

Re: Request to issue corrigendum on the top of the story, "From four to a hundred: The politics of disinformation in the Hill Tracts conflict," published on September 29, 2024 at <https://en.dismislab.com/from-four-to-a-hundred-the-politics-of-disinformation-in-the-hill-tracts-conflict/>



From Suhas Chakma <suhaschakma@rightsrisks.org>
To Dismislab <editor@dismislab.com>
Cc <minhj.aman@digitallyright.org>, <tamarayesmin@dismislab.com>, <partho@dismislab.com>, <abrar.ifaz@digitallyright.org>, <hsmsohrab@gmail.com>, <director@rightsrisks.org>, <suhaschakma@rightsrisks.org>
Date 2024-10-17 07:43

Dear Mr Aman,

Please note that the longer the current text remains on your site, the more harm is caused to our reputation.

Therefore, it ought to be addressed by Friday or else, we shall go public with our statements.

We have given the proof regarding the FIR the contents of which were already reported. The photographs from the Khagarachari hospital was provided to us and you did not verify from us before casting aspersion.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely

Suhas Chakma

Get [BlueMail for Android](#)

On 16 Oct 2024, at 12:47, Dismislab <editor@dismislab.com> wrote:

Dear Suhas Chakma,

I sincerely apologize for the delayed response. Unfortunately, your message was filtered into the spam folder, and I was unable to address it promptly.

We understand the gravity of the matter and are treating it with the utmost seriousness. Please rest assured that we will provide a comprehensive response as soon as possible.

Thank you for your understanding.

Best regards,
Minhaj Aman
Lead
Dismislab.com

----- On Mon, 14 Oct 2024 14:42:54 +0600 suhaschakma@rightsrisks.org wrote -----

Rights & Risks Analysis Group

C-3/441, Janakpuri, New Delhi-110058

Email: director@rightsrisks.org, suhaschakma@rightsrisks.org

Website: www.rightsrisks.org

Phone: +91-11-35631078

14 September 2024

To

The Editor, Dismislab (Bangladesh)

Email: editor@dismislab.com, minhj.aman@digitallyright.org, minhj.aman@digitallyright.org, tamarayesmin@dismislab.com, partho@dismislab.com, abrar.ifaz@digitallyright.org, hsmsohrab@gmail.com

Dear Sirs/Madams,

Our attention has been drawn to an article, "*From four to a hundred: The politics of disinformation in the Hill Tracts conflict*", published by you on September 29, 2024 at <https://en.dismislab.com/from-four-to-a-hundred-the-politics-of-disinformation-in-the-hill-tracts-conflict/> last week and we were unable to respond instantly because of the Durga Puja holidays.

Be that as it may, your impugned article starts with disinformation and misinformation from the first sentence itself to create a distorted narrative to downplay human rights violations in the CHTs on 19-20 September and discredit the most prominent human rights activist, Mr Suhas Chakma by insinuating about the number of deaths quoted by him as "**a claim not substantiated**". In the process, your organisation violated the most sacrosanct and inviolable principle of Fact-Checking i.e. verification of facts from the original sources and you relied upon selective secondary sources of information (newspaper articles). You have failed to verify the First Information Report No.12/107 dated 20 September 2024 regarding the kidnapping and murder of Mohammed Mamun on 18 September 2024 and the basis of the Rights and Risks Analysis Group's (RRAG) press statement regarding the number of deaths on 20 September 2024.

There are number of issues which require rebuttal but the RRAG will highlight only two issues with the request to issue corrigendum on the top of the story given the following incontrovertible facts.

1. YOUR STORY STARTS WITH LIES ABOUT THE DEATH OF A YOUNG MAN IN A MOB ATTACK

Your article starts with the falsehood.

The first sentence of your article states, "*On September 18, in Dighinala, Khagrachari, a young man died in a mob attack following theft allegations*".

To substantiate the claim that it was a mob attack, you relied on the story "*Clash in CHT after hill students' demo*" published by *The Prothom Alo* on 29 September 2024 (<https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/local-news/4egt04jr56>).

