

1<sup>st</sup> July, 2021

**Rape Law Reform Coalition  
Press Release**

**Rape Law Reform Coalition welcomes government's decision to repeal Section 155 (4) of the  
Evidence Act**

The Rape Law Reform Coalition (RLRC), comprising of seventeen rights organisations of the country, welcomes the [recent announcement](#) by the Law Minister that the government will amend Evidence Act 1872 to remove Section 155(4) which allows defence lawyers to raise questions about a rape complainant's character in court. The repeal of Section 155 (4) of the Evidence Act 1872 was one of the key demands in RLRC's ten-point demand on rape law reform issued in October 2020 during the country wide anti-rape protests and has also been a longstanding demand of many of RLRC's member organisations. [Research and advocacy conducted](#) as part of our ongoing Rape Law Reform Now campaign has shown how Section 155 (4) of the Evidence Act and the use of character evidence against rape complainants more broadly, has long perpetuated impunity for rape and obstructed justice for rape survivors. The character of the complainant should never be relevant in a rape trial. Rather, whether or not sexual intercourse took place without valid consent should be the key legal question in a rape trial.

The Rape Law Reform Coalition has persistently raised the need to repeal Section 155(4) of the Evidence Act with various Members of Parliament, ministries and other concerned stakeholders at the government and non-governmental levels.

RLRC expressed gratitude to all who have advocated for this reform for the past decades, and in particular Anisul Huq, the Minister of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, for taking the long awaited decision to repeal this archaic and colonial provision.

**On behalf of the Secretariat of the Rape Law Reform Coalition<sup>1</sup>  
Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST)**

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<sup>1</sup> [Rape Law Reform Coalition: The coalition is made up of 17 member organisations including which include: Acid Survivors Foundation, Action Aid, Ain O Salish Kendra, Bandhu Social Welfare Society, Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust \(Secretariat\), Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, Bangladesh Women Lawyers' Association, BRAC, Care Bangladesh, ICDDR,B, Justice for All Now \(JANO, Bangladesh\), Manusher Jonno Foundation, Naripokkho, We Can, Women for Women, Women with Disabilities Development Foundation, Young Women's Christian Association](#)