lakshmipur, Cox's Bazar, Dinajpur, Satkhira, Natore, Bhola, Natrakona, Kishoreganj, Magura, Nilphamari, Unspecified, Habiganj, Feni, Faridpur, Jessore, Bagarhat, Gaibandha, Tangail, Lalmonirhat, Nawabganj, Sunamganj, Khagrachchari, Madaripur, Gopalganj, Meherpur, Kurigram, Thakurgoan, Pirojpur, Maulvibazar, Mankganj, Narail, Shariatpur, Joypurhat, Rangamati, Chuadanga, Naogaon, Barguna, Jhalokati, Panchagarh, Sherpur, Bandarban, Rajbari.

The statistics for lethal casualties again show a more differentiated picture (see table 5). Dhaka accounts for only 7,4 per cent of all casualties, with 'non-city' districts Kushtia or Pabna recording high casualty figures. Rangamati, a district in CHT with low event and wounded counts, has a relatively high number of lethal casualties,

indicating the often-deadly nature of the few events that take place.

Table 6: Most affected districts (lethal casualties)

	Lethal casualties	
	Number	Per Cent
Kushtia	208	8,6%
Dhaka	179	7,4%
Pabna	138	5,7%
Khulna	115	4,8%
Chittagong	108	4,5%
Rangamati	83	3,4%
Jhenaidah	80	3,3%
Narayanganj	78	3,2%
Bogra	67	2,8%
Chuadanga	64	2,6%
Jessore	64	2,6%
Satkhira	62	2,6%
Rajshahi	60	2,5%
Meherpur	59	2,4%
Lakshmipur	47	1,9%
Natore	44	1,8%
Sirajganj	42	1,7%
Sylhet	39	1,6%
Noakhali	39	1,6%
Naogaon	38	1,6%
Multiple districts	221	9,1%

a. Other districts in order of number (high to low): Khagrachchari, Narsingdi, Comilla, Nawabganj, Gazipur, Cox's Bazar, Barisal, Gaibandha, Joypurhat, Bagarhat, Nilphamari, Feni, Chandpur, Munshiganj, Rangpur, Kishoreganj, Lalmonirhat, Dinajpur, Magura, Rajbari, Faridpur, Patuakhali, Habiganj, Natrakona, Mymensingh, Unspecified, Thakurgoan, Tangail, Narail, Madaripur, Mankganj, Shariatpur, Pirojpur, Brahmanbaria, Maulvibazar, Jamalpur, Sherpur, Kurigram, Panchagarh, Sunamganj, Gopalganj, Jhalokati, Bhola, Bandarban, Barguna

With seven of its ten districts in the top twenty and one district: Kushtia, the most affected, Khulna division indeed ranks high in the rate of lethal casualties in political violence.

4.2.3 Urban and rural violence

Violence in the main urban centres (city corporations), while being the most visible, accounts for about one fourth of all violence (see table 7). While a similar number of people are wounded in these events, it is interesting that the violence is relatively less lethal, with only 13,7 per cent of lethal casualties resulting from violence within city corporation limits. If we consider the (conservative) population estimates of the census of Bangladesh, which records only about 10 per cent of the population living within the city corporation limits, the share of violence of city corporations is relatively high.

If we consider not simply violence within city limits, but also include violence in the districts in which the city corporations are located, a slightly different picture emerges. Most importantly these city districts account for over 40 per cent of events and over 35 per cent of wounded, with only slightly over 30 per cent of the population living in these urban districts. While rural locations record higher shares for lethal violence, with about 28 per cent of all lethal casualties recorded in city districts, this is more or less in line with the population figures.

Table 7: Urban-rural distribution of events, wounded and lethal casualties

		Events	Wounded	Lethal Casualties
		Per Cent	Per Cent	Per Cent
City corporations[a]	Rural	75,2%	75,4%	86,3%
	Urban	24,8%	24,6%	13,7%
City districts[b]	Rural	57,6%	62,4%	72,1%
	Urban	42,4%	37,6%	27,9%

[a]Urban is violence within the boundaries of the city corporations, excluding Gazipur (its boundaries were not yet delimitated at the time of writing).
[b]Urban is violence within the boundaries of districts containing city corporations (including Gazipur).

4.2.4 Dhaka Violence

The role of the capital Dhaka (and its surrounding district) warrants a short note. As figure 3 shows, while Dhaka has remained one of the crucial centres for political violence in Bangladesh, its share in overall political violence has been far from uniform. The yearly variation shows its importance, or even dominance for events of political violence and, to an even larger extent, wounded in political violence. Yet this violence has generally been less lethal, with quite big variations across the 2002-2013 period. Certainly in the beginning of the time period, Dhaka registered a relatively large percentage of yearly lethal casualties. Moreover, although the trend is not very pronounced, its dominance in the overall scenario of political violence seems to be decreasing slightly.

Figure 3: Percentage of events, wounded and lethal casualties taking place in Dhaka by year (2002-2013)
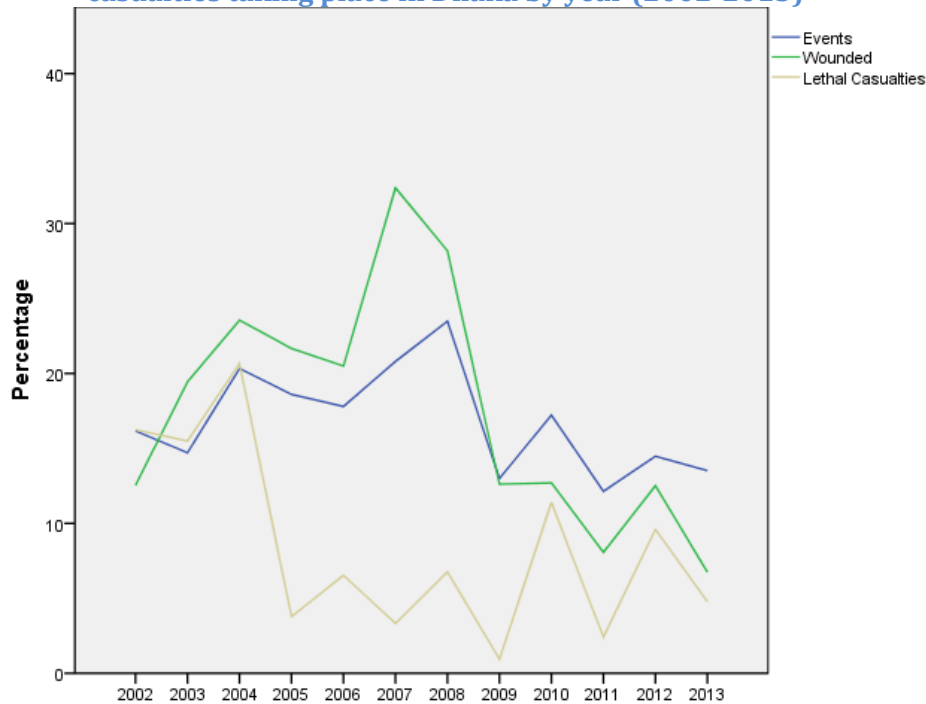
4.3 Actor-wise distribution of violence

The next section discusses the actors involved in political violence in Bangladesh and those targeted by political violence (see section 3.7 for more info on the distinction). It first focuses on the shares of individual political organisations and 'families' of political organisation. As mentioned, political organisations are the specific groups, like parties, student groups and rebel groups, while the political families aggregate the data according to a main political party, which can be considered to be the parent organisation of the political family.

We also mention different type of alliances (AL, BNP, JeI) as actors. These are based on the media reports, and refer both to reports in which it is mentioned that one of the main political parties and one or more of their (unspecified) auxiliary organisations are participating, and when the articles refer to political alliances led by one of the main political parties (e.g. the Grand Alliance, Four-Party alliances or a combination of JeI with other Islamist groups). Although we have disaggregated data for both types, we have decided to aggregate these two for conciseness.

Second, we provide data on violent clashes (tables 12-13). Clashes here are considered to be events of political violence in which two or more actors are recorded as

opposing each other or taking different sides in the violent event. We establish which political organisations and political families clash predominantly with whom. In this section the extent of intra and inter-group violence is discussed. Intra-group refers to either a clash with a political organisation, or, when discussing political families, within one family. Inter-group refers to either a clash with another political organisation, or, when discussing political families, between different families. Intergroup violence on the level of political organisations can thus be intra-group on the level of political families.

Multiple response sets are used to account for the presence of more than one group or political family in a single event. Data thus reflect the events in which a particular group or political family is one of the actors (not excluding other actors or political families to be involved in the same event).

4.3.1 Political groups and families involved as actors and targets
Table 8 shows the presence of different political groups and organisations as one of the actors in political violent events, and the wounded and lethal casualties resulting from these events.

Law enforcement agencies are the single most active group of actors in political violence, closely followed by (political party) activists of AL and BNP, who

participate each in about a fourth of all events. However, when taking into account wounded and lethal casualties, events in which law enforcement agencies are active contain a much larger share of wounded (43,5 per cent) and lethal casualties (53 per cent.

BNP and AL have relatively similar shares for events, wounded and lethal causalities, They participate in over a fourth of events each and these events result in around 30 per cent of wounded for each party. However, less lethal casualties are reported from events in which activists of these political parties are actors (at around 13 per cent each).

The student wings of both parties, BCL and JCD, are also main actors in political violence, BCL being substantially more active (15,6 per cent) than JCD (11 per cent). Violence in which these groups participate contain slightly less wounded, with the shares for lethal casualties being substantially lower with 5 per cent for violence in which BCL participates and 4,1 per cent for violence in which JCD participates.

The other wings of AL and BNP are substantially less active, with BJL only participating in 4,4 per cent of events and JJD a relatively low 2,8 per cent of events, with similar or slightly lower shares for wounded and lethal casualties.

Table 8: Involvement of major individual political organisations and alliances in violent events (Multiple Response, Actors)

	Events		Wounded		Lethal Casualties	
	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
Law enforcement agency	3519	24,9%	54951	43,5%	1278	53,0%
Awami League	3238	22,9%	35384	28,0%	299	12,4%
Bangladesh Nationalist Party	3112	22,0%	39811	31,5%	323	13,4%
Bangladesh Chhatro League	2210	15,6%	15151	12,0%	121	5,0%
BNP centred alliance	1598	11,3%	17056	13,5%	222	9,2%
Jatiyatabadi Chhatro Dal	1553	11,0%	12043	9,5%	99	4,1%
Jamaat-e-Islami centred alliance	1034	7,3%	8109	6,4%	330	13,7%
Islami Chhatro Shibir	887	6,3%	8483	6,7%	92	3,8%
Awami League centred alliance	836	5,9%	11931	9,5%	112	4,6%
Jubo League	629	4,4%	4113	3,3%	84	3,5%
(Former) Rebel Group	591	4,2%	617	0,5%	700	29,0%
Jubo Dal	400	2,8%	3779	3,0%	63	2,6%
Jamaat-e-Islami	330	2,3%	4221	3,3%	68	2,8%
Islamist Group (non-JeI)	203	1,4%	4155	3,3%	106	4,4%
Left-Wing Party organisations	81	0,6%	804	0,6%	44	1,8%
Jatiya Party	74	0,5%	970	0,8%	2	0,1%

Political parties often operate in the already mentioned types of alliances, with certainly those around BNP and JeI being active. JeI even mostly operates as part of an alliance of actors (active in 7,3 per cent of events, compared to individual JeI involvement in only 2,3 per cent of events). While for BNP-alliances shares for wounded and casualties are roughly proportional to their involvement as actors in events, for JeI-alliances the share for lethal casualties resulting from violence in which JeI participates is much higher (13,7 per cent) as compared to their shares for events and wounded. AL-centred alliances are less active. Finally, it is interesting that for JeI, both its alliances and its student wing, ICS, participate much more in violent events than JeI party activists on their own.

