



COI QUERY

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Title	Information on the Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL)
Reference period	August 2024 to 24 July 2025
Topic(s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Structure, purpose and organisation2. Treatment of members of the Bangladesh Chhatra League, including low-ranking supporters and protesters, by the interim government following Sheikh Hasina's resignation, including during the "Devil Hunt" operation
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COI QUERY RESPONSE – Bangladesh

Information on the Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL)

1. Structure, purpose and organisation

The Bangladesh Chhatra League is a student wing of the former governing political party, the Awami league, which led Bangladesh under Sheikh Hasina for more than 15 years until it was overthrown by pro-democracy mass protests in July/August 2024.¹ In October 2024, the current interim government of Bangladesh, under Prime Minister Muhammad Yunus, banned the Bangladesh Chhatra League citing ‘its involvement in murder, torture, rape, and terrorism, particularly during the last 15 years of the Sheikh Hasina regime’,² as well as acts such as ‘violence, harassment and exploitation of public resources’.³ The ban was imposed under the anti-terrorism act of 2009.⁴ Bangladesh’s interim government also declared it a ‘terrorist organisation’.⁵

In May 2025, the interim government also imposed a ban on all activities of the former-governing party, the Awami league.⁶ According to sources, under the previous Awami League government, the Bangladesh Chhatra League suppressed dissent, used violence, and attacked student protesters, during antigovernment protests in July and August of 2024.⁷ Furthermore, local media reported that during the Awami League’s years in power, members of the Chhatra League who were involved in violent acts were often rewarded with senior positions and better opportunities.⁸

The Chhatra league was founded in 1948 under the leadership of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the country’s founding president.⁹ According to January 2023 article by the local news source, New Age BD, the organisation was involved in programmes at all universities and district levels, including rallies and cultural events.¹⁰ Further, the organisation was made up of 301

¹ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Bangladesh, 2025, [url](#); BD News 24, Interim government bans Bangladesh Chhatra League under anti-terrorism law, 23 October 2024, [url](#); Al Jazeera, Bangladesh’s new outcasts: Students from ex-PM Hasina’s party now in hiding, 27 October 2024, [url](#); Reuters, Bangladesh bans student wing of ousted Sheikh Hasina’s party, 24 October 2024, [url](#)

² BD News 24, Interim government bans Bangladesh Chhatra League under anti-terrorism law, 23 October 2024, [url](#)

³ Al Jazeera, Bangladesh’s new outcasts: Students from ex-PM Hasina’s party now in hiding, 27 October 2024, [url](#)

⁴ BD News 24, Interim government bans Bangladesh Chhatra League under anti-terrorism law, 23 October 2024, [url](#); Daily Asianage, Chhatra League banned for ‘terror’ activities, 24 October 2024, [url](#)

⁵ Al Jazeera, Bangladesh’s new outcasts: Students from ex-PM Hasina’s party now in hiding, 27 October 2024, [url](#); Print (The), Chhatra League leaders hide for safety in Bangladesh. They’re organising to bring back Hasina, 30 November 2024, [url](#)

⁶ DW, Bangladesh: What does the ban of Sheikh Hasina’s party mean?, 12 May 2025, [url](#)

⁷ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Bangladesh, 2025, [url](#); Al Jazeera, Bangladesh’s new outcasts: Students from ex-PM Hasina’s party now in hiding, 27 October 2024, [url](#); CILJ, The July Revolution: Student Politics in Bangladesh Violated Right to Life, 10 July 2025, [url](#)

⁸ Netra News, Let a future Bangladesh be free of Chhatra League, 24 July 2024, [url](#)

⁹ New Age BD, Chhatra League observes 75 years of founding anniversary, 4 January 2023, [url](#)

¹⁰ New Age BD, Chhatra League observes 75 years of founding anniversary, 4 January 2023, [url](#)

committee members, with Saddam Hossain as the president.¹¹ Further information on the structure of the organisation could not be found within the time constraints of this query.

2. Treatment of members of the Bangladesh Chhatra League, including low-ranking supporters and protesters, by the interim government following Sheikh Hasina's resignation, including during the "Devil Hunt" operation

In February 2025, the 'Devil Hunt' operation, a joint military and police campaign, was launched by the interim government, to address growing unrest and maintain public safety nationwide,¹² following a violent attack in Gazipur against students by supporters of the former government.¹³ Thousands were arrested during the operation.¹⁴ Furthermore, according to sources, the interim government arrested thousands of supporters of the political party, the Awami League,¹⁵ whilst its leader and former prime minister, Sheikh Hasina, 'faces criminal charges over the deaths of hundreds of protesters in the uprising in July and August last year'.¹⁶ Since February 2025, sources described several incidents of Chhatra league members being arrested by the police throughout the country.¹⁷

A November 2024 article by the Print, quoting President of the Chhatra league, Saddam Hossain, stated that both 'supporters' and those 'directly associated' with the Chhatra League were 'being targeted by the Yunus administration'.¹⁸ He further claimed that 'students who support us in any form have been prosecuted, unlawfully imprisoned, and the university authorities and the interim government are taking no responsibility to ensure their safety and security'.¹⁹

According to the news source, The Business Standard, between 1 February and 9 February 2025, a total of 245 people, including members of the Awami league and Chhatra league,

¹¹ Eye News, Bangladesh Chhatra League full committee announced, 13 July 2023, [url](#)

