

Bangladesh

Hindus, Christians, Buddhists, and Religious Minorities

Killed, Converted, Forced to Flee

A factual ground report prepared by a multidisciplinary research team on the unabated violence and atrocities against religious minorities since the regime change in August 2024.



We urge immediate intervention to stop the ongoing genocide of religious minorities in Bangladesh



Global Hindu Temple Network-America



Global Hindu Heritage Foundation

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Preface

The current situation in Bangladesh paints a deeply troubling picture. It highlights escalating violence and systemic oppression against its Hindu population. Since August 2024, following a regime change, the plight of Hindus has worsened dramatically under a military-Islamist government led by Prof. Muhammad Yunus, with no accountability. Mobs roam rural areas with impunity targeting Hindu families with brutal assaults. Even the places of worship and homes of minority communities are not spared. Women are subjected to sexual violence and for their own safety families are forced to flee from their ancestral lands.

Hindus in Bangladesh have long faced persecution and exclusion, with their culture, religion, and identity under constant attack. Despite Bangladesh's secular founding in 1971, the country gradually shifted towards religious fundamentalism, declaring itself an Islamic state in 1988. Once 22% of the population in 1951, Hindus now make up only 8.5% as of 2011. Their survival is increasingly threatened, and their community faces the risk of extinction.

This report highlights their suffering and examines how the growing influence of extremist groups has deeply impacted government, politics, and society, leaving minority communities increasingly vulnerable and struggling to survive.

It is a plea for global recognition of their plight and an urgent call to action. At its heart, this document is about justice—justice for the millions of lives lost, the countless women violated, and upholding the right to live with dignity in one's ancestral land.

Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to highlight the ongoing persecution of Hindus in Bangladesh, a tragedy often ignored. By documenting the historical trajectory of this persecution, we aim to highlight not only the scale of the violence but also its systematic nature. From the killings, forced abductions and conversions during pre-Partition riots to the barbaric genocide of 1971, these acts were never random. They were calculated efforts to decimate the Hindu population and erase their cultural identity.

The findings of this report are more than just statistics; they are human lives impacted by injustice. By presenting these realities, we hope to inspire immediate action, foster international solidarity, and ensure the safety and dignity of Hindus in Bangladesh for generations to come.

Findings

Our research uncovers a painful yet undeniable truth: the persecution of Hindus in Bangladesh is both historical and ongoing, deeply rooted in systemic discrimination and violence.

1. Historical Persecution

- The 1971 genocide remains a dark stain on human history, during which *Operation Searchlight* carried out by Pakistan army in what was then East Pakistan resulted in the killing of three million civilians, the rape of up to 300,000 women, and the mass destruction of Hindu temples. The Pakistan army should be held to account for its war crimes in 1971.
- The systematic nature of the violence was chilling, with Hindus hunted down through "short-arm inspections" to identify their religious identity.

2. Institutionalized Marginalization

- The 1988 declaration of Bangladesh as an Islamic State marked a turning point in the systemic exclusion of Hindus. Policies restricted their economic opportunities, stifled their rights, and fostered an environment of unchecked violence.
- In rural areas, Hindus have been disproportionately targeted through land grabs, forced displacements, and mob violence, with little to no intervention from authorities.

3. Contemporary Crisis

- In August 2024, following a regime change, the situation for Hindus worsened drastically. Reports document an alarming rise in gang rapes, murders, and desecration of temples.
- Rural Hindu communities face the brunt of these attacks, enduring atrocities that often go unreported and unpunished.

Recommendations

To stop the ongoing persecution and foster an environment of safety and dignity for Hindus in Bangladesh, we propose the following actionable measures:

1. International Recognition and Intervention

- The United Nations and global human rights organizations must formally recognize the plight of Hindus in Bangladesh as an ongoing genocide.
- International pressure must be applied to ensure accountability for crimes against minorities.

2. Legal Protections

- Enact robust Minority Protection Laws in Bangladesh, safeguarding the rights of Hindus and other minorities.
- Establish special tribunals to prosecute crimes against minorities and ensure swift justice for victims.

3. Economic Support and Resettlement

- Offer financial aid to displaced Hindu families to help them rebuild their lives.
- Protect land ownership rights and provide legal recourse for victims of land grabs.

4. Monitoring and Reporting Mechanisms

- Set up independent bodies to monitor hate crimes and make the report public.
- Establish a database documenting incidents of violence to ensure transparency and accountability.

A Call to Action

This report is not just a record of history but an urgent plea for justice. Hindus in Bangladesh, who have contributed to its culture and heritage for centuries, now face extinction in their own homeland.

How much longer can the world remain silent? Each day of inaction pushes this ancient community closer to disappearance.