(Former) rebel movements and certainly the Islamist groups are active in a rather small number of events. Yet, these events result in rather large numbers of lethal casualties. Violence in which Left-wing and CHT rebel groups are engaged result in almost 30 per cent of all lethal casualties. If we disaggregate this data more, it is predominantly the left wing groups who are engaged in lethal events. PBCP-related events account for over 50 per cent of the total number of casualties stemming from events involving (former) rebel groups and events in which an array of different left-wing rebel groups, like the (New) Biplobi Communist Party and Gono Mukti Fauz, are active for a further 30 per cent. Events involving UPDF result in just over 15 per cent of the total number of lethal casualties

from events involving (former) rebel groups. Similar to rebel movements, Islamist groups (often of a proscribed nature) are only active in only 1,4 per cent of events, but these events result in 4,4 per cent of lethal casualties.

Table 9 gives data for the same groups, but this time not for their involvement as actors, but rather as targets of political violence. As mentioned before, this distinction between actors and targets is based on the newspaper reports and the dividing line is not always as clear-cut. Moreover the absolute numbers for events, wounded and lethal casualties from attacks are substantially lower than those for those in which groups engage as actors, reflecting

the lesser number of events coded as attacks in our database.

The data for targets/attacks follows many of the trends we already discussed for actors. Yet, importantly, state security forces are much less likely to be targets of political violence than actors. It is predominantly the political parties and their wings that are attacked.

While JeI-centered alliances were quite prominent as actors, they are almost not targeted by violence. Other alliances are similarly reported to be involved in substantially lower shares of events as targets compared to as actors.

Table 9: Involvement of major political organisations in violent events (Multiple Response, Targets)

	Events		Wounded		Lethal Casualties	
	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
Awami League	1004	20,6%	11303	30,7%	176	17,8%
Bangladesh Nationalist Party	716	14,7%	6709	18,2%	146	14,8%
Bangladesh Chhatro League	504	10,4%	3076	8,4%	54	5,5%
Jatiyatabadi Chhatro Dal	339	7,0%	1854	5,0%	46	4,6%
Law enforcement agency	229	4,7%	1547	4,2%	45	4,6%
Jubo League	228	4,7%	1453	3,9%	73	7,4%
Islami Chhatro Shibir	169	3,5%	1188	3,2%	46	4,7%
Jubo Dal	150	3,1%	690	1,9%	60	6,1%
BNP centred alliance	129	2,7%	2008	5,5%	26	2,6%
(Former) Rebel group	116	2,4%	89	0,2%	144	14,6%
Left-Wing Party organisations	104	2,1%	1071	2,9%	39	3,9%
Awami League centred alliance	98	2,0%	1312	3,6%	17	1,7%
Jamaat-e-Islami	75	1,5%	887	2,4%	29	3,0%
Islamist Group (non-JeI)	36	0,7%	1010	2,7%	13	1,3%
Jatiya Party	23	0,5%	115	0,3%	1	0,1%
JeI centred alliance	11	0,2%	79	0,2%	1	0,1%

If we aggregate the data for the major political families (see table 10-11), it is clear that AL and BNP are the two political families by far most involved as actors in violent political events (see table 10). Both parties are actors in over 40 per cent of the total number of violent events. While the shares for wounded are similar or slightly more elevated, they record substantially lower shares of lethal casualties, at around 20-25 per cent for both. State actors, predominantly police are involved in about a fourth of all violent events, but, as mentioned, these events results in much higher shares of both wounded and lethal casualties, around 40-50 per cent of the total. JeI-related actors are engaged in 14,7 per cent of violent events. These events result in a about the same percentage of wounded. Yet, violence in which JeI is involved, accounts for almost 20 per cent of all lethal casualties.

The data for targets show relatively similar trends, although at slightly lower levels indicating the more diffuse nature of attacks.

Figure 4 allows us to shed some more light on the yearly distribution of lethal casualties and the involvement of the major political families (excluding state actors) involved in political violence. We see major variations in the shares of the different political families across different years. Most pronounced is the consistently low percentage of lethal events recorded involving JeI over the period 2002 to 2012 and their rise to prominence in 2013 (see further).

Table 10: Involvement of major political families in violent events (Multiple Response, Actors)

	Events		Wounded		Lethal casualties	
	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
Awami League	6330	44,8%	58578	46,4%	536	22,3%
Bangladesh Nationalist Party	6240	44,1%	66112	52,4%	640	26,6%
State Actor	3521	24,9%	54963	43,6%	1279	53,1%
Jamaat-e-Islami	2076	14,7%	18210	14,4%	450	18,7%

Table 11: Involvement of major political families in violent events (Multiple Response, Targets)

	Events		Wounded		Lethal Casualties	
	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
Awami League	1733	35,6%	15585	42,3%	311	31,5%
Bangladesh Nationalist Party	1278	26,3%	10689	29,0%	264	26,7%
State Actor	237	4,9%	1583	4,3%	45	4,6%
Jamaat-e-Islami	236	4,9%	1933	5,3%	64	6,5%

At the same time, we see a decline of lethal rebel group related violence in recent years, although it is too early to make definite conclusions about this trend. The shares for AL and BNP, while showing much variance across years, show a sometimes surprisingly similar distribution (excluding 2009-2010), although period of the BNP regime (and certainly in the beginning of this regime), saw a higher share of BNP-related lethal events. Similarly, during the AL regime, AL-related events produced a larger share of lethal casualties (again with a clear dominance in the beginning of this regime).

Figure 4: Involvement of major political families in lethal events by year (percentage)
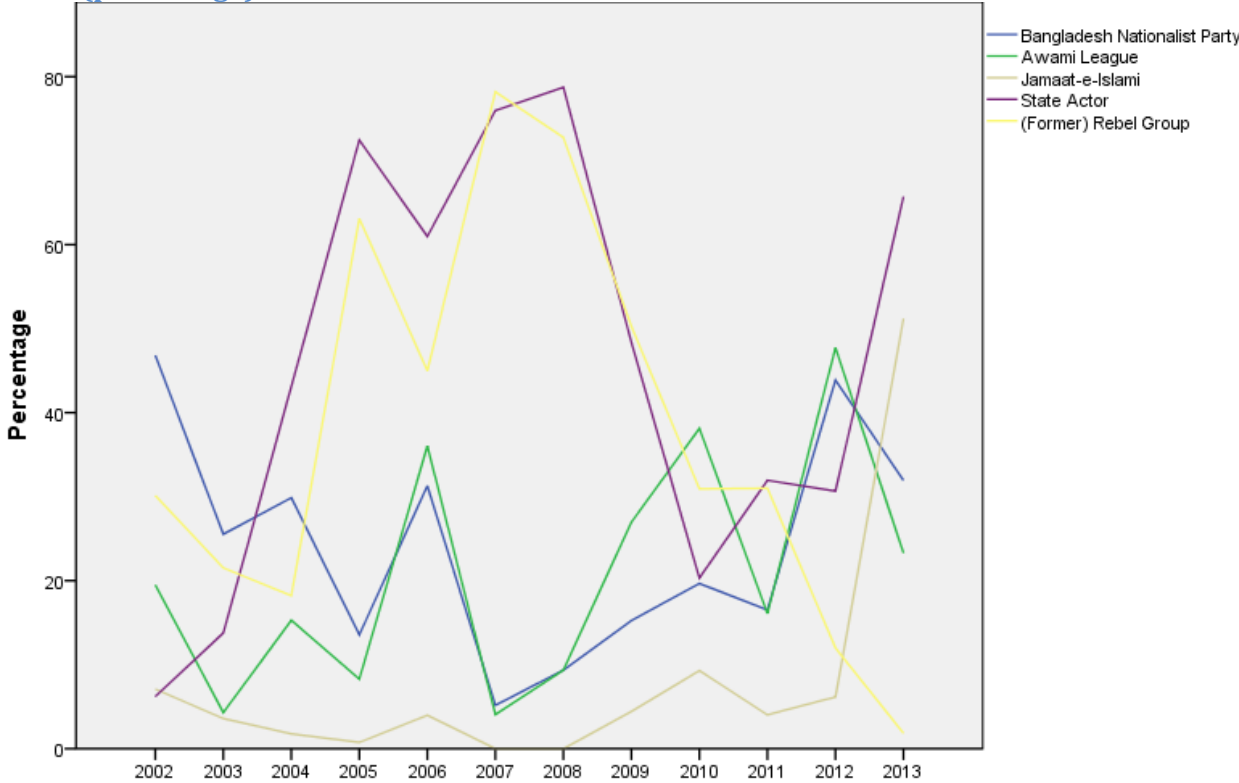
Table 12: Violent events (clashes) between main political organisations and alliances (Counts, Multiple Response, Actors)

	Law enforcement	Awami League	Bangladesh Nationalist Party	Chhatro League	Chhatro Dal	BNP centred alliance	AL centred alliance	Chhatro Shibir	JeI centred alliance	(Former) Rebel Group	Jamaat-e-Islami	Jubo Dal	Jubo League	Islamist Group (non-JeI)	Left-Wing Party organisation	Jatiya Party
Law enforcement	**6**	315[a]	515[a]	80	117[a]	490[d]	244[c]	251[c]	511[e]	400[e]	135[c]	63[b]	40[a]	117[e]	31[d]	6
Awami League	315	**600**[b]	1192[d]	56	43	155[a]	19	30	53	1	89[b]	33[a]	53[a]	17	1	14[b]
Bangladesh Nationalist Party	515[a]	1192[d]	**589**[b]	82	21	25	86[a]	7	4	2	23	18	53[a]	3	2	7[a]
Chhatro League	80	56	82	**674**[d]	333[b]	30	6	191[b]	38	-	6	22	78[b]	13	11[a]	3
Chhatro Dal	117	43	21	333[b]	**364**[c]	5	8	140[b]	5	-	2	34[a]	20	1	11[a]	4
BNP centred alliance	490[a]	155	25	30	5	**7**	280[d]	2	1	-	4	-	10	-	-	-
AL centred alliance	244	19	86	6	8	280[b]	**13**	5	13	-	16	1	1	9	-	2
Chhatro Shibir	251	30	7	191[a]	140[a]	2	5	**5**	4	-	2	3	13	-	6	5
JeI centred alliance	511[a]	53	4	38	5	1	13	4	**3**	1	-	1	12	-	-	1
(Former) Rebel Group	400[a]	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	**67**[a]	-	-	-	-	1	-
Jamaat-e-Islami	135	89	23	6	2	4	16	2	-	-	**1**	-	7	2	-	2
Jubo Dal	63	33	18	22	34	-	1	3	1	-	-	**82**[b]	38[a]	-	-	1
Jubo League	40	53	53	78	20	10	1	13	12	-	7	38[a]	**98**[c]	9	1	2
Islamist Group (non-JeI)	117	17	3	13	1	-	9	-	-	-	2	-	9	**4**	-	-
Left-Wing party organisation	31	1	2	11	11	-	-	6	-	1	-	-	1	-	**6**	16[b]
Jatiya Party	6	14	7	3	4	-	2	5	1	-	2	1	2	-	16[b]	**17**[b]
Column total (incl. not listed groups)	3419	2728	2672	1668	1142	1015	707	686	667	481	453	302	296	190	73	71

[a] ≥ 10% of column (rounded) [b] ≥ 20% of column (rounded) [c] ≥ 30% of column (rounded) [d] ≥ 40% of column (rounded) [e] ≥ 50% of column (rounded) **Bold = intra-group violence**

Table 13: Violent events (clashes) between major political families (Multiple Response, Actors)

	Awami League	Bangladesh Nationalist Party	State Actor	Jamaat-e-Islami
	Number	Number	Number	Number
Awami League	**1519**[c]	1988[d]	586[a]	404[b]
Bangladesh Nationalist Party	1988[d]	**1104**[b]	1032[c]	182[a]
State Actor	586[a]	1032[b]	**7**	761[e]
Jamaat-e-Islami	404	182	761[b]	**13**
Column total (incl. not listed families)	4678	4422	3038	1416

[a] ≥ 10% of column   [b] ≥ 20% of column   [c] ≥ 30% of column   [d] ≥ 40% of column   [e] ≥ 50% of column

4.3.2 Groups and families involved in clashes

To further develop the data given above, we take a look at the data for clashes between different groups. (Tables 12-13) Again we have provided tables for the different organisations and alliances involved (table 12) and, the more aggregated, data for the major political families (table 13). Although not straightforward to read and with many cells having low counts, some broad trends can be discerned.

