



Association for
Protection of
Civil Rights



KARWAN E MOHABBAT

Evictions in Assam

A Field Report

On 23 - 24 August 2025, a team comprising of **Harsh Mander, Prashant Bhushan, Jawahar Sircar, Syeda Hameed, Wajahat Habibullah, Ritumbra Manuvie and Fawaz Shaheen** visited **Gawahati, Goalpara and Kamrup** districts in Assam to listen to people who had been displaced by various eviction drives being carried out by the state government in the last two months.

Shortly before we reached Assam, we were informed that prohibitory orders barring gatherings of five or more people had been ordered in Goalpara district, which was initially the only district we intended to visit on 23 August. Upon reaching Guwahati, we were informed that an eviction drive was currently underway in Raikhyasini in Goalpara. We were also told by local stakeholders that all cars coming into Goalpara are being checked, and that the district administration may even prevent us from entering the district. At that point we decided to split



Association for
Protection of
Civil Rights



KARWAN E MOHABBAT

the team and Prashant Bhushan, Jawahar Sircar and Ritumbra Manuvie went to Kamrup district while Harsh Mander, Wajahat Habibullah and Fawaz Shaheen proceeded to Goalpara.

On the way to Goalpara we were informed through the local MLA that he was in touch with the district administration. They clarified that while we will not be prevented from entering the district, we would not be allowed to visit the sites where the evictions took place or the camps where the displaced families are staying. What is undeniable is that the state administration created a climate of fear and intimidation to discourage us from going to Goalpara and meeting freely with the families who were displaced in the massive eviction drives.

In Goalpara district, eviction drives have been carried out in three places over the last two months: Hasila Beel under Balijana Circle on 16 June 2025 in which the homes of over 680 families were dismantled, Ashudubi Revenue Village under Matia Revenue Circle on 12 July 2025 in which the homes of 1084 families were demolished, and in Rakhyasini under Matia Revenue Circle, in which several shops were demolished on the day of our tour, 23 August 2025. While we were in Goalpara, residents in Rakhyasini told us that the eviction drive was still underway, and families from seven different revenue villages in the Rakhyasini area feared that they might eventually come to be displaced.

It is important to note that all of the displaced families in these eviction drives are Muslims. We met some of these members of the displaced families in the home of the Congress MLA in Goalpara Mr Rasheed.

HASEELA BEEL

Displaced former residents of Haseela Beel told us that on Friday, 13th June 2025 public announcements were made and banners were placed in their areas asking them to vacate their houses in 48 hours. No individual notices were made to them. On Monday, 16 June 2025 the district administration forcibly carried out the demolition drive and demolished their houses. None of the residents were served with individual notices or given a chance to appear before an authority to present evidence of why they were entitled to stay on the land and should not be evicted. All the displaced families are now living under canvas sheets amidst the monsoon rain in four different places and are largely subsisting on the charity and compassion of their neighbours. This has entirely been organised by private charity. The state government has not made any alternative arrangements for their rehabilitation, nor has it made any provisions for their food, shelter, healthcare, or the education of their children, which has been disrupted due to the eviction drive.

The residents of Haseela Beel showed us land documents which prove that most of them have been living on this land since 1948. These documents include the 1951 NRC, voter lists from the 1950s and 1970s, various land revenue documents,

their own identity cards as well as their inclusion in the 2019 NRC. The state government had also built lower primary schools and 3 Anganwadis in Haseela Beel, further underlining the residents' claim of legitimate possession of the land. According to historical records these families are essentially climate refugees who had moved to Haseela Beel in 1948 after losing their homes to riverbank erosion and flooding, which is a common phenomenon in many parts of Assam. At the very least, the land documents available with the displaced residents of Haseela Beel merit a careful judicial examination to determine the veracity of their claims before any lawful action to displace them. However, the district administration carried out its eviction drive without any inquiry or due process, and with only two days of prior public notice. Apart from the homes of over 680 families, the eviction drive also led to the destruction of schools, Anganwadis and other public institutions like mosques. The eviction drive has not only rendered over 680 families homeless overnight, but also led to the loss of their livelihood and access to essential services like education and healthcare.

ASHUDUBI VILLAGE

The eviction drive in Ashudubi village followed a similar pattern to the one in Haseela Beel. Over 1084 families were displaced on 12 July 2025. None of the residents of the village had received individual notices of eviction, with only some public announcements being made a few days prior without specific details. The residents of Ashudubi village had approached the Guwahati High Court for relief, but the eviction drive was carried out before the High Court could fully dispose of the petition. Displaced residents of Ashudubi village told us that the land was part of the Paikan Bijni Zameendar prior to the enforcement of Zameendari abolition, and they had lived on it for over 60 years. They also showed us land records including pattas and land deeds dating back to 1962, as well as documents from the 1951 NRC, various voter lists and the 2019 NRC, which included the names of all the residents. The village also had 5 Anganwadis, 3 primary schools, 1 middle school and a Public Water Supply Scheme, all of which were destroyed in the eviction drive along with 8 mosques, 2 madrasas and the homes, crops and livestock of over 1000 families.

On 17 July 2025, a joint team of Forest and Police officials dug up and blocked the main access road to Ashudubi, which prevented relief workers from entering the area. When the displaced residents gathered to request that the road remain open, police lathi charged them and opened fire, resulting in the death of 19 year old Sakowar Ali and at least 4 other bullet injuries. They claim that Ali was killed by the policeman at close range by putting a bullet through his forehead. According to the displaced residents of Ashudubi village, no inquiry has been initiated into the death of Sakowar Ali or the use of force by the police. Contrary

to court orders and established procedure, no arrangement has been made by the district administration for the rehabilitation of the displaced families. These families are currently living in various temporary shelters and neighbours' houses in the adjoining village. The eviction drive has resulted in the loss of their homes and livelihood, as well as access to education and healthcare services.

RAKHYASINI AREA ADJACENT TO GOALPARA MUNICIPALITY

On 23rd August 2025 (Saturday), the district administration carried out a sudden eviction drive in the Rakhyasini area, demolishing over 105 business establishments along one side of the Matia–Krishnai connecting road. The administration issued no written notice prior to the eviction. According to the residents, about a week earlier, one official, accompanied by the police, had visited the area and verbally told some people to vacate within 1–2 hours, while those who protested were given two days. However, without further intimation, on the morning of the 23rd at around 9 a.m., the administration deployed bulldozers, police, and RAF forces to carry out the demolition.

When questioned about the reason, officials reportedly said that the eviction was necessary to clear the PWD boundary for “road safety.” However, the establishments were in fact maintained at a distance from the PWD road area. Several cases concerning the Rakhyasini area are already pending before the Gauhati High Court, where a stay order on eviction is in force. Despite this, residents allege that the administration, with the help of police, continues to intimidate them daily in order to pressure them into leaving.

The Rakhyasini area is adjacent to the Goalpara Municipality and, in the year 2007, the Government of Assam, through the Urban Development Department, officially included the entire Rakhyasini area within the Goalpara Development Authority under the Assam Nagar Raj Act, 2007 (vide Government of Assam Notification No. 387, Dispur, dated 14th December 2007, published in the Assam Gazette Extraordinary). This would clearly preclude the Rakhyasini area from being considered part of a Protected/Reserved Forest (PRF) area. However, the current eviction drive was carried out without following due process or allowing the judicial determination of the claims of residents to be completed.

