

Razakars, History, Bangladesh War, Human Rights Violations

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The Razakars were a group of armed volunteers that existed during the final years of princely rule in parts of India, especially around the time of independence. They were formed to support and protect the ruling authority and its interests during a period of political uncertainty and change.

About Razakars

- The Razakars were a **volunteer paramilitary group** formed in **1971 during the time of the Bangladesh Liberation War**.
- The word “**Razakar**” means **volunteer or helper**, but later it came to be associated with collaborators in Bangladesh.
- They were created by the **Pakistani military to get local support in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh)**.
- Most Razakars were **Urdu-speaking migrants (Biharis)**, along with some **Pro-Pakistani Bengalis** who opposed the separation of East Pakistan.
- Many members were linked to **religious and political groups** like Jamaat-e-Islami and its student wing.

- Over time, they were **trained and organised into groups like Al-Badr and Al-Shams** to assist the army more effectively.
- Their knowledge of **local language, people, and geography** made them useful for military operations.

Razakars in Bangladesh Liberation War

- Razakars worked closely with the Pakistani army to **control the rebellion in East Pakistan**.
- They helped in **identifying, tracking, and targeting local people**, especially those supporting independence.
- They were involved in **raids, arrests, and intelligence gathering**, acting as guides for the army.
- Many reports and accounts accuse them of being involved in **serious human rights violations**, including violence against civilians.
- They are often linked to the **killing of intellectuals, journalists, and professionals** towards the end of the war.
- Their actions contributed to the **fear and suffering of the local population during the conflict**.
- After Bangladesh became independent in 1971, many Razakars were seen as **collaborators and faced backlash**, while some fled or later became part of political debates in the country.

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Razakar Post-War Fate in Bangladesh

- After Bangladesh became independent in **December 1971**, the new government took strong steps **against those who had supported the Pakistani forces**.
- Organizations that were seen as collaborators, such as **Jamaat-e-Islami, were banned**, and many of their leaders fled to Pakistan to avoid action.
- In **1972**, the government introduced the **Bangladesh Collaborators (Special Tribunals) Order** to identify and try people accused of helping the Pakistani military.
- In **1973**, under the leadership of **Sheikh Mujibur Rahman**, the **International Crimes (Tribunal) Act** was passed to investigate and punish war crimes committed during the conflict.
- These steps were taken **to ensure justice for victims and to hold those responsible for violence and atrocities accountable**.

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/razakars/>

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