First, as expected, clashes between Awami League and BNP are the most pronounced, with more than 40 per cent of clashes for both parties being of this nature.

Secondly, law enforcement agencies engage in clashes with a broad spectrum of actors, but form the major opponent for (former) rebel groups, BNP alliances, Left-Wing party organisations and most of the Islamist parties and groups, with more than half for non-JeI Islamist parties and groups, more than 30 per cent for JeI and more than a third for ICS.

The source material does not allow drawing very fine-grained conclusions about the specific nature of the involvement of state security forces in political violence.

Table 14: Involvement of law enforcement agencies in events

	Per cent of total events
Participant from start event	24,2%
Arrives during the event	2,6%
Arrives, remains inactive during the event	0,8%
Arrives, intervenes during the event	3,4%
Arrives, separates sides in event	3,0%
Arrives, participates in event on side A	0,5%
Arrives, participates in event on side B	0,2%
Arrives after the violent event	17,6%

Yet, as table 14 shows, in about a quarter of all events law enforcement agencies are active from the start of the event, in about 10 per cent of events they arrive during the violence and take up different roles and in just over 17 per cent of all events they arrive on the scene after the violence has finished (and are per definition not recorded as actors).

Third, Student groups clash predominantly with other student groups, with a large number of clashes being factional in nature. More than 40 per cent of BCL clashes are factional; for JCD this is about one third. Only ICS has low levels of reported factional violence. Moreover, their opponents in inter-group clashes often also belong to (rival) student organisations.

Fourth, in total almost 20 per cent of all clashes are factional. Apart from the student groups, factional violence is quite prominent for a number of groups including BNP, AL, Jubo League and Jubo Dal, Jatiya Party and for (former) rebel groups (although this might reflect UPDF-PCJSS violence).

The aggregated data confirms these trends (table 13), with AL and BNP engaged in most clashes. State security forces predominantly clash with BNP organisations, followed by JeI, with a lower share for AL. JeI organisations engage mostly state security forces and clash to a lesser extent with both AL and BNP organisations.

4.4 Hartal violence

As mentioned in the introduction, hartal, a form of general strike, is one of the most pronounced forms of political action resulting in violence in Bangladesh. In our database 369 hartal-days were recorded for the 2002-2013 period. These hartals resulted of course in widely diverging amounts of violence, with the most violent hartal recording more than 50 separate events, but many only counting one or two instances of political violence.

About a quarter of all violent events occur during hartals, with a slightly higher percentage for wounded. Hartal violence is slightly less lethal recording under a fifth of all lethal casualties (see table 15).

Table 15: Distribution events, wounded and lethal casualties of (no) hartal events

		Events	Wounded	Lethal Casualties
Hartal event?	No	75,1%	72,6%	80,4%
	Yes	24,9%	27,4%	19,6%

As can be seen from figure 5, the incidence of hartal is quite diverging, both with regard to violent events associated with hartal as a percentage of the total number of violent events for each year (blue line), and with regard to the percentage of the total number of violent events during hartal by year (green line).
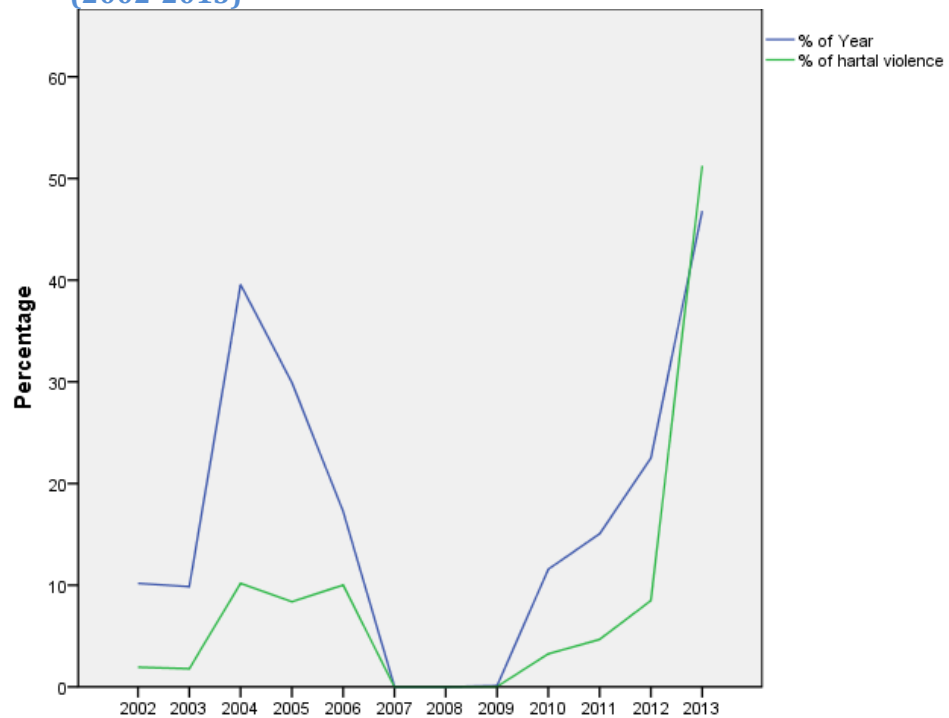
The year 2013 stands out, with about half of the total number of hartal events; almost half the violent events in 2013 also occurred during hartals.

Most other years record much lower counts in the overall incidence of hartal, with 2004-2006 and 2012 being relatively more affected. Both the caretaker government years (2007-2008) and the first year after the caretaker period (2009) record zero or close to zero hartal events.