¹² Dhaka Tribune, What is Operation Devil Hunt?, 9 February 2025, [url](#); Al Jazeera, 'Gotham but no Batman': Crime grips Bangladesh 6 months after Hasina fled, 4 March 2025, [url](#); NDTV World, Operation Devil Hunt: How Bangladesh Is Hunting Sheikh Hasina Loyalists, 10 February 2024, [url](#)

¹³ Daily Star (The), Operation Devil Hunt launched, 9 February 2025, [url](#); UNB, "Operation Devil Hunt" launched nationwide following Gazipur attack, 8 February 2025, [url](#)

¹⁴ Al Jazeera, 'Gotham but no Batman': Crime grips Bangladesh 6 months after Hasina fled, 4 March 2025, [url](#); NDTV World, Operation Devil Hunt: How Bangladesh Is Hunting Sheikh Hasina Loyalists, 10 February 2024, [url](#)

¹⁵ BD Digest, Awami League's Reckoning: Between Accountability and Survival, 12 May 2025, [url](#); AP News, Turbulence in Bangladesh as new government grapples with aftermath of Sheikh Hasina's ouster, 6 February 2025, [url](#)

¹⁶ AP News, Turbulence in Bangladesh as new government grapples with aftermath of Sheikh Hasina's ouster, 6 February 2025, [url](#)

¹⁷ Sylhet Mirror, 7 arrested over procession by banned Chhatra League in Sylhet, 3 April 2025, [url](#); Business Standard (The), 245 activists of AL, affiliated orgs arrested in Ctg since 1 February, 9 February 2025, [url](#); Business Standard (The), 34 more AL, Jubo League, Chhatra League members arrested in Ctg in 24 hours, 5 February 2025, [url](#); Business Standard (The), 40 more AL, Jubo League, Chhatra League members arrested in Ctg in 24 hours, 6 February 2025, [url](#); Business Standard (The), 8 held during 'Operation Devil Hunt' in Khagrachhari, 10 February 2025, [url](#); Business Standard (The), Nine more AL and affiliated org's activists arrested in capital: DB, 21 April 2025, [url](#);

¹⁸ Print (The), Chhatra League leaders hide for safety in Bangladesh. They're organising to bring back Hasina, 30 November 2024, [url](#)

¹⁹ Print (The), Chhatra League leaders hide for safety in Bangladesh. They're organising to bring back Hasina, 30 November 2024, [url](#)

were arrested during the ‘Devil Hunt’ operation, for their previous involvement in attacks on protesters involved in the anti-Hasina protests of July and August 2024.²⁰ The same source stated that nine more people, including members of the Chhatra league, were arrested in April 2025, for what police described as ‘attempts to destabilise the country’ in ‘organising flash processions [...] aimed to spread panic among the public’.²¹ Sources also described that in February 2025, a Dhaka court on Friday ordered three leaders of the Chhatra League to be sent to jail after they were arrested for distributing anti-government propaganda leaflets in front of the National Press Club in the capital.²² In March 2025, the High Court upheld the death sentences of 20 Chhatra League members convicted of killing a fellow student in 2019 over his alleged political affiliation.²³ In November 2024, the news source, the Print, also noted that ‘two separate courts sent 55 Chhatra League leaders and activists to jail’.²⁴

In October 2024, Al Jazeera reported that students affiliated with Awami League-linked networks were being arrested by police or targeted by ‘mob violence’.²⁵ The same report noted that, according to Awami League estimates, around 50 000 students were ‘now in limbo, struggling to continue their tertiary education’.²⁶ Police also stated to Al Jazeera that 10 Chhatra League leaders were arrested in Dhaka that month, along with more than 100 student activists nationwide.²⁷

UN OHCHR documented one case of sexual violence against a female Chhatra League member, in which, she was reportedly denied health care due to her political affiliation.²⁸

Further Information on the treatment of members of the Bangladesh Chhatra League could not be found among the sources consulted by EUAA within time constraints

²⁰ Business Standard (The), 245 activists of AL, affiliated orgs arrested in Ctg since 1 February, 9 February 2025, [url](#)

²¹ Business Standard (The), Nine more AL and affiliated org's activists arrested in capital: DB, 21 April 2025, [url](#)

²² Dhaka Tribune, 3 leaders of banned Chhatra League sent to jail, 7 February 2025, [url](#); Financial Times (The), Three leaders of banned BCL sent to jail, 7 February 2025, [url](#)

²³ TRT Global, Bangladesh court upholds death penalty for student killers, 16 March 2025, [url](#); Hindu (The), Bangladesh HC upholds 20 students' death penalty for lynching university mate, 16 March 2025, [url](#)

²⁴ Print (The), Chhatra League leaders hide for safety in Bangladesh. They're organising to bring back Hasina, 30 November 2024, [url](#)

²⁵ Al Jazeera, Bangladesh's new outcasts: Students from ex-PM Hasina's party now in hiding, 27 October 2024, [url](#)

²⁶ Al Jazeera, Bangladesh's new outcasts: Students from ex-PM Hasina's party now in hiding, 27 October 2024, [url](#)

²⁷ Al Jazeera, Bangladesh's new outcasts: Students from ex-PM Hasina's party now in hiding, 27 October 2024, [url](#)

²⁸ UN OHCHR, Human Rights Violations and Abuses Related to the Protests of July and August 2024 in Bangladesh, 12 February 2025, [url](#), para. 220

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