Your organization did not verify whether the story published by *The Prothom Alo* is true or not. That the young man, Mohammed Mamun, died as a result of mob attack was absolutely false and it was a case of kidnapping and murder as per the FIR registered and the kidnapping and murder case was turned into a mob attack to justify the attacks on indigenous hill people.

In this particular case, on 20 September 2024, FIR No.12/107 was registered by Mr Abdul Maten Mridha, Inspector and Officer-in-Charge of Khagrachari Police Station, on a complaint filed by Mrs Mukta Akhtar (National Identity Card No.6869755918), wife of late Mohammed Mamun of Salbon, Shaplar Mor, Khagrachari Sadar. She filed the complaint against accused No.1 Mohammed Shakeel (27 years); (2) Rafiqul Alam (55 years); (3) Didarul Alam and (4) 10-12 tribals and Bengalis. Mrs Mukta Akhtar in her complaint in Bengali (translated herein below) stated the following:

"My husband (victim) is a furniture business and owner of "Maa" furniture in the locality. My husband (victim) like everyday was out from home towards the shop at 1800 hours on 17/09/2024. As I had guests at my home and there was not enough space, he told me that he will stay at the shop. Therefore, I did not inquire about his whereabouts in the night. At About 7.00 hours on 18/09/2024 I came to know that the staff of my husband and witness Shahin has been picked up. Thereafter, I also received the information that at 2400 hours in the night that accused No.1 accused under the instruction of accused No.2 and 3 was forced to accompany them and when he refused, he was picked up by the accused. It is pertinent to mention that my husband has previous enmity with accused No.2 and 3. After learning about all these, I started searching for the victim. At one point, I saw a video in the facebook that under the instructions and presence of the above mentioned accused, there was an attempt to murder my husband. At that point, I came to know that my husband (victim) was murdered and his dead body was lying at the Sadar hospital. Thereafter, me and my family members rushed to the hospital, identified his dead body and brought the dead body after postmortem and buried him. Thereafter, I came to know that witness Shahin was picked up by the accused No.1 and unknown persons who brutally tortured and injured him. Witness Shahin is still under treatment in the hospital. After burying my husband (victim) and becoming a little bit stable after the family's loss, and advice from the locally known persons, there was little delay in filing the FIR".

A copy of the FIR and the complaint is attached as **ANNEX-1**.

Without verifying the facts and speaking to the victim's family and survivor Shahin/witness to the murder, you turned a case of kidnapping and murder into "a mob attack". You turned the owner of "Maa" furniture as per Ms Mukta Akhtar into an alleged thief. This is nothing but defamation of the dead.

The FIR was registered on 20 September and it has been available publicly including with the RRAG. The facts stated in the FIR filed by Mrs Mukta Akhtar were published in *The Dhaka Tribune* (CHT violence: Two cases filed in Khagrachhari, Rangamati, dated 22 September 2024 @ <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/nation/359333/cht-violence-two-cases-filed-in-khagrachhari>) and *The Daily Star* (CHT violence: Two cases filed in Khagrachhari and Rangamati dated 22 September 2024 @ <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/crime-justice/news/cht-violence-two-cases-filed-khagrachhari-and-rangamati-3709121>). Even though, you published the story 10 days after the FIR was filed and 8 days after The Dhaka Tribune and The Daily Star published the contents of the FIR, you selectively relied on the story published in *The Prothom Alo*, "Clash in CHT after hill students' demo" on 29 September 2024 (<https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/local-news/4egt04jr56>).

In fact, you did not mention the fact Mohammed Mamun was kidnapped and murdered by persons belonging to his own community (linguistically Bengali following Islam) on 18 September because of previous enmity at his own village in Khagrachari Sadar as per his own wife. The same kidnapping and murder was used by the illegal plain settlers to attack the indigenous peoples in Dighinala on 19 September which had nothing to do with the death of Mohammed Mamun. You concealed these **MATERIAL** facts to mislead the readers who might be trusting your story as a fact-checking organization, without realizing that you not only failed to verify facts from the primary sources but you actually selected a particular secondary source (news story) to certify false information as a "fact" to suit your narrative.