With regard to the importance of hartal events in the total scenario of violence in single years – and apart from 2013 - 2004 clearly stands out with about 40 per cent of all events occurring during hartal; 2005

shows a similar high trend, with about 30 per cent of all events being hartal events.

Not surprisingly, the district-wise distribution of violence follows a similar pattern to the overall distribution of violence (see above, tables 4-6). Dhaka is by far the most affected district with regards to both hartal events and wounded resulting from these events, with major cities, like Chittagong, Narayanganj, Rajshahi and Comilla all in the top 10. Bogra, a major centre for BNP politics, and Sirajganj, which was highly affected by violence related to the war crimes tribunals also rank high (tables 16-17).

Table 16: Districts most affected by hartal violence (events)

	Events
	Per Cent
Dhaka	17,5%
Chittagong	5,1%
Narayanganj	4,3%
Bogra	3,6%
Sirajganj	3,1%
Rajshahi	3,1%
Gazipur	2,8%
Comilla	2,8%
Sylhet	2,7%
Noakhali	2,6%
Multiple districts	2,4%

Table 17: Districts most affected by hartal violence (wounded)

	Wounded
	Per Cent
Dhaka	13,2%
Naryanganj	4,0%
Chittagong	3,7%
Sirajganj	3,2%
Rajshahi	2,8%
Sylhet	2,8%
Comilla	2,7%
Bogra	2,4%
Kushtia	2,0%
Rangpur	2,0%
Multiple districts	26,1%

Again, similar to the overall distribution of lethal casualties, the picture for lethal casualties during hartal is more variegated (table 18). Dhaka only records 6,7 per cent, with high shares for Bogra (in fact being the most lethal district during hartal violence), Satkhira and Chittagong.

Notwithstanding relative low counts for Dhaka, these top four districts account for roughly a fourth of all lethal casualties during hartal.

Table 18: Districts most affected by hartal violence (lethal casualties)

	Lethal Casualties
	Per Cent
Bogra	8,0%
Dhaka	6,7%
Satkhira	6,1%
Chittagong	4,1%
Sirajganj	2,6%
Dinajpur	2,5%
Joypurhat	2,3%
Jessore	2,2%
Thakurgoan	2,2%
Lalmonirhat	2,1%
Multiple districts	30,6%

Both events and wounded (and to a lesser extent lethal casualties) are rather evenly distributed with the least violent top-ten district only accounting for e.g. 2,6 per cent of total events in hartal, 2 per cent of wounded and 2,1 per cent of lethal casualties. Importantly, events coded as multiple districts, while only representing 2,4 per cent of all events, account for 26,1 per cent of all wounded and even a 30 per cent of all lethal casualties.

Only the organisations associated with four political families have a major presence in hartal violence (see table 19). BNP and State actors actively engage in over 40 per cent and Awami League related organisations in over a third. JeI accounts

for lower shares, being active in just over a fifth of all events. BNP related hartal events result in over 50 per cent of wounded, with the share of AL relatively lower at about 40 per cent. Both have much lower shares for lethal casualties (30 and 24 per cent respectively). JeI related violence, while only leading to a relatively low number of wounded (13,4 per cent), records just over half of all lethal casualties. Violence with state actor involvement (over 40% of all hartal events), records much higher figures for wounded and lethal casualties, both hovering just above the 75 per cent mark.

Table 19: Major political families in hartal violence (Multiple Response, Actors)

	Events	Wounded	Lethal Casualties
BNP	48,6%	56,3%	30,0%
State Actor	43,1%	75,5%	76,5%
Awami League	37,7%	40,9%	24,0%
Jamaat-e-Islami	21,7%	13,4%	50,2%

4.5 Political violence in 2006 and 2013

Two years in the 2002-2013 period, 2006 and 2013, show a distinct magnitude of violence and thus warrant some closer attention. We will first discuss the regional and organisational dynamics of the 2006 violence and then, more extensively, focus on the 2013 violence.

4.5.1 Political violence in 2006

Our database presents 2006 as one of the most politically violent years in

Bangladesh. Some 2051 violent events occurred in 2006, which resulted in 21607 wounded and 330 lethal casualties (see table 2 and more discussion in section 4.1). Political violence in 2006 centred on electoral reforms related to voter lists and the appointment of the Chief of the caretaker government, but also included operations against left-wing insurgents in Southwest Bangladesh.

Table 20: District-wise distribution of Lethal casualties and events (2006)

	Lethal Casualties	Events
Pabna	10,4%	2,6%
Kushtia	9,3%	2,5%
Khulna	7,8%	2,9%
Dhaka	6,5%	17,8%
Jhenaidah	4,2%	1,5%
Chittagong	3,0%	3,4%
Jessore	3,0%	2,2%
Naogaon	2,9%	0,7%
Narayanganj	2,5%	2,9%
Chuadanga	2,4%	1,0%
Meherpur	2,3%	0,6%
Bogra	2,2%	2,0%
Khagrachhari	2,1%	1,8%
Nawabganj	1,8%	0,7%
Dinajpur	1,8%	0,7%
Multiple districts	14,5%	1,2%

Table 20 shows the leading role of Dhaka in these violent events, with a share of 17,8 per cent. Yet, Dhaka ranks only fourth for lethal casualties, with a share of 6,5 per cent. Among other important regional districts, Pabna, which records a relatively average share of events, ranks highest with regards to lethal casualties with 10,4 per cent Kushtia and Khulna also record high

number of casualties (9,3 and 7,8 per cent) for only around 2-3 per cent of events.

Secondly, it is interesting that a number of political strongholds like Bogra, for BNP and Narayanganj, for AL, while being both in the top fifteen most lethal districts still score quite limited number of violent events and lethal casualties in 2006, very close, or even under their overall average.

