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## **Odhikar Press Release on Violence against Women in Bangladesh on the Occasion of International Women's Day 2007**

### **5816 women Raped, 1241 killed for dowry, 1080 Victims of Acid Violence in the last 6 years and 2 months**

As per Odhikar's data, from 1 January 2001 to 28 February 2007 a total of **5816** women and children were reportedly raped across the country. Among these numbers, **636** women were killed after being raped and **69** committed suicide after the incident. During this time total **1024** women were the victimized of acid violence. A total of **1884** women fell victim to dowry related violence during last 6 years and 2 months. Of them **1241** women were killed, 479 were brutally tortured, 61 suffered acid burns and 95 committed suicide.

In the last two months of January and February 2007, Odhikar's data reveals that **66** women and children were raped and **11** of them were killed after rape. Odhikar reports that a total of **639** women and children were raped in 2006. Among them, **126** were killed after rape, **13** allegedly committed suicide after the rape. Whereas in 2005 a total of **907** women and children were raped. Among them, **126** were killed after rape, **14** allegedly committed suicide after the rape.

In 2007 till February, total **15** women were the victims of acid attack. On the other hand in 2006 total **105** women were the victimized of acid. It is reported that in 2005 total **104** women were the victims of acid attack.

In the last two months between January and February 2007 total **30** women have been killed due to dowry related violence. In 2006, **323** women have been the victims of dowry. Among them **243** women were brutally killed, **64** tortured, **5** victimized by acid violence, and **8** committed suicide due to unremitting dowry demands. In 2005 total **382** women have been the victims of dowry. Among them **227** women were brutally killed, **123** tortured, **13** victimized by acid violence, and **19** committed suicide due to unremitting dowry demands

Women are still in a vulnerable position in the society, where instances of rape, dowry, acid throwing, domestic violence, fatwa, trafficking and so on occur at an unrelenting pace. At a discussion meeting organized to commemorate International Women's Day, Dr. Saira Rahman Khan of the School of Law, BRAC University commented, "we have many impressive laws on paper to protect the women, but in reality lack of implementation of laws, corruption and the lack of political will have kept women's rights issues at the bottom of the agenda list. Violence against women will not decrease significantly unless all these other factors are addressed." She further added, "We talk about women's empowerment, but first of all we need to bring about a wider understanding of gender equality and bridging the economic gap between genders. Poor women find it hard enough to find employment of any sort and then they have to face social factors such as the recent slum evictions, which play havoc with their rights to earn. Furthermore, empowerment begins at home and men and boys must be sensitized about the contributions made by their mother, daughters and sisters in the home and in their lives, even though it is the men who are the earning members."

This report is prepared on the basis of reports published in 12 National leading dailies, Odhikar's own network and a discussion meeting organized to commemorate International Women's Day.

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