2. YOU INSINUATE AGAINST SUHAS CHAKMA, DIRECTOR OF RRAG, ABOUT THE NUMBER OF DEATHS WITHOUT VERIFYING FROM HIM

In your story, you had further insinuated in the following way:

*"Nevertheless, Suhas Chakma, director of the Rights and Risks Analysis Group claimed nine indigenous deaths in a media statement. He along with other Indian Chakma leaders urged Mr. Modi to downgrade ties with Bangladesh after killings of tribals. The Borderlens, cited the letter that claimed "the deaths of 9 tribals" and reported that five unidentified bodies remain at Khagrachari hospital, **a claim not substantiated**. And, IWGIA only mentions four deaths in its joint statement with CHT Commission."* (Emphasis ours)

Once again it is reiterated that as a fact-checking organization, your first and non-negotiable principle is to verify from the source itself before drawing your conclusion, "**a claim not substantiated**". You insinuated against myself (Suhas Chakma) without verifying the basis of my/our claims. You did not verify despite my/our emails being available on the website of the Rights and Risks Analysis Group (www.rightsrisks.org) and my profile being given in LinkedIn (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/suhas-chakma-b0466a45/>) where you could have sent messages to verify. You choose not to verify.

If you had contacted, the RRAG would have given its basis which are substantiated below:

A. Four officially recognized deaths (Photos provided)

As per the official figures four indigenous hill tribe persons were killed by the illegal settlers and the Bangladesh Army. They were identified as (1) Mr Dhana Ranjan Chakma (52 years), son of Handara Chakma of Udol Bagan who was beaten to death by the Bangladesh Army personnel at Dighinala on 19 September 2024; (2) Mr Junan Chakma, 22 years, son of Rupayon Chakma of village Juboraj-para, Perachara Union, Khagrachari shot dead by Bangladesh Army on 19 September; (3) Mr Rubel Tripura, 24 years, son of Gorjon Muni Tripura of Perachara Union, Khagrachari Sadar Upazila shot dead by Bangladesh Army on 19 September; and (4) Mr Anik Chakma, beaten to death by the illegal settlers at Rangamati on 20 September 2024.

The photographs of these four death persons as provided to the RRAG. **Please refer to the pdf version of this letter for the photos.**

B. Five unidentified dead bodies which were lying at Khagrachari Hospital different from four officially recognized deaths (photos provided)

On the morning of 20 September 2024, the RRAG was provided photographs of five unidentified dead bodies which were lying at Khagrachari hospital. The photographs of these five unidentified persons appeared different from those four identified death persons as mentioned above.

The photographs of these five unidentified dead bodies lying at Khagrachari Hospital on 20 September 2024 as submitted to the RRAG. **Please refer to the pdf version of this letter for the photos.**

When the RRAG submitted the memorandum to the Prime Minister of India and issued the press release on 20 September 2024 which was published by *The Borderlens*, we relied on the photographic evidence provided to us from the Khagrachari hospital. The dead could not speak up to identify themselves. It was with great difficulty that people shared these photos from the hospital premises.

Therefore, the assertion in your article - "*five unidentified bodies remain at Khagrachari hospital, **a claim not substantiated***" - is false. Our claim was based on the photographs we were provided by the eye-witnesses.

In this regard, it is pertinent to mention that Bangladesh has witnessed enforced disappearances committed in Bangladesh and it is so much so that the Government of Bangladesh established a [Commission on Enforced Disappearances on 29 August 2024](#).

In April 2019 Michael Chakma disappeared, his family held a funeral service for him and he was held illegal custody enduring mental and physical torture during his captivity at Ainagar operated by the military intelligence directorate (DGFI). He was released on 9 August 2024. [When a habeas corpus petition was filed after his disappearance, the Government of Bangladesh lied before the High Court and claimed that Michael Chakma was not kidnapped at all.](#)

Against these practices of human rights violations and military rule in the CHTs by the Bangladesh Army, you have the effrontery to publish false information/ misinformation/ concocted information completely relying on secondary sources of information (newspapers) chosen selectively to create a narrative that downplays human rights violations in the CHTs and discredit a prominent human rights activist, Suhas Chakma, without any verification from the primary sources.