Table 21: Major political families in political violence (2006, actors)

	Events	Wounded	Lethal Casualties
Awami League	59,2%	67,6%	36,0%
BNP	50,5%	58,9%	31,3%
State Actor	22,8%	34,6%	61,0%
Jamaat-e-Islami	7,0%	8,7%	4,0%
(Former) Rebel Group	6,4%	0,5%	45,0%

The nature of the political violence clearly is reflected in table 21, which shows the main political families active in the 2006 violence. AL, as the opposition organising against the government participated in almost 60 per cent of all events, which led to almost 70 per cent of all the wounded. Their share for lethal casualties, which at 36 per cent is markedly lower, is still quite high compared to their overall share, which hovers around the 20 per cent mark (see table 10).

BNP, being in government, records slightly higher shares for all three indicators: events, wounded and lethal casualties. State actors participated in slightly fewer events and these led to markedly less wounded, but again topping the lethal casualty figure, with 61 per cent of all lethal casualties coming from events in which they were an actor. JeI participation in political violence in 2006 is clearly under average (see also further), while the rebel group's share for lethal casualties is much higher than average, reflecting the operations against the left-wing groups.

4.5.2 Political violence in 2013

As mentioned in the introduction, and also clear from the figures and tables in the previous sections, the violence in 2013 has considerable influence on our findings. Without wanting to offer a thorough analysis of 2013 dynamics, in this final section we want to point out and reiterate a number of notable elements of the 2013 violence; this also to be able to better interpret the results for the overall 2002-2013 period.

First of course, are the high numbers of wounded and lethal casualties resulting from 2013 violence, with more than 30000 wounded and over 750 lethal casualties, coming from more than 3800 events. This makes 2013 by far the most violent year, almost dwarfing the other years, with the exception of 2006. Moreover, with around 50 per cent of all hartal events taking place in 2013, it also impacts on the overall results for hartal violence.

Figure 6: Wounded and lethal casualties by district (2002-2012/2002-2013, excluding Dhaka)
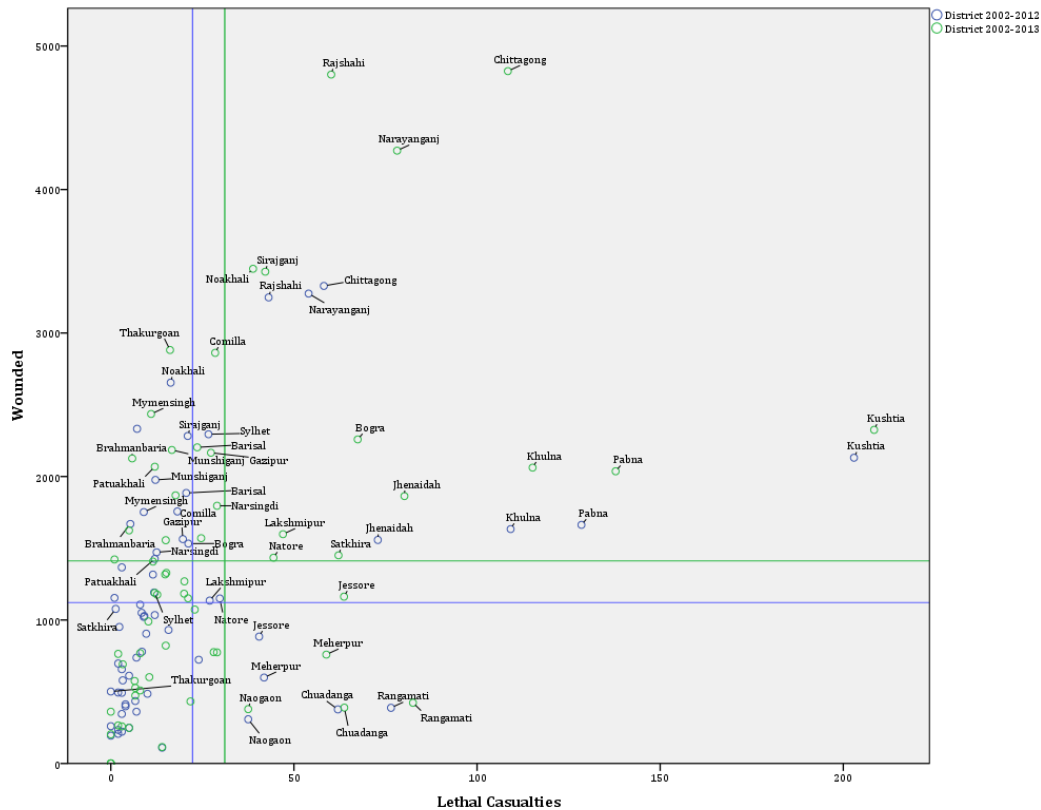
Second, and this is most clear from figure 6, 2013 has greatly impacted on the data of individual districts. The graph plots all districts according to counts for wounded and lethal casualties and offers plot points for both the period 2002-2012 and 2002-2013. This shows graphically the effect of the 2013 violence on each separate district. It clearly highlights for instance the impact on urban districts like Chittagong, Narayanganj or Rajshahi, but maybe more importantly also on districts like Satkhira or Bogra. It also allows to discern between districts where 2013 meant more wounded but limited lethal casualties (like Rajshahi or Sirajganj), and where the violence was much more lethal, with relatively less

people getting wounded (like in Satkhira). Similarly, it also shows the limited impact in some districts, like Barisal and Chuadanga.

Tables 22 and 23 further elaborate these findings. While for the 2002-2012 period, Dhaka was prominent with clearly the most events and second to Kushtia for lethal casualties, in 2013 this dominance has been challenged. Although still a majority of events took place in Dhaka district (although at a reduced 13,5%), it is only fourth in the list of most lethal districts, with Sathkira, Chittagong and Bogra topping the list. Kushtia, the most lethal district for the 2002-2012 period does not

make the top-15 in 2013. Moreover, while for the 2002-2012 period more than 8,5 per cent of all casualties were reported from Dhaka district, this is almost halved in 2013. 'Rural' districts like Satkhira, Jessore or Noakhali take a front seat. Moreover, more than 15 per cent of all lethal casualties result from events coded as 'multiple districts', mostly large-scale violent events across the country, which are, with around 1 per cent, relatively rare. For the 2002-2012 period, this is almost a third.

Table 22: district-wise distribution of violence (2002-2012)

	Lethal Casualties	Events
Kushtia	12,3%	3,0%
Dhaka	8,6%	16,5%
Pabna	7,8%	2,8%
Khulna	6,6%	2,7%
Rangamati	4,6%	1,0%
Jhenaidah	4,4%	1,8%
Chuadanga	3,8%	0,8%
Chittagong	3,5%	4,4%
Narayanganj	3,3%	3,4%
Rajshahi	2,6%	3,8%
Meherpur	2,5%	0,6%
Jessore	2,5%	1,8%
Naogaon	2,3%	0,6%
Natore	1,8%	1,5%
Lakshmipur	1,6%	1,2%
Multiple districts	5,7%	1,3%

With regard to the major political families involved, 2013 also shows a distinct pattern (see tables 24 and 25). While for the 2002-2012 period AL dominates with a participation in over 50 per cent of events, this drops to about half this in 2013. It is predominantly JeI, whose share goes up more than fourfold in 2013 against the 2002-2012 period, and to a lesser extent the state actors that cover the difference. While BNP remains relatively stable (increasing their share slightly), they become the dominant actor in 2013 being active in almost half of all events. Rebel group-related events almost disappear in 2013.

Table 23: District-wise distribution of lethal casualties and events (2013)

	Lethal Casualties	Events
Satkhira	7,9%	3,2%
Chittagong	6,6%	7,1%
Bogra	6,0%	3,5%
Dhaka	4,8%	13,5%
Narayanganj	3,2%	4,2%
Jessore	3,0%	2,0%
Noakhali	2,9%	3,0%
Sirajganj	2,8%	2,9%
Lakshmipur	2,6%	1,9%
Gaibandha	2,6%	1,4%
Joypurhat	2,6%	1,5%
Nawabganj	2,4%	1,5%
Nilphamari	2,3%	1,1%
Rajshahi	2,2%	4,7%
Meherpur	2,2%	0,7%
Multiple districts	16,4%	1,1%

Considering wounded and lethal casualties the picture become more pronounced. Certainly for JeI the rise in lethal casualties from events in which they were an actor in 2013 is very clear, from 3,6 per cent for the 2002-2012 period to over 50 per cent in 2013. The share for wounded in events in which they participated also more than triples.

Table 24: Major political families in political violence (2002-2012, actors)

	Events	Wounded	Lethal Casualties
Awami League	51,5%	50,6%	21,8%
BNP	42,2%	51,2%	24,1%
State Actor	21,7%	36,6%	47,2%
Jamaat-e-Islami	7,6%	9,8%	3,6%
(Former) Rebel Group	5,6%	0,6%	41,6%
Islamist Group (non-JeI)	1,2%	2,5%	3,4%

Events in which state actors participated also resulted in substantially more wounded and lethal casualties. Again rebel groups disappear. On a lesser scale, 2013 also saw the emergence or resurgence of a number of Islamist groups, who, while still only participating in few events, see their share for lethal casualties of events in which they participate double from about 3,5 to about 6,5 per cent.

Table 25: Major political families in political violence (2013, actors)

	Events	Wounded	Lethal Casualties
BNP	49,2%	56,2%	31,9%
Jamaat-e-Islami	33,6%	29,2%	51,2%
State Actor	33,3%	65,6%	65,7%
Awami League	26,6%	33,1%	23,3%
Islamist Group (non-JeI)	2,2%	5,8%	6,6%
(Former) Rebel Group	0,3%	0,1%	1,8%

5 Tentative Conclusions and Next Steps

This report has shown the diversity of violence in Bangladesh. While major cities like Dhaka and Chittagong record often also the highest level of violence, the overall picture is quite diffuse, with a great distribution of violent events across the territory of Bangladesh. While the major political parties and their auxiliary organisations indeed appear as important actors in the overall scenario of political violence, their (violent) interactions are of quite diverse nature, with both inter-group violence and factional violence, either within one political group or family. Moreover, the prevalence of the different political families and groups across the period is also highly diverse. Moreover, if one takes a specific look at specific types of violence, like hartal violence (or for that part student violence or bomb blasts) still other dynamics emerge.

As such, while this report has aimed to present an overview of political violence from 2002 to 2013 and provide basic data to understand the shape of this violence, many questions remain unanswered.

As stated in the introduction, political violence and its endurance has been the subject to quite some debate both in academia and in policy circles. Often it has been discussed in moral terms. The authors of this report believe that next steps should be taken to better study the complex causes, rationales and aims of political violence; This not to condone political violence, but to better understand it. Thus, rather than reiterating the findings mentioned above, this conclusion wants to offer some next steps to address this question and multiple avenues which can be followed.

First, the dataset can help us not only to delineate the general distribution of political violence, but also to test a number of hypotheses with regard to its specific regional or temporal occurrence. One first obvious step is to combine this dataset, with other, publicly available data, e.g. census, socio-economic or election data, and run a number of models. This should at least shed some light on more overarching questions about the structural prevalence of hartal.

Secondly, and this is at the same time more challenging and more rewarding, we need more qualitative data to understand the often fine-grained causes and rationales behind the organisation of violence in different part of the country. This will demand studies with specific regional or

actor-oriented focuses. This database can than help to guide and identify specific clusters of potentially rewarding in-depth research. This should shed light on the multifaceted nature of political violence in Bangladesh, the actors involved and their often-particular reasons for participating in violent events.

Indeed, while in some cases we have specific bigger triggers, like the war crimes tribunals or elections, a lot of the violence recorded is of a highly everyday nature, seemingly less related to these overall bigger events. It will provide a challenge to not simply account for the overall picture of political violence, but also to offer answers for these more mundane forms of political violence.

With this report we hope to provide some basic data for a topic that has been discussed in Bangladesh academia, press and policy circles for a long time. While our date remain open to interpretation, we hope to provide a common ground for this interpretation.

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(The authors of this report do not by definition support the views and conclusions of the authors mentioned above.)