

Contested Land – underlying causes and consequences

2025 Bangladesh Land and Resource
Conflict Monitoring Report

Part of Land Watch Asia Initiative on
Land Conflict Monitoring



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Introduction

Land conflict is one of the most persistent social and governance challenges in Bangladesh, affecting millions of rural and urban households. These conflicts are often linked to unequal land distribution, tenure insecurity, weak governance, overlapping claims, and large-scale public or private projects. Smallholder farmers, indigenous communities, and other marginalized groups continue to bear the brunt of these conflicts. A significant portion of land conflicts arises from the encroachment of *khas* (public) land and waterbodies by politically influential groups, local elites, or land grabbers (either corporate bodies or individuals), leaving landless, marginal farmers and fisherfolk without access to resources. Climate change further aggravates the situation, as river erosion, floods, and cyclones displace communities, compelling them to seek new land, particularly in *char* and coastal areas, where they face heightened vulnerabilities and violence, often falling under the control and coercion of *Jotdars* (literally landlords) or land mafias.

Conflicts over territories and waterbodies of indigenous peoples (IPs) are growing concerns in Bangladesh, particularly in regions such as the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), coastal belts, and wetland areas. Indigenous communities often face land dispossession due to the forest reserve declarations, commercial plantations often in the name of “social forestry,” infrastructure projects, and tourism initiatives that overlook their customary land rights. In many cases, traditional lands are recorded as State forests, leaving IPs without legal recognition despite generations of occupation and stewardship. Government directives and projects have increasingly imposed significant restriction on *jhum* (traditional swidden or shifting) cultivation of IPs in CHTs.¹ Additionally, widespread encroachments on indigenous lands by influential corporate and private actors, as well as reportedly the members of the Bengali community, continue to jeopardize the livelihoods of IPs. Repeated incidents of arson and land grabbing have forced communities to relocate to increasingly remote areas where they face worsening food insecurity year after year.² Environmental degradation driven by economic interests, militarization, and State-led infrastructure projects has disproportionately impacted IPs in the CHT. Deforestation, pollution of water bodies, and loss of biodiversity caused by commercial rubber plantations, military encampments, and both the State-owned and private tourism venture, encompassing from small homestays to big resorts have severely undermined the sustainability of traditional indigenous livelihoods.³ Conflicts over *haors* (wetland in north-eastern regions), *baors* (lakes in south-western region), *beels*⁴ (lake-like wetland with static water), and other wetlands affect fisherfolk communities and seasonal rural farmers, who depend on open water bodies for their livelihoods. Powerful leaseholders, local elites, or commercial interest groups frequently gain control over these water resources, restricting access for small-scale fishers and farmers. This leads to loss of income, food insecurity, and social tension.

In many areas, conflicts escalate into violence, forced evictions, or legal harassment. Environmental degradation further exacerbates the situation, as deforestation, shrimp farming, and industrial pollution reduce the productivity of forests and water bodies. Women, who rely heavily on forest products and small-scale fishing, are particularly affected.

¹ Joint letter of nine special rapporteurs of UN Human Rights Council to the Chief of the Interim Government of Bangladesh dated 24 September 2025 (Ref: AL BGD 4/2025). [p. 2]

² *ibid.* p. 3

³ *ibid.* p. 3

⁴ A beel is a large, surface, static water body that accumulates runoff water through internal drainage channels. While many beels dry up during the winter, they expand into vast, shallow freshwater lagoons during the monsoon season.

Box 1: Land reform in Bangladesh

Land reform in the country has long been central to debates on equity, rural development, and social justice — reflecting Bangladesh’s agrarian roots and high population density. Following independence in 1971, the government inherited a highly unequal landholding structure shaped by colonial-era tenure systems and later reforms under Pakistan. Although the formal abolition of the *zaminadri* (intermediary rent-collecting by landlords) system through the East Bengal State Acquisition and Tenancy Act, 1950 (later renamed as State Acquisition and Tenancy Act), land concentration, tenancy insecurity, and informal sharecropping arrangements persisted. In the decades after independence, successive governments introduce measures to impose land ceilings, distribute *khas* (State-owned/public) agricultural land to landless households and strengthen tenancy rights. The Land Reform Ordinance, 1984 set a family ceiling on agricultural land ownership and sought to regulate sharecropping by recognizing the rights of *Bargadars* (sharecroppers), including provisions for crop sharing arrangements. However, implementation has remained uneven due to weak land administration, political patronage, corruption, and complex & outdated land records. As a result, many landless and marginal farmers — particularly women, indigenous people, and *char* dwellers living on riverine islands — continue to face insecure tenure and frequent conflicts.