In the light of the above facts which can stand judicial scrutiny, the Rights and Risks Analysis Group calls upon your organization to issue a corrigendum on the top of the article/ page to provide the following clarifications:

- In the first sentence of the article it was stated that "*On September 18, in Dighinala, Khagrachari, a young man died in a mob attack following theft allegations*". This does not reflect the truth as mentioned in the FIR No. No.12/107 dated 20 September 2024 registered by the Khagrachari Police Station based on the complaint filed by Mrs Mukta Akhtar, wife of the deceased young man Mohammed Mamun. In her complaint, Mrs Akhtar stated that her husband Mohammed Mamun was the owner of Maa Furniture and not an alleged thief and he was murdered by accused No.1 Mohammed Shakeel (27 years), (2) Rafiqul Alam (55 years), (3) Didarul Alam and (4) 10-12 tribals and Bengalis after kidnapping and torture. The facts of the FIR were published in *The Dhaka Tribune (CHT violence: Two cases filed in Khagrachhari, Rangamati, dated 22 September 2024 @ <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/nation/359333/cht-violence-two-cases-filed-in-khagrachhari>)* and *The Daily Star (CHT violence: Two cases filed in Khagrachhari and Rangamati dated 22 September 2024 @ <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/crime-justice/news/cht-violence-two-cases-filed-khagrachhari-and-rangamati-3709121>)*. A copy of the FIR is provided.
- In the article, it was stated, "*Nevertheless, Suhas Chakma, director of the Rights and Risks Analysis Group claimed nine indigenous deaths in a media statement. He along with other Indian Chakma leaders urged Mr. Modi to downgrade ties with Bangladesh after killings of tribals. The Borderlens, cited the letter that claimed "the deaths of 9 tribals" and reported that five unidentified bodies remain at Khagrachari hospital, **a claim not substantiated**. And, IWGIA only mentions four deaths in its joint statement with CHT Commission.*" The same is corrected as "*Nevertheless, Suhas Chakma, director of the Rights and Risks Analysis Group claimed nine indigenous deaths in a media statement. He along with other Indian Chakma leaders urged Mr. Modi to downgrade ties with Bangladesh after killings of tribals. The Borderlens, cited the letter that claimed "the deaths of 9 tribals" and reported that five unidentified bodies remain at Khagrachari hospital, **a claim substantiated with photographs of five unidentified***

dead bodies sent to the RRAG. However, IWGIA only mentions four deaths in its joint statement with CHT Commission." Photographs of the five unidentified bodies are provided.

These clarifications should be done in the next 48 hours with the copy of the FIR and the photos of the five unidentified dead bodies which were lying at the Khagrachari Hospital on 20 September 2024.

This is without prejudice to our rights and contentions to issue a public statement and share the same with all fact-checking organizations all over the world, national NGOs in Bangladesh, regional and international human rights organizations in the world, diplomatic community and UN agencies based in Dhaka and key multilateral financial institutions.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely

Suhas Chakma

Director

Encl: As above.

Re: Request to issue corrigendum on the top of the story, "From four to a hundred: The politics of disinformation in the Hill Tracts conflict," published on September 29, 2024 at <https://en.dismislab.com/from-four-to-a-hundred-the-politics-of-disinformation-in-the-hill-tracts-conflict/>



From Dismislab <editor@dismislab.com>
To suhaschakma <suhaschakma@rightsrisks.org>
Date 2024-10-28 13:41

 Edited Subject_ Response of Dismislab Regarding the Report on the CHT Incident.pdf (~6.1 MB)

Dear Suhas Chakma,

We sincerely apologize for the delay in responding to your email. We have reviewed your observations thoroughly with utmost priority. Please find our response to the concerns raised by you and the Rights & Risks Analysis Group (RRAG) attached.
Thank you for your patience and understanding.

