

PRESS RELEASE

# **Bangladesh: Action against corporate punishment in schools and medrassas**

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## **BLAST AND ASK CHALLENGE INACTION OVER CORPORAL PUNISHMENT OF CHILDREN IN SCHOOLS AND MADRASAS: HIGH COURT SHOW CAUSE ON GOVT, DIRECTION ON EDUCATION MINISTRY**

Two human rights groups, BLAST and ASK, today challenged the systematic failure of the Government to take action regarding repeated and severe incidents of corporal punishment – including caning, beating and chaining of children by teachers in schools and madrasas as a gross violation of human rights.[1] The case was brought following the reported suicide on Wednesday last week of a 10 year old boy, a student of a government school in Mymensingh after he had been beaten by a school teacher earlier in the day, and in the wake of dozens of such cases being reported in the press over the past year.[2]

The High Court directed the Government to show cause why a) it should not declare the involvement of government employees in such violence, and the failure to take any effective measures for prevention, or prosecution and punishment of those responsible, to be a violation of the rights to freedom from cruel, degrading and inhuman treatment or punishment guaranteed under the Constitution and b) why it should not direct the Government to conduct trainings for all teachers, regular inspection and monitoring of schools, and disseminate information through the national media about corporal punishment as a wrong and a human rights violation.

The Court also issued interim orders a) on concerned Ministries and the Boards of Education to report within two months on measures taken to investigate, prosecute and punish such incidents of corporal punishment and b) on the Ministry of Education to immediately instruct all primary and secondary educational institution by circular to refrain from carrying out any incident of corporal punishment on any child in any such institution.

A Division Bench comprising Justice Md Imman Ali and Justice Obaidul Hasan issued the Rule. The writ petition was filed by Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust ([www.blast.org.bd](http://www.blast.org.bd)) and Ain o Salish Kendra ([www.askbd.org](http://www.askbd.org)). Sara Hossain appeared for the petitioners, with Abantee Nurul, Bulbul Rabeya Banu and Majhabeen Rabbani, Advocates. The matter is to be heard again on 4 August 2010.

**From Ain-o-Salish Kendra (ASK) and Bangladesh Legal Aid Association and Services Trust (BLAST),** who brought the issue of corporal punishment in schools and madrassas to the high court in Bangladesh

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**Notes:**

[1] The petitioners argued that the failure of the concerned Ministries and Boards of Education to take action amounted to a violation of fundamental rights guaranteed under the Constitution and under international human rights treaties such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, as well as CEDAW and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

[2] Reported incidents between March to July 2010 included the chaining of a 7 year old madrasa student for 'indiscipline', and severa beatings and canings resulting in hospitalization of several students, including caning of 25 students after their failure to bring coloured pencils to school, and hospitalization of 8 of them; beating of a girl student of a madrasa in Bandarban for three days; beating of a 13 year old boy student in a madrasa; and the beating of a girl student with disabilities for her failure to contribute to a school fund

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\* Source: WLUML:

<http://www.siawi.org/article2110.html>