Rapid urbanization, infrastructure expansion, and industrial projects have intensified competition over land, often leading to displacement and inadequate compensation. Climate change further complicates the reform agenda, as river erosion, flooding, cyclones, and coastal salinity displace rural people and contribute to rising urban poverty and exposure to vulnerabilities. In this context, land reform is not only about redistribution but also securing tenure, modernizing land records through digitalization, improving dispute resolution mechanisms, and ensuring transparent & accountable land governance.

Effective land reform in Bangladesh must balance agricultural productivity with environmental sustainability, particularly in coastal and *char* areas where fragile ecosystems intersect with livelihoods. Ultimately, meaningful progress depends on political commitment, administrative reform, and community participation to ensure that land serves as a foundation for poverty reduction, social stability, and inclusive development rather than a source of persistent inequality and conflict.

Land conflict monitoring report

The 2025 monitoring report builds on the previous national monitoring exercises conducted in 2018, 2020, and 2023. It aims to track patterns of land and resource conflicts, identify affected communities, document incidents of human rights violations (HRVs), and analyze drivers of conflict to inform policy advocacy and reform.

Methodology and data sources

The Association for Land Reform and Development (ALRD) gathered both primary and secondary data to understand the nature and prevalence of land conflicts, their causes, and their implications in terms of violence or HRVs in the country. Data were compiled from multiple sources including information from community, civil society network, media monitoring, government records, court documents, and police reports.

Table 1. Sources of information for the cases

Source	Number	Percentage (%)
Mainstream media (print, online, radio)	71	35.68
Community, community-based organization	42	21.11
Government agencies, institutions	30	15.08
Court	30	15.08
CSO/NGO	17	8.54
Police Report	8	4.01
National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)	1	0.50
Total	199	100.00

Most land conflict data came from mainstream media (35.68 percent), followed by community sources (21.11 percent) and government & court records (30.16 percent, combined). [Table 1]



Discussion with members of an indigenous community in Kulaura, Moulvibazar for gathering primary data

The Bangladesh Land Conflict Monitoring Report was drafted and presented in an online validation meeting held on 26 February 2026, which were attended by 33 participants including a member of the National Human Rights Commission of Bangladesh (NHRCB), land governance experts, and partners of ALRD. Key comments and feedback from the participants were incorporated in the finalization of this report.

Scope and limitations of the study

ALRD collected information and data on 64 cases of structural land conflicts that were reported all over Bangladesh in the year 2025. The monitoring covered structural land conflicts in rural areas. Common conflict information collected may be classified as follows:

- Information about the case or the basic components of the conflict's storyline, e.g., type of land/resource contested, size of contested area, and location;
- Information about the relationships or the stakeholders involved in a land conflict and their actions, e.g., affected communities and adverse claimants;
- Information about incidents or violent events that are markers for ongoing conflicts, e.g., victims and reported perpetrators of violence and types of violence; and,
- Responses and corrective actions to address conflict, e.g., what (if any) corrective actions were taken and by whom, and what are the demands.

The conflicts included in this monitoring report were mostly manifest conflicts, or those marked by violent incidents. There were also latent conflicts covered in the monitoring, such as communities actively challenging the ownership or control of other actors, or communities facing threats of dispossession or displacement due to the ongoing conflict. These conflicts also included cases which had been “officially resolved” but community discontentment remained.

In terms of limitation, the monitoring faced limited availability of primary data in some of the cases documented. Additionally, the political tension that persisted through the end of 2025 and into January 2026, in the lead-up to the national election and referendum (scheduled in February 2026), resulted in fewer field visits for collecting primary data from communities and local CSOs. Nonetheless, efforts were undertaken to ensure the continuity and quality of the monitoring process through alternative data sources and remote engagement where possible.