Best regards,
Lead
Dismislab.com

4. Lastly, we reached out to the grief stricken families of the 2 identified deceased in Khagrachari and they also confirmed those images to be of their lost loved ones.

Our Verification: Our analysis aimed to determine if the five photos presented as separate, unidentified bodies exhibited any visual patterns or similarities that could help reach a conclusion. We found that the photo of Dhana Ranjan Chakma (Picture 1) features a distinctive sheet of cloth, which also appears in two photos labeled as unidentified individuals (2 and 3). Additionally, another image collected from social media (Picture 4) shows the same cloth. While Picture 2 is claimed to be of an unidentified person, a social media post dated 20th September clearly identifies this individual, suggesting that the bodies are not separate as claimed."

<p>Picture 1: Identifies Dhana Ranjan Chakma in the email request for corrigendum</p>	<p>Picture 2: Claimed to be unidentified</p> <p>Picture 2: Claimed to be of second and third unidentified bodies, one of which is wrapped in a cloth similar to that seen in other photos.</p>	<p>Picture 4: A social media post dated 20th September identifies Dhana Ranjan Chakma, contradicting the claim in the email.</p>
<p>Visual analysis (highlighted with a yellow arrow) indicates the presence of the same piece of cloth on a body across all photos. This cloth appears in images that are claimed to be unidentified (Pictures 1 and 4) and in those that identify the body as Dhana Ranjan Chakma (Pictures 2 and 3).</p>		

We had the photos independently cross-verified. Our representative interviewed the Resident Medical Officer of Khagrachari Sadar Hospital, Mr. Ripple Bappi Chakma. He stated, "On the night of September 19th, following the unrest between the hill people and Bengalis, several patients came in for treatment after 9:30 PM. Of these, a few were admitted, while others were referred to different hospitals. Three individuals passed away while under treatment here. One

was from Dighinala, while the other two were from Khagrachari Sadar.” After reviewing the photos (which you shared as of the unidentified individuals), he confirmed that they were of Junan, Dhana Ranjan, and Rubel, taken from the verandah of Khagrachari Sadar Hospital.

We also attempted to contact the families of the deceased. While they were unable to reach anyone from the family of Dhana Ranjan Chakma, we did manage to get in touch with the families of Junan Chakma and Rubel Tripura.

We contacted the mother of the deceased Junan Chakma, Mrs. Ruposhi Chakma. Upon seeing the photos, she confirmed that they were indeed of her son Junan. She said, “One picture on the floor and the other with the cover—both are of my son Junan Chakma.” Our visual analysis, and several social media posts, posted on 19th and 20th September also confirms the same.



Picture 5: identifies Junan Chakma in the corrigendum email.

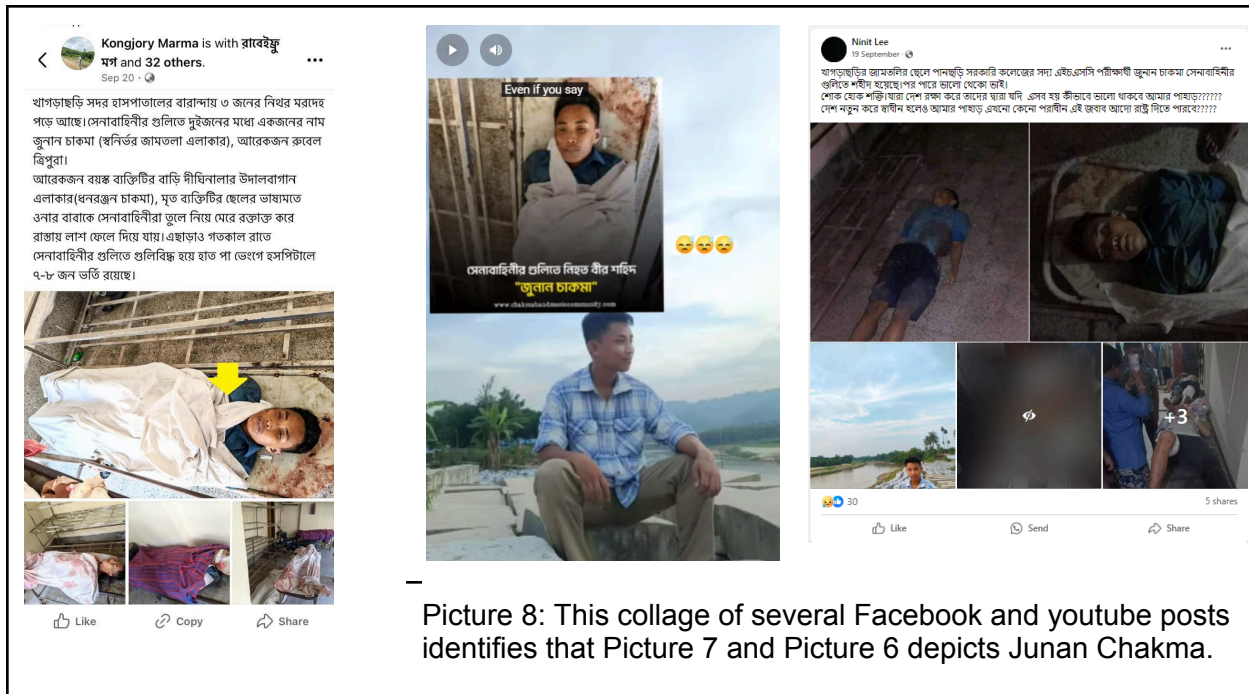


Picture 6: This is the same image of Junan Chakma, yet it is claimed to be of a fourth unidentified person in the email. The angle and the attire of the body are identical to those in Picture 5. Visual similarity is marked in a yellow arrow.

Junan’s mother also identified this picture as being of her son.



Picture 7: The above photo was claimed to be of the fifth unidentified body. However, Junan’s mother and several social media posts identify Picture 7 as being of Junan Chakma.



Picture 8: This collage of several Facebook and youtube posts identifies that Picture 7 and Picture 6 depicts Junan Chakma.

Rubel Tripura's elder brother, Dirgha Moni Tripura, confirmed on record that the photos (allegedly of unidentified deceased) we showed him included his brother. He identified Rubel in two photos of the allegedly unidentified individuals, stating, "In the pictures marked 3, marked with a circle, one image shows the face uncovered, while another has the face covered—both are of my brother Rubel Tripura."

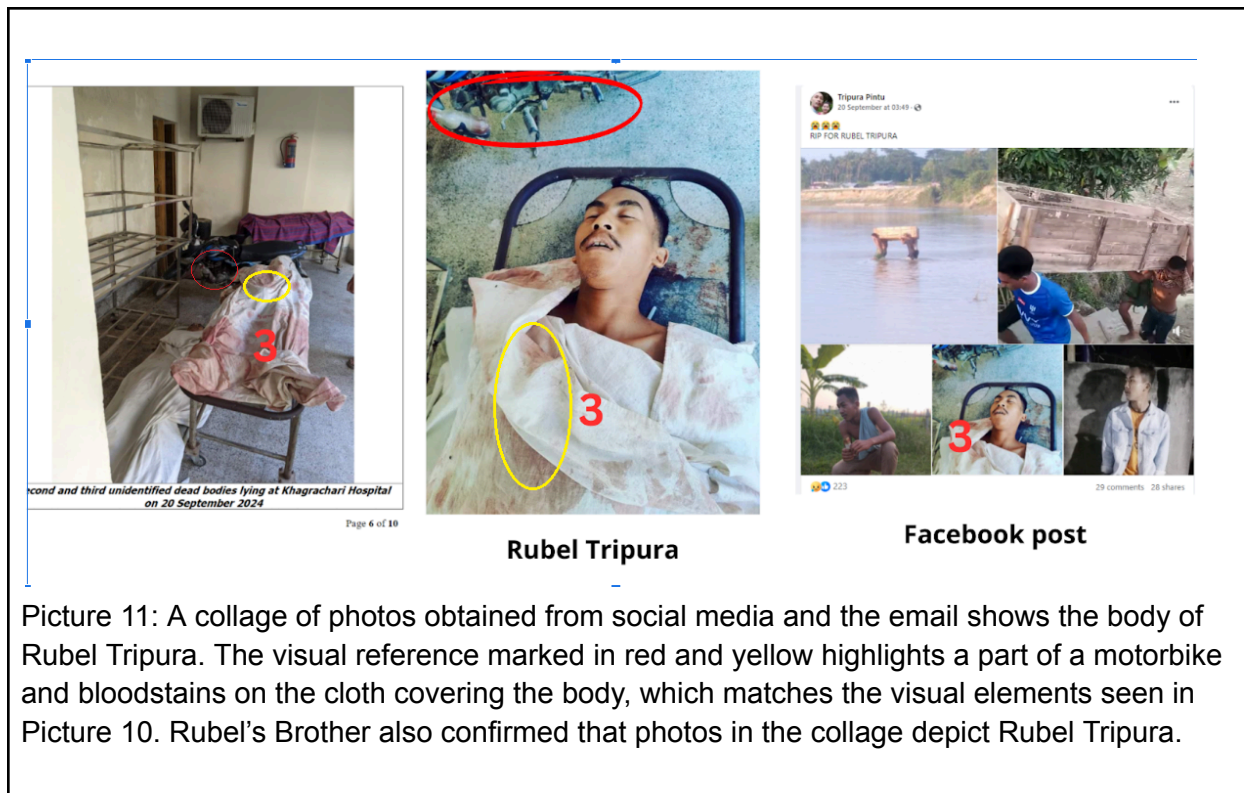


3. Death body of Rubel Tripura

Picture 9: identifies Rubel Tripura in the corrigendum email.

Second and third unidentified dead bodies lying at Khagrachari Hospital

Picture 10: Claimed to be of second and third unidentified bodies, but one of which (marked in arrow) is of Rubel Tripura confirmed by his brother and the doctor.



Visual analysis and photos collected from social media corroborate this finding. Several social media posts have identified the photos of Rubel Tripura, which the email had claimed to depict unidentified bodies. One of the photos, described in the email as showing the 'second and third unidentified body,' was identified as Rubel Tripura, matching the visual references found in social media posts.

Amendments:

There were several narratives surrounding Mr. Mamun's death, but this was not the subject matter of the article. Our decision to describe the event as a 'mob attack' was based on multiple credible sources, including local news reports and human rights organizations, which supported this characterization. While we strive to remain open to all perspectives for fairness, we also have a responsibility to ensure that our article does not inadvertently contribute to narratives that could deepen divisions or justify violence against minority groups. Therefore, we have chosen to stand by our initial language, while continuing to monitor new information as it becomes available. Our commitment remains to report fairly and accurately, especially when the stakes involve the safety and rights of marginalized communities.

While we deeply respect your work for the rights of the minorities, please be informed that we will be updating our statement, "a claim not substantiated" and replace it with "Upon verification, the images of the 5 unidentified bodies were revealed to be of the three already identified individuals died in Khagrachari, often in different positions".

Regarding your request for a full corrigendum at the top of the article, we believe that such a correction is not warranted in this case. Our investigation and the evidence we have gathered through independent verification, including visual analysis and interviews, suggest that the initial reporting was accurate. The discrepancies identified, such as the identification of the deceased individuals, were cross-checked with multiple sources, including direct family confirmations and hospital authorities.

We hope that we have been able to adequately address the concerns of Mr. Suhas Chakma and the RRAG. If this response does not fully resolve the issue, you are welcome to submit your disagreement or explanatory statement. We can publish all the evidence and create an independent story based on it which can lead the whole scenario clear for all.

We just want to reiterate that we share the same values as yours, in protecting the rights of minority communities.

Best wishes,
Lead,
Dismislab