

# BANGLADESH HEALTH WATCH

August 10, 2021

**Professor Dr. Mijanur Rahman**  
Director, MIS  
Directorate General of Health Services  
Mohakhali, Dhaka

Subject: **BHW requests for ensuring vaccination for the marginalized populations under the current country-wide vaccination program**

**Dear Professor Rahman,**

Bangladesh Health Watch, a civil society initiative, sponsored an investigative report on transgender people's access to Covid vaccination. The report was published in the Prothom Alo' on August 05, 2021. Link:

<https://www.prothomalo.com/amp/story/bangladesh/coronavirus/%E0%A6%9F%E0%A6%BF%E0%A6%95%E0%A6%BE%E0%A6%B0-%E0%A6%86%E0%A6%93%E0%A6%A4%E0%A6%BE%E0%A7%9F-%E0%A6%A8%E0%A7%87%E0%A6%87-%E0%A6%B9%E0%A6%BF%E0%A6%9C%E0%A7%9C%E0%A6%BE%E0%A6%B0%E0%A6%BE>

In the report, the transgenders/hijras identified several obstacles in getting access to Covid-19 vaccination, one of which is lack of an option to record their sex as transgender or third gender in the *Shurokka* app, during registration. Other obstacles reported were fear of vaccine administration, lack of birth registration certificate or national identity card, leading to confusion about age limit. The transgenders are also not included in the 25 categories of priority groups for vaccination, although due to lifestyle and profession, they are at a high risk of Covid.

Given the extremely marginalised lives of the hijra community, on behalf of BHW, we would earnestly request you to:

- Add a provision for recording third gender identity in the *Shurokka* app
- Include hijras as one of the priority groups, and
- Mobilize them to make them interested to accept vaccination as a way of their life.

Sincerely yours,



Abu Muhammad Zakir Hussain, PhD  
Convener  
Thematic Group on Vaccination  
Bangladesh Health Watch



A. Mushtaque Chowdhury, PhD  
Convener  
Bangladesh Health Watch

Copy to:

1. **Professor Dr. Abul Bashar Mohammad Khurshid Alam**, Director General of Health Services Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.
2. **Dr. Md. Shamsul Haque**, Line Director, MNC&AH, Director General of Health Services Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.
3. **Professor Dr Nazmul Islam**, Line Director of Communicable Diseases Control (CDC), Director General of Health Services Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh