



COI QUERY

Country of Origin	Bangladesh
Title	Surveillance and profiling of protesters under the interim government
Reference period	8 August 2024 to 27 July 2025
Topic(s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">The use of surveillance, including facial recognition and profiling, by national authorities during demonstrationsThe use of surveillance during security checks, including at airport arrivals
Date of completion	28 July 2025
Query Code	Q21-2025
Contributing EU+ COI units (if applicable)	N/A



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All sources used are referenced and cited in the bibliography section. A quality review has been performed in line with the above mentioned COI methodology. This document does not claim to be exhaustive or conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to international protection. If a certain event, person or organisation is not mentioned in the report, this does not mean that the event has not taken place or that the person or organisation does not exist. Terminology used should not be regarded as indicative of a particular legal position.

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Cite as: EUAA, Country of Origin Information Query, Bangladesh, Surveillance and profiling of protesters under the interim government, 28 July 2025, [url](#)



COI QUERY RESPONSE – Bangladesh

Surveillance and profiling of protesters under the interim government

1. The use of surveillance, including facial recognition and profiling, by national authorities during demonstrations

Information on the use of surveillance by national authorities during demonstrations under the interim government was scarce among the sources consulted by EUAA within time constraints. However, the following information may be relevant.

The Constitution of Bangladesh guarantees the right to peaceful assembly and participation in public gatherings, which can be limited with ‘reasonable restrictions imposed by law in the interests of public order or public health’.¹ The Constitution also states that every citizen of the country has the right ‘to be secured in his home against entry, search and seizure’ and the right ‘to the privacy of his correspondence and other means of communication,’ which can also be subject to ‘any reasonable restrictions imposed by law in the interest of the security of the State, public order, public morality or public health’.²

As noted by Bangladeshi researcher Sabhanaz Rashid Diya in October 2024,³ the absence of clear definitions for such terms as ‘national security’ and ‘public order’ has led to arbitrary interpretations and enabled ‘broad discretion’ for law enforcement and intelligence agencies to intercept personal communications, justifying this through references to national legislation.⁴ According to Diya, state efforts to counter extremism and terrorism have expanded into ‘arbitrary monitoring and wiretapping of ‘suspected’ citizens’, which involved the collection of personal data, such as bank, business, and mobile phone records, body and bag scans, facial recognition via video surveillance (CCTV) cameras, and cross-border movement tracking.⁵

As noted by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN OHCHR), in January 2025, the National Telecommunications Monitoring Centre (NTMC) – Bangladesh’s ‘electronic surveillance intelligence agency’⁶ – leads the country’s surveillance infrastructure, operating ‘sophisticated surveillance equipment and software reportedly

¹ Bangladesh, Laws of Bangladesh, The Constitution of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, [url](#), Art 37

² Bangladesh, Laws of Bangladesh, The Constitution of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, [url](#), Art 43

³ Sabhanaz Rashid Diya, About, n.d., [url](#)

⁴ Diya, S. R, Beyond the Shadows: Reforming surveillance practices in Bangladesh, The Daily Star, October 2024, [url](#)

⁵ Diya, S. R, Beyond the Shadows: Reforming surveillance practices in Bangladesh, The Daily Star, October 2024, [url](#)

⁶ UN OHCHR, Human Rights Violations and Abuses related to the Protests of July and August 2024 in Bangladesh, 12 February 2025, [url](#), pp. 7-8



obtained from Israeli and other foreign companies'.⁷ The law enforcement and intelligence agencies of the country, including the police, the Directorate-General of Armed Forces Intelligence (DGFI), the National Security Intelligence (NSI), and the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), are 'integrated into the NTMC structure allowing them extensive and unchecked access to surveillance information'.⁸ The NTMC justifies its broad surveillance authority on 'vague provisions' of the Bangladesh Telecommunications Regulation Act (2001),⁹ which has allowed warrantless interception, recording, and collection of information for reasons related to national security or public order.¹⁰ In August 2024, local media reported that Bangladesh Mobile Phone Consumers' Association (BMPCA) made a statement to demand the abolishment of the NTMC for its involvement in 'hacking mobile phones and illegally leaking private conversations of citizens'.¹¹ In its report published the same month, Transparency International Bangladesh has similarly called for the abolishment of the NTMC.¹²

As of September 2024, there were 'at least a dozen intelligence agencies' in the country.¹³ The interim government reportedly made 'significant changes' within DGFI and NSI, dismissed and arrested chiefs of the NTMC and the Special Branch (SB) of the police, who were implicated in the excessive use of force during the 2024 protests,¹⁴ and formed commissions to introduce reforms, including in the areas of public administration, judiciary, and police.¹⁵ In October 2024, experts noted that the country's constitutional and legal framework allows for state surveillance and fails to provide adequate privacy and data protection safeguards.¹⁶ According to Shahzeb Mahmood, Head of Research, Legal, and Policy at TechGlobal Institute, citizen monitoring can be authorised in accordance with at least four laws and more than a dozen regulatory guidelines, with no comprehensive privacy protection in place.¹⁷

For information on treatment of protesters, including online surveillance, prior to the reference period of this COI Query Response see [EUAA COI Country Focus Report Bangladesh, July 2024](#)

⁷ UN OHCHR, Human Rights Violations and Abuses related to the Protests of July and August 2024 in Bangladesh, 12 February 2025, [url](#), para 329

⁸ UN OHCHR, Human Rights Violations and Abuses related to the Protests of July and August 2024 in Bangladesh, 12 February 2025, [url](#), para 329

⁹ UN OHCHR, Human Rights Violations and Abuses related to the Protests of July and August 2024 in Bangladesh, 12 February 2025, [url](#), para 329

¹⁰ TechGlobal Institute, Bangladesh: State Vs. Corporations in the Surveillance Debate, n.d., [url](#)

¹¹ Financial Express (The), BMPCA wants NTMC to be abolished, 18 August 2024, [url](#)

¹² Transparency International Bangladesh, 'New Bangladesh' TIB's Recommendations on Promoting Democracy, Good Governance & Anti-Corruption, Policy Brief #146/2024, August 2024, [url](#)

¹³ Institute for Security & Development Policy, Bangladesh Needs an Intelligence Reform after People's Revolution, 19 September 2024, [url](#)

¹⁴ Institute for Security & Development Policy, Bangladesh Needs an Intelligence Reform after People's Revolution, 19 September 2024, [url](#)

¹⁵ Business Standard (The), 6 reform commissions' terms extended again till 15 Feb., 20 January 2025, [url](#)

¹⁶ Daily Star (The), Overhaul surveillance, privacy laws: experts, 16 September 2024, [url](#)

¹⁷ Daily Star (The), Overhaul surveillance, privacy laws: experts, 16 September 2024, [url](#)



2. The use of surveillance during security checks, including at airport arrivals

In 2021, RAB introduced On-site Identification and Verification System (OIVS), which enables identification of a person¹⁸ through fingerprint scanning on the spot.¹⁹ The data available through OIVS provides such details as national identity card, passport, immigration history, criminal database/history,²⁰ such as previous arrests and detentions, violations of traffic rules or belonging to Rohingya identity.²¹ Information on the use of OIVS to specifically identify protesters could not be found within the time constraints of this query.

E-gates began operating at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka in June 2021.²² As of the end of April 2025, 44 E-gates were installed across the country, including 26 at Dhaka airport, six at Chattogram airport, and six at Sylhet airport.²³ Although authorities reported that all E-gates were operational, their use was around 40 % at Sylhet airport, 30 % at Chattogram airport, and 5 % at Dhaka airport. According to authorities, E-gates are used solely to verify the authenticity of passports.²⁴

Further information on the use of surveillance during security checks, including at airport arrivals, could not be found within the time constraints of this query.

¹⁸ Daily Sun, OIVS tech introduced, 28 February 2021, [url](#); Daily Star (The), Rab launches on-site identification, verification system to check criminal profile instantly, 28 February 2021, [url](#); Bhuiyan, I.H., Digitalisation of Bangladesh Police: Progress and prospects, The Business Post, 8 December 2023, [url](#)

¹⁹ Daily Sun, OIVS tech introduced, 28 February 2021, [url](#); Bhuiyan, I.H., Digitalisation of Bangladesh Police: Progress and prospects, The Business Post, 8 December 2023, [url](#)

²⁰ Daily Star (The), Rab launches on-site identification, verification system to check criminal profile instantly, 28 February 2021, [url](#); Bhuiyan, I.H., Digitalisation of Bangladesh Police: Progress and prospects, The Business Post, 8 December 2023, [url](#)

²¹ Daily Star (The), Rab launches on-site identification, verification system to check criminal profile instantly, 28 February 2021, [url](#)

²² Identity Week, Cognitec's face recognition used in Veridos eGates at Bangladesh Airports, 8 July 2021, [url](#)

²³ Business Standard (The), Tk100cr e-gates lie unused at most airports amid manual checks, 29 April 2025, [url](#)

²⁴ Business Standard (The), Tk100cr e-gates lie unused at most airports amid manual checks, 29 April 2025, [url](#)



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