Key findings

Population and area affected by conflict

The 64 ongoing cases of land and resource conflict affected 78,981 households, within a total area of 25,125.35 hectares of land. [Table 2]

Table 2. Total number of cases, area contested, and households affected by land and resource conflicts, 2025

Ongoing cases	Number
Total number of cases	64
Total number of hectares contested	25,125.35
Total number of households affected	78,981

Duration of land conflicts

The data show that in over half (36 out of 64) of the cases, the conflicts have lasted more than 15 years, and with more than one-third (24 cases) lasting over two decades. Only a small proportion (six percent) are recent or less than two years. This pattern indicates systemic weakness in dispute resolution, legal enforcement, and institutional responsiveness. [Table 3]

Information on when the conflict began was unavailable in four cases.

Table 3. Duration of Land and Resource Conflicts by Number of Years

Number of Years	Number
Less than two years	4
2 to less than 5 years	9
5 to less than 10 years	5
10 to less than 15 years	6
15 to less than 20 years	12
20 years or more	24
Unknown	4
Total	64

Types of land and resources affected by conflicts

Table 4a shows that land and resource conflicts predominantly affect indigenous lands and smallholder agriculture, together accounting for 83 percent of cases and 77 percent of contested areas. This highlights deep pressures on rural livelihoods and ancestral domains. Water resources also represent significant contested areas underscoring growing competition over productive and ecologically sensitive resources. [Tables 4a and 4b]

Table 4a. Types of land and resources affected by conflicts

Type of Land/resource	Number of cases	Percent of cases (%)	Contested area (ha)	Percent of contested area (%)
Indigenous people/customary land/ancestral domain	28	43.75	7,814.42	31.10
Smallholder agriculture/farming	25	39.06	11,633.03	46.30
Water/fisheries resources	5	7.81	4,350.30	17.31
Housing and settlements	2	3.13	20.10	0.08
Common lands/public lands managed by the community	3	4.69	1,305.50	5.20
Others	1	1.56	2.00	0.01
Total	64	100.00	25,125.35	100.00

Table 4b. Conflicts involving land and waters, by number of cases and total area contested (in ha)

	Number of cases	Total area contested (ha)
Land/land resources	59	20,775.05
Water/fisheries resources	5	4,350.3
Total	64	25,125.35

Communities and sectors most affected by conflicts

Together, indigenous communities and smallholder farmers account for over 92 percent of affected sectors. This reflects their vulnerability in land governance. [Table 5]

Table 5. Primary sector or community affected by conflict, by number and percent of cases

Primary sector or community affected by conflict	Number of cases	Percent of cases (%)
Indigenous people (IP)	30	46.88
Farmers: peasants (landless smallholder farmers, sharecroppers, agricultural workers, tenants, lessees, small owners)	29	45.31
Fisherfolk	3	4.69
Informal settlers	1	1.56
Discriminated sectors (caste, religion, ethnicity)	1	1.56
Total	64	100.00

Adversarial claimants

The government agencies remain the largest adversarial claimant (48 percent of cases), followed by influential individuals (36 percent) and private companies (14 percent). This reveals a critical governance paradox: the State is both the regulator of land and the largest claimant in land conflict. [Table 6]

Table 6. Adversarial claimants in land conflict, by number and percent of cases

Adversarial claimants	Number of cases	Percent of cases (%)
Government agencies	31	48.44
Powerful individuals (e.g., politicians, businessmen, landlords, officials/ex-officials, ex-military)	23	35.94
Private companies	9	14.06
Community vs. community (residents, settlers, migrants, refugees)	1	1.56
Total	64	100.00

The major contexts where the State becomes an adversary are infrastructure projects, special economic zones (SEZs)/export processing zones (EPZs), conservation and protected areas, public utilities & energy projects, and land administration disputes over *khas* or forest land (mostly against indigenous communities). In these cases, key governance challenges include top-down project implementation without adequate consultation with communities, lack of free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) in affected communities, and compensation & resettlement process that are delayed, inadequate, or exclusionary.

