

Briefaktion zu Bangladesch Suizide von Kleinbauern: erschütternde Beispiele für ein gescheitertes Ernährungssystem



Bangladesch ist ein Agrarstaat – und doch fehlt es an einem grundlegenden Schutz für die Menschen, die die Nahrungsversorgung sichern. Millionen Kleinbäuer*innen und Kleinbauern leiden unter wachsendem wirtschaftlichen Druck, fehlender staatlicher Unterstützung und einem Markt, der ihnen keine fairen Preise ermöglicht. Die Industrialisierung der Landwirtschaft hat viele in die Abhängigkeit von teuren chemischen Betriebsmitteln und Saatgut getrieben. Die Folge: massive Verschuldung und wachsende Verzweiflung.

Immer wieder kommt es zu dramatischen Selbstmorden. Zwei erschütternde Beispiele: Am 27. März nahm sich der Zwiebelbauer Saiful Sheikh aus dem Bezirk Meherpur das Leben, nachdem er durch Ernteverluste in Schulden geraten war. Nur wenige Wochen später, am 14. April, stürzte sich der Landwirt Ruhul Amin aus Rajshahi vor einen Zug – ebenfalls wegen einer ausweglosen finanziellen Lage. Solche Fälle sind keine Einzelschicksale, sondern Ausdruck eines strukturellen Versagens.

Menschenrechte wie das Recht auf Nahrung, auf soziale Sicherheit und auf faire Arbeitsbedingungen werden in Bangladesch systematisch verletzt. Besonders betroffen sind Kleinbäuerinnen und -bauern, die keinen Zugang zu Lagerkapazitäten, stabilen Absatzmärkten oder staatlichen Sicherungssystemen haben. Ohne Mindestpreise bleibt ihnen oft nur der Notverkauf unter Wert.

FIAN fordert die Regierung Bangladeschs auf, menschenrechtliche Verfahren und strukturelle Reformen einzuleiten: Dazu gehören ein gesetzlich verankerter Mindestpreis für Grundnahrungsmittel, die Einrichtung einer unabhängigen Getreidepreiskommission sowie regionale Lager- und Vertriebsinfrastruktur. Kleinbäuerliche Betriebe müssen gezielt unterstützt und der Übergang zur agrarökologischen Produktion gefördert werden. Nur so können Ernährungssouveränität gestärkt, bäuerliche Existenzen gesichert und weitere Tragödien verhindert werden.

Bitte unterstützen Sie die Arbeit unserer Partnergruppen in Bangladesch. Trennen Sie den beiliegenden Brief ab und senden Sie diesen mit Ihrer Unterschrift und Adresse nach Bangladesch (Porto: 1,25 €).

Zusätzlich können Sie den Brief scannen und an die rechts aufgeführten Adressen digital versenden.

Bitte senden Sie den beigegeführten Brief an:

H.E Dr. Muhammad Yunus
Honorable Chief Advisor of the People's
Republic of Bangladesh
State Guest House, Jamuna
30 Hare Road
Dhaka
Bangladesh

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FAO AO Representation in Bangladesh
House #74
Road #18, Block-J
Banani, Dhaka
Bangladesh
E-mail: fao-bd@fao.org

Herr Botschafter
Md Mosharraf Hossain Bhuiyan
Botschaft von Bangladesch
Kaiserin-Augusta-Allee 111
10553 Berlin
E-mail: info.berlin@mofa.gov.bd

Bitte verwenden Sie bei E-mails folgenden Betreff:
**Bangladesh: Tragic Suicides of Peasants –
Showcases of a Failed Food System**

Bitte informieren Sie uns, wenn Sie sich an die Regierung von Bangladesch wenden:
Sabine Pabst: pabst@fian.org

H.E Dr. Muhammad Yunus

Honorable Chief Advisor of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
State Guest House, Jamuna
30 Hare Road
Dhaka
Bangladesh

Date

Tragic Suicides of Peasants – Showcases of a Failed Food System

Your Excellency,

Recently I learned about the tragic suicides of Saiful Sheikh from Meherpur and Mir Ruhul Amin from Rajshahi - two smallholder onion farmers - on March 2025 and April 2025 respectively. According to reports, both had borrowed heavily to cultivate onions but then suffered severe financial losses due to unremunerative crop prices. Media reports have repeatedly highlighted distressing incidents in which farmers, facing severe financial pressure from low returns for their agricultural products and unpaid loans, abandoned their produce at wholesale markets or fed it to cattle. They are often unable to recover even production costs.

These tragic events reflect the extreme vulnerability of small-scale farmers in Bangladesh. Smallholder farmers make up 85% of the agrarian community in Bangladesh. Despite being an agrarian economy, Bangladesh lacks adequate protection mechanisms for its farmers. Many of them are regularly facing food shortages and cannot afford healthy diets.

Industrial agricultural intensification has made farmers dependent on expensive external inputs of agrochemical companies. To purchase these, most farmers have to take up loans. However, lack of access to formal credit, due to complex application procedures, forces many of them to choose informal credits at high compounding interest rates. In addition, due to the absence of a regulated market system and fair pricing policy, farmers have little to no control over the value of their produce, which invites market manipulation and leaves marginalized and smallholder farmers especially vulnerable. The persistent economic pressure this generates contributes to distress and, in extreme cases, may trigger tragic incidents such as suicide. Bangladesh also lacks a clear and accountable state mechanism for compensating those affected by those losses.

Bangladesh is a state party to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) in which the human right to adequate food and nutrition is enshrined. The Government of Bangladesh is thus bound by international law to respect, protect and fulfil the right to food and nutrition of its people, including smallholder farmers.

Moreover, the State is bound by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas (UNDROP), which it has actively supported. UNDROP explicitly addresses the rights of smallholder farmers. In Article 16 the Declaration spells out the Right to Decent Income and Livelihood and the Means of Production in Article 16: “(…) States shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that their rural development, agricultural, environmental, trade and investment policies and programmes contribute effectively to protecting and strengthening local livelihood options and to the transition to sustainable modes of agricultural production (…)”.

The lack of state policies, regulations, and programmes that guarantee decent livelihoods for small-scale farmers and effectively protect them against economic hardship, as well as the failure to put in place effective mechanisms to compensate families affected by the tragic loss of their loved ones, amounts to a violation of the obligations of the Bangladesh Government under international human rights law.

In light of the alarming situation of small-scale farmers in Bangladesh, I would like to kindly request you to:

- Immediately establish an Agricultural Product Commission and declare and enforce Minimum Support Prices (MSP) for all major agricultural products. Establish a crop pricing commission to ensure fair returns for farmers and protect them from financial ruin;
- Support territorial markets and ensure access to markets for smallholder farmers with fair prices that reflect living wages;
- Provide accessible, farmer-friendly subsidy systems and institutional credit, with loan waivers and extended repayment for farmers facing financial difficulties and indebtedness;
- Prioritize longer term structural reforms to improve livelihoods of farmers and address the negative outcomes of the industrial food system, such as the transition to agroecology. Develop a clear action plan (Road Map) with timelines and monitoring framework;
- Ensure participatory access to essential services, incentives, and adequate support for agro-ecological food production (such as crop insurance, credit, and cash transactions), as well as a functioning social safety net; and
- Ensure effective monitoring by the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE).

Please keep me informed of the actions you take in this regard.

Respectfully yours,