The genocide of minorities in Bangladesh demands urgent attention, immediate intervention and swift action. The international community must hold the Government of Bangladesh wholly accountable for protecting its citizens and preventing further atrocities and demand compliance with its obligations under United Nations Human Rights Declaration, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights¹ (ICCPR) and International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights² (ICESCR), United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child³, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women⁴ (CEDAW) signed and ratified by it.

We urge governments, global organizations, and individuals to stand with the Hindus of Bangladesh. They deserve the right to live without fear, practice their faith, and rebuild their lives with dignity. Let us work towards a world where no community fears for its survival, and justice wins over hatred.

¹ Signed and ratified by Bangladesh on 6th September 2000.

² Signed and ratified by Bangladesh on 5th October 1998.

³ Signed and ratified by Bangladesh on 26th January 1990/3rd August 1990

⁴ Signed and ratified by Bangladesh on 6th November 1984.

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Their work is supported by detailed research, firsthand accounts, and credible sources such as, Hindu American Foundation, BBC South Asia, Amnesty International, AP News, and the Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Oikya Parishad (BHBCOP) open letter on atrocities, Cares Global, and the World Hindu Federation. Additionally, evidence from the field provided by the Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council (BHBCUC), reports published in Vatican News, India Today, Asia News, Minority Rights Group, and several books documenting the atrocities further reinforce the findings.

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Bangladesh: Atrocities Against Hindus and Religious Minorities

List of organizations requested to take action

1. Excellency Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under Secretary General, United Nations Department of Peace Operations.
2. Excellency Volker Türk, High Commissioner, United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner.
3. Dr. (Ms.) Sima Sami Bahous, Executive Director, U N Women.
4. Ms. Catherine Russell, Executive Director. UNICEF.
5. Mr. Sanjay Wijesekera, Regional Director, UNICEF South Asia
6. Secretary Anthony Blinken, State Department, United States Government
7. USAID
8. USCIRF
9. The World Bank- President and the Board of Executive Directors
10. The International Monetary Fund- Managing Director and the Board of Executive Directors
11. The Asian Development Bank- President and the Board of Executive Directors
12. Private Sector:
 - a. H&M Sweden
 - b. Zara (Inditex) Spain
 - c. Walmart
 - d. Gap
 - e. Target
 - f. PVH Corporation (Brand Names Tommy Hilfiger and Calvin Klein)
 - g. Levi Straus & Co
 - h. VF Corporation (Brand Names: The North Face and Timberland)
 - i. American Eagle Outfitters
 - j. JCPenney
 - k. Kohl's
 - l. Macys
 - m. L Brands (Brand Names: Victoria's Secret, PINK)
 - n. Abercrombie and Fitch
 - o. Ralph Lauren
 - p. L. L. Beans

1. Purpose of the Report

We urge the international community to review, reflect, and act immediately to save the lives of religious minorities in Bangladesh.

The purpose of this report is to bring to your attention and urge action to address the unending atrocities against Hindus and other minorities in Bangladesh. These atrocities have been going on since the tumultuous birth of Bangladesh in 1971, with intermittent cessation whenever the country had a strong democratically elected government that focused on economic growth, poverty alleviation, and securing the gains of development through control of communal conflicts. On 5th August 2024 a democratically elected government led by Prime Minister Ms. Sheikh Hasina was unseated through street violence, student agitations, political opposition, Islamist organizations such as Jamaait-e-Islami, and the Bangladesh military.

A Military-Islamist government fronted by an interim arrangement led by Prof. Muhammad Yunus, a micro-finance expert and Nobel Laureate, has taken over with lingering question marks on the authorizing environment and accountability of its “civilian” leadership. The regime changes unleashed targeted violence against Hindus, their places of worship, their properties and also against other minorities, fitting into the undesired pattern of most agitations and protests in volatile Bangladesh.

The severity of violent atrocities is more pronounced in the rural areas where, in the last five decades, the Hindu population has dwindled to a very small minority. This report provides a succinct overview of the most recent developments, documented atrocities and slow-motion genocide ongoing for over five decades, and suggestions for immediate action by the responsible international community and other stakeholders in peace, justice and human rights.

The report is in five sections: Section 1 explains the purpose of the report, Section 2 provides the context of recent political developments in Bangladesh resulting in the current turmoil; Section 3 documents the atrocities since the regime change on 5th August 2024; Section 4 demonstrates the systematic pattern of atrocities since the birth of Bangladesh, particularly after its declaration as Islamic Republic; and Section 5 is an appeal to the international community to act urgently to stop this ongoing genocide in Bangladesh.

2. Recent Violent Political Developments in Bangladesh

Bangladesh went through national elections in January 2024 which was boycotted by the main opposition party Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). but a few smaller parties participated, and about 30% of the seats were won by independent candidates that opposed the Awami League, the ruling party. BNP-led protests in the run-up to elections turned violent and partly affected the voter turnout⁵. Ms. Sheikh Hasina, leader of Awami League, won the election to become the Prime Minister for the fourth time. However, the absence of meaningful political opposition put a legitimate question mark on the fairness and transparency of the whole electoral process. A high voltage student protest, ostensibly against job reservation for families of freedom fighters (those who fought for independence in 1971), quickly morphed into a broader protest in which political opposition and banned fundamentalist organization Jamaat-e-Islami joined to exacerbate it. The post-Covid decline in Bangladesh's economy only added further fuel to the discontent.

In June, students took to the streets of Bangladesh, demanding an end to a policy that allocated up to 30% of government jobs to the descendants of veterans from the 1971 war of independence against Pakistan. Protesters argued that this policy disproportionately benefited supporters of Prime Minister Hasina's Awami League, the party that played a pivotal role in the liberation struggle, and that these individuals were already part of the country's elite. As a result of this quota system and similar reservations for marginalized groups, only 44% of civil service positions were awarded based on merit. Although the government had already taken steps to reduce the job reservations, a High Court ruling deemed the government's decision unconstitutional, reinstating the quota system⁶. This led to further unrest among students, fuelling their calls for reform⁷. Gradually the youth led agitation grew violent, and the police and authorities handled it in a heavy-handed manner resulting in several student deaths in police firings. Job quota protests paused after Bangladesh Supreme Court scrapped the job quota on 21st July. However, the protestors were back on the street within a week with added demands to force the resignation of PM Sheikh Hasina.

On 5th August, the Chief of Armed Forces of Bangladesh formally intervened and urged PM Sheikh Hasina to resign, and she was allowed to leave for India immediately. As soon as Sheikh Hasina left the country, law and order in Bangladesh broke down, violent mobs were everywhere, police and armed forces pulled back and did not stop the outraging mobs that went on a rampage, rioting and unleashing violence against minorities that peaked in almost all rural areas.

⁵ Gautam Lahiri, Atlantic Council. <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/bangladeshs-election-widely-boycotted-or-widely-accepted/>

⁶ <https://www.jurist.org/news/2024/07/bangladesh-high-court-upholds-civil-service-quota-for-independence-fighter-descendents/>

⁷ Aniruddh Ghosal <https://apnews.com/article/sheikh-hasina-bangladesh-students-gen-z-protests-2723012c6177c2feafd1e81c20c68309>

3. Documented Atrocities Against Minorities Since Regime Change in August 2024.

Bangladesh has had a disappointing track record of turning any protest into an opportunity for committing atrocities against minorities, particularly Hindus. Unhindered street mobs unleashed after the fall of Sheikh Hasina's government on 5th August were no different. Most of the murders, looting, rapes, burning of homes, destruction of temples, happened in the rural areas or small towns where the Hindu population has been dwindling for the last fifty years. The Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Oikya Parishad (BHBCOP) reported more than 2,000 cases of communal violence in August 2024⁸. Of the several murders, most heinous was that of an innocent four-year old boy whose throat was slit. Hindu homes and temples were targeted for looting, destruction and setting on fire. Girls and women have been threatened and forced to convert. Hindu teachers, University Professors, and government officials were forced to resign by the unruly mobs threatening violence.

A communique "Ethnic Cleansing of Hindus in Bangladesh" released by two civil society organizations CaresGlobal and World Hindu Federation Bangladesh Chapter notes⁹ "Sexual Violence and Atrocities were committed against Hindu women in 53 districts in Bangladesh since exit of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on 5 August 2024. Over 50 Hindus have been murdered in cold blood, of these 15 Hindus were identified [Haradhan Roy (Councillor of Rangpur), Pradeep Kumar Bhowmick (Communist Leader), Santosh Saha (ASI Police), Kamal Roy (Driver in Rangpur), Sanat Kumar, Pranob Ghosh, Biswajit Sadhu, Ashim Kumar, Utpal Mandal (all 5 men in Satkhira) Moloi Mandal, Rajeshwar Das, Mrinal Kanti Chatterjee, Basudev Das, Sumon Gharami, Santosh Kumar]. Several brutalized rapes of Hindu women have been recorded. From Pirojpur district, we received testimonials from women who were gang raped and brutally tortured by Islamists, 12 Hindu girls were kidnapped and raped as recorded by our team between 5th and 13th August. In several districts, more than 61 Hindu temples were vandalized, looted and burnt; more than 295 Hindu houses were vandalized, looted and burnt; more than 183 Hindu business were vandalized, looted and burnt. Hindu Political leaders were forced to flee for their lives as Islamic terrorists were hunting them. Many Hindu professors and government officials were forced to resign by the radical anarchists, thus publicly discriminating against Hindus and Buddhists only for their religion. A web portal called Hindu Voice.in has recorded more detailed incidents from authentic sources".

Global media covered the stories of atrocities against minorities in conjunction with the coverage of regime change in Bangladesh. BBC South Asia provided evidence from the field