Drivers of land conflict

Conflicts driven by conservation zones (mostly government claimed forest land) and government programs (or projects) together account for a significant portion (46.3 percent) of contested land. Whereas, agrarian conflict is another major driver found in 17 cases and 21.9 percent of contested land. [Table 7]

Table 7. Drivers of land and resource conflict based on number and percent of cases and contested area (in hectares)

Drivers of land and resource conflict	Number of cases	Contested area (ha)
Landlord-tenant conflict/agrarian conflict	17	5,500.75
Government programs	14	5,007
• Public utilities (dams, power lines, power/energy, irrigation, etc.)	2	2,204.30
• Special economic zones	2	866.95
• Other government projects/programs	10	1,935.78
Conservation/Protected Areas and “No Go” Zones	11	6,627.82
Private-led business enterprises	9	978.35
• Agribusiness, plantations	3	243.17
• Power generation and transmission	3	518.00
• Others	3	217.18
Government-led business/State enterprises	1	202.00
Conflicting claims between communities/sectors over land and resource (overlapping tenure and use)	1	1,942.50
Others (government leasing system of waterbodies, government claims IPs land as <i>khas</i> i.e. government owned land, etc.)	11	4,866.90
Total	64	25,125.35

Box 2: Development without consent: Santal community's fight for land justice in Gobindaganj

In *Gobindaganj upazila* (sub-district) of *Gaibandha* district, indigenous Santal communities have faced prolonged injustice stemming from State land acquisition and development projects. Historically, approximately 1,842 acres (745.5 hectares) of land, predominantly belonging to the Santal community, were first requisitioned and later acquired in 1962 for the cultivation activities of the Rangpur Sugar Mills, under an agreement that the land must be returned if it was used for purposes other than those specified. After the mill was laid off in 2004, the land was leased for other commercial cultivation, violating the original terms.

Tensions escalated on 6 November 2016 when local administration, police, and mill affiliates forcibly attempted to evict Santals protesting to reclaim their ancestral land. The confrontation left three Santals dead and many injured. Despite the gravity of the incident, justice remains elusive, with limited legal accountability and unresolved demands for restitution. The government subsequently proposed establishing an Export Processing Zone (EPZ) on the disputed land and relocating the affected Santal families to alternative sites, a plan the community opposed.

Santals have argued that the relocation disregarded their cultural ties and livelihood linked to ancestral land — a core failure of FPIC principles. Their protests have continued amidst fear of eviction and broader concerns over irregular and unjust acquisition practices without adequate environmental or social impact assessments.



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Photo 1A Santal women hold a placard demanding justice for the violent eviction carried out against her community.

Incidents of human rights violations and reported perpetrators

A total of 28 human rights violations (HRVs) incidents were documented during the reporting period, affecting both individuals and communities. These incidents involved 108 individual victims and impacted 218 households at the community level. The data revealed that violence and intimidation were not isolated events but part of a broader conflict dynamics affecting vulnerable populations. [Table 8]

Table 8. Human Rights Violations (HRVs)

Incidents of HRVs	Number Incidents	Number of Victims
Against individuals	18	108 individuals
Against communities	10	218 households
Total	30	

Among individual victims, the most common form of HRVs was assault or physical injury, accounting for 10 incidents affecting 78 people. This was followed by killing or murder in three incidents that claimed eight lives. Detention or arrest was reported in three incidents affecting six individuals. In addition, one incident of labelling affected 15 people, reflecting the use of legal or social pressure to suppress affected groups. [Table 9]

Table 9. Forms of HRVs committed against individuals, by number of incidents and number of victims

Type of HRVs	Number of incidents	Number of individual victims			
		Male	Female	Unidentified	Total
Assault/Physical injury*	10	38	18	22	78
Killing/murder	3	8	0	0	8
Detainment/legal arrest or illegal detention; and "criminalization"	3	6	0	0	6
Labelling, branding, "red-tagging"	1	15	0	0	15
Others	1	1	0	0	1
Total	18	68	18	22	108

Note: The recorded type of HRV reflects the most recent incident of HRV inflicted on the victim.

** Of the assault/physical injury victims, three females also experienced sexual assault and three males experienced abduction; additionally, one female and one male faced physical threats and other forms of intimidation*

In terms of the reported perpetrators of HRVs against individuals, powerful individuals account for 61 percent of incidents, with government agencies and beneficiaries of government social forestry programs as the perpetrators in almost 28 percent of incidents combined. [Table 10]

Table 10. Reported perpetrators of HRVs against individuals, by number of incidents and percentage

Reported perpetrators of HRVs against individuals	Number of incidents	Percent of incidents (%)
Powerful individuals, authorities (e.g., politicians, ex-bureaucrats, ex-military, landlords, etc.)	11	61
Government agencies	3	17
Unidentified assailants	2	11
Others (beneficiaries of government social forestry programs)	2	11
Total	18	100

The data on communities affected by HRVs shows that a total of 10 incidents impacted 218 households during the reporting period. The burden of these violations fell primarily on two groups: a) smallholder & landless farmers, and b) indigenous people. [Table 11]

Table 11. Communities affected by HRVs, by number of incidents and number of affected households

Communities affected by HRVs	Number of incidents	Number of affected households
Farmers	4	123
Indigenous people (IP)	6	95
Total	10	218

At the community level, the destruction of crops, homes, or other property was the most prevalent violation, with eight incidents affecting 152 households. One incident involved forcible entry without free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC), impacting 50 households, while another incident of criminalization affected 16 households. [Table 12]

Table 12. Types of HRVs committed against communities, by number of incidents and number of affected households

Type of HRVs against communities	Number of incidents	Number of affected households
Destruction of crops, homes, property	8	152
Forcible entry/encroachment, entry without free, prior and informed consent (FPIC)	1	50
Labelling, branding, “red-tagging”, criminalization	1	16
Total	10	218

The data revealed that powerful individuals or authorities were responsible for the majority of violations, accounting for approximately 60 percent of reported incidents. Government agencies were involved in 10 percent of the cases, while the remainder were attributed to other perpetrators. [Table 13]

Table 13. Reported perpetrators of HRVs committed against communities, by number of incidents and percentage

Perpetrators of HRVs against communities	Number of incidents	Percent of incidents (%)
Powerful individuals, authorities (e.g., politicians, ex-bureaucrats, ex-military, landlords, etc.)	6	60
Government agencies	1	10
Others	3	30
Total	10	100

Box 3: Land conflict and role of National Human Rights Commission of Bangladesh

In Bangladesh, land-related human rights violations include forced evictions, land grabbing, fabricated cases, and violence against indigenous and marginalized communities, especially where formal tenure documentation is weak.⁵

The National Human Rights Commission of Bangladesh (NHRCB) is mandated to receive and investigate complaints of human rights violations, including land-related abuses, and to make recommendations to authorities for remedial action. It can also initiate *suo-moto* (on its own motion) inquiries and promote awareness of rights protections.

However, the NHRCB can not issue a legally binding order. This lack of enforcement power undermines its ability to ensure compliance and accountability in land-related human rights cases, while limited resources and institutional capacity further constrain timely investigations and follow-up. These structural weaknesses have contributed to perceptions of reduced effectiveness and limited public confidence in the Commission's role in addressing serious violations.⁶

Recently, a new legislation was adopted by the Interim Government introducing significant institutional and procedural reforms to strengthen human rights protection mechanisms. The reform aims to enhance investigative authority, improve institutional independence, and ensure greater compliance with the recommendations from the Commission. If effectively implemented, it could expand access to remedies for victims of land-related violence and improve accountability of State and non-State actors.

Responses of affected communities

For remedies, communities relied mostly on judicial process because other alternatives have limited jurisdiction. However, court processes are slow and expensive. Communities sought remedies mostly through courts (33 responses), peaceful demonstration (18 responses) and government administrative mechanism (10 responses). Information on community response was unavailable in two cases. [Table 14]

Table 14. Responses by communities to address conflict

Responses of Communities to Conflicts	Number of Responses
Seek conflict resolution	44
<i>through government administrative mechanism</i>	10
<i>through local or direct negotiations</i>	1
<i>through courts and/or quasi-judicial bodies</i>	33
Peaceful demonstrations/non-violent acts	18
No information available	2
Total	64

Note: Communities may take one or more approaches in response to conflict, resulting in the total number of responses exceeding the number of cases. The chosen responses reflect the mechanisms or platforms that are more accessible to the communities.

⁵ <https://www.bonikbarta.com/bangladesh/pviDdISvhmOqeyYk>

⁶ <https://ohrh.law.ox.ac.uk/bangladeshs-national-human-rights-commission-a-watchdog-without-teeth>

Corrective actions

Only a small fraction of conflicts (four cases) saw corrective action, indicating weak resolution mechanisms. Data availability remained a challenge — data on corrective actions was unavailable in 15 cases. [Table 15]

Table 15. Corrective actions to address the conflict

Whether corrective actions were taken to address the conflict case	Number
Yes	4
<i>by the Government</i>	4
<i>by agreement with the adversarial party</i>	0
<i>by third party, specify</i>	0
No/not yet	45
No information available	15
Total	64

Land conflict resolution mechanisms in Bangladesh

Formal dispute resolution in Bangladesh primarily occurs through civil courts under land laws and the Code of Civil Procedure, alongside administrative mechanisms which started from land offices at the *upazila* (sub-district), district and divisional levels, up to Land Appeal Board. As of 2024, the judiciary faces a backlog of over 4.5 million pending cases.⁷ A substantial proportion of cases (both civil and criminal) pending in the judiciary are related to land conflicts. Estimates suggest that around 70 to 80 percent of all legal cases in Bangladesh involve land disputes, many of which remain unresolved for years or even decades.⁸ The prolonged nature of litigation often discourages affected communities from seeking legal remedies and contributes to frustration, social tension, and sometimes desperate and violent confrontation over land.

In the Chattogram Hill Tracts (CHT), land disputes are shaped by customary tenure systems of indigenous peoples. The traditional governance structure — headed by the Circle Chief, Mouza Headman, and Karbari — plays a significant role in mediating disputes based on customary laws and community consensus. The CHT Land Dispute Resolution Commission, established following the Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord, is mandated to address land disputes in the region, although implementation challenges persist.

Among indigenous communities in the plains, customary leaders and community-based *shalish* (informal mediation) mechanisms remain important for resolving land-related disagreements, especially where formal documentation is weak or absent. These traditional systems are generally faster and culturally legitimate but may lack legal enforceability.

⁷ The Daily Star, 5 July 2025. <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news/over-45-lakh-cases-pending-courts-3933306>

⁸ Dhaka Tribune, 4 September 2025. <https://www.dhakatribune.com/amp/bangladesh/government-affairs/390717>

Key highlights: Implications for national land governance

The findings suggest several systemic issues:

- **Multiple agencies control different types of land:** Multiple government agencies exercise authority over different categories of land, often resulting in overlapping mandates and disputes. For example, Land Administration and Revenue Offices operate land-related activity under the Ministry of Land, the Forest Department controls forest land and newly emerged *chars* (riverine island) under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, and the Water Development Board controls the dams, embankments, irrigation projects and adjacent water bodies including ditches, ponds, canals, etc., under the Ministry of Water Resources.
- **Overlapping jurisdiction creates disputes:** This is particularly evident in *char* areas of the coastal regions, wetlands, and *Khasi purjhis* in Sylhet regions, where conflicting authority between the Forest Department and the Land Administration, along with unclear boundary demarcation, frequently gives rise to conflicts.
- **Lack of tenure security:** Customary and informal land rights remain largely unrecognized within the formal legal framework, leaving many communities without secure tenure or protection from displacement. At the same time, public land distribution processes are inconsistent and often lack transparency, creating inequities in access and increasing the risk of conflict and marginalization.
- **Marginalized people suffer most in irregularities of survey and record:** Small holders and marginalized groups are disproportionately affected by forged documents, irregularities, and complexities in land survey and records systems.
- **Development without safeguards:** Development programs and projects are often implemented without adequate safeguards, reflecting weak social and environmental protections. Affected communities frequently have limited participation in planning and implementation processes, resulting in decisions that overlook local needs, rights, and long-term sustainability. This exclusion often generates frustration, negative repercussions, and heightened tensions, which can escalate into confrontation and, in some cases, violent clashes. The loss of livelihoods, means of living, and shelter leaves affected people in precarious and highly vulnerable situations.

Recommendations

The government should adopt and implement a comprehensive agrarian reform policy that ensures equitable land distribution, recognition of customary and informal tenure rights, and secure access to land for smallholders and marginalized communities. Institutional reforms are needed to strengthen land administration agencies, improve land records management, enhance transparency, and ensure coordinated implementation across relevant ministries and departments.

Specific recommendations include:

1. On policy reforms

- *Protect the rights of indigenous peoples through constitutional/legal recognition and enforcement safeguards.*

- *Ensure legal protection of landless communities*, including enactment and implementation of the legal provisions for *khas* land recovery and distribution.
- *Mandatory FPIC (free, prior, and informed consent) for projects affecting local communities* — development, infrastructure, conservation, and commercial projects that affect local communities, particularly indigenous peoples and other vulnerable groups, must ensure FPIC before approval and implementation.
- *Inclusion of transparent compensation and resettlement systems in acquisition laws* - compensation and resettlement process must be fair, timely, inclusive, and transparent, ensuring that affected individuals and communities receive adequate compensation based on current market value and livelihood loss.

2. On institutional reforms

- *Establish a unified land governance framework.* The government should develop and implement a coherent and integrated land governance framework that harmonizes existing laws, policies, and institutional mandates. This would reduce overlapping jurisdictions, clarify roles and responsibilities, and promote transparency and accountability in land administration.
- *Strengthen land dispute resolution bodies.* Land dispute resolution bodies should be reformed and adequately resourced to ensure timely, accessible, and impartial adjudication of cases. Capacity building, legal awareness, and community-friendly procedures can enhance trust and improve the effectiveness of these institutions.
- *Sensitize government agencies.* Conduct awareness and capacity building programs on land and human rights for key government institutions, e.g. Forest Department, Land Administration, Water Development Board, and law-enforcing agencies on the human rights and legal rights of marginalized citizens, including indigenous peoples, fisherfolk, landless and smallholder farmers.
- *Establish an independent land conflict monitoring mechanism to track trends, publish reports, and inform policy reform.*

3. On strengthened human rights protection

- *Independent monitoring of land-related violence.* An independent and credible mechanism should be established to systematically document and monitor incidents of violence related to structural land conflicts. Regular public reporting can enhance transparency, deter abuses, and ensure accountability of perpetrators.
- *Legal support and protection for land rights defenders.* Comprehensive legal aid and protection measures should be provided to land rights defenders facing threats, harassment, or criminalization. Safeguard mechanisms must ensure their safety and enable them to carry out their advocacy without fear of reprisal.
- *Proactive role of NHRCB to safeguard victims of land-related human rights violations.* The National Human Rights Commission of Bangladesh (NHRCB) should take a proactive role in investigating complaints, conducting fact-finding missions, and issuing timely recommendations. It should also monitor the implementation of its directives to ensure effective remedies for victims.

4. On preventive conflict management

- *Early warning systems for land-related violence.* Support should be given to communities for developing early warning systems to identify rising tensions and potential triggers of land-related violence. Timely data collection and coordination among authorities and communities can help prevent escalation into conflict.
- *Strengthening community protection mechanisms, enhancing social capital to prevent violence.* Community-based protection mechanisms should be reinforced to promote solidarity, collective action, and mutual support. Building social capital and trust among stakeholders can reduce vulnerabilities and prevent violent confrontations.
- *Community-level mediation and dialogue platforms.* Local mediation and dialogue platforms should be institutionalized to facilitate constructive engagement among conflicting parties. Inclusive and participatory dialogue can foster mutual understanding and peaceful resolution of disputes.

5. On strengthening civil society engagement in land conflict monitoring and accountability

- *Establish community-based monitoring systems to document disputes, with special focus on marginalized groups.*
- *Provide legal awareness and legal/paralegal support to affected communities.*
- *Promote transparency and accountability by tracking the responses of State mechanisms and publishing periodic reports.*
- *Use evidence for policy advocacy to improve land governance and coordination among institutions.*

Acknowledgment

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The 2025 Land and Resource Conflict Monitoring (LRCM) Report shows that land conflict in Bangladesh remains a persistent challenge, driven by weak governance, tenure insecurity & overlapping claims, impact of climate change, displacement due to development projects, and elite encroachment further intensifying HRVs and violence. This is reflected in the 64 cases of ongoing land and resource conflicts in 2025, involving 25,125.35 hectares and affecting 78,981 households. These dynamics highlight the urgent need for comprehensive land governance reforms, stronger tenure security, and rights-based & inclusive approaches to conflict prevention and resolution.

