

Publisher of secular books killed, 3 wounded in Bangladesh

31/10/2015 20:37 by admin

Dhaka, Bangladesh: A publisher of secular books was hacked to death and three other people were wounded in two separate attacks Saturday at publishing houses in Bangladesh's capital, police said.

The attacks in Dhaka come amid fears about the rise of radical Islam in Bangladesh. At least four atheist bloggers have been murdered in the impoverished country this year, while the Islamic State group claimed responsibility for three other attacks.

Both of the publishers involved in Saturday's attacks had published works of Bangladeshi-American blogger and writer Avijit Roy, who was hacked to death on the Dhaka University campus while walking with his wife in February.

No one immediately claimed responsibility for the latest attacks. The local Islamist group Ansarullah Bangla Team had claimed responsibility for the blogger killings and recently threatened to kill more bloggers.

The slaughtered body of publisher Faisal Arefin Deepan of the Jagriti Prokashoni publishing house was found inside his office following the second of Saturday's attacks, senior police officer Shibly Noman said.

Earlier in the day, publisher Ahmed Rahim Tutul and two writers were shot and stabbed by three men in the office of the Shudhdhoswar publishing house, said police officer Abdullah Al Mamun.

Local police chief Jamal Uddin Meer said the assailants then locked the wounded men inside the office before escaping. "We had to break the lock to recover them," Meer said.

The two writers were identified by police as Ranadeep Basu and Tareque Rahim. All three of the victims were hospitalized, and Tutul was in critical condition, Meer said.

Bangladesh has been rocked by a series of attacks this year claimed by Islamic extremists, including the blogger murders and, more recently, the killing of two foreigners— an Italian aid worker and a Japanese agricultural worker. An Oct. 24 bomb attack on thousands of Shiite Muslims in Dhaka killed a teenage boy and injured more than 100 other people.

The Islamic State group claimed responsibility for the attacks on the two foreigners and the bombing, but Bangladesh's government has rejected that the extremist Sunni militant group has any presence in the country.

The government has instead blamed domestic Islamist militants along with Islamist political parties— specifically the opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party and its main ally, Jamaat-e-Islami— for orchestrating the violence to destabilize the already fractious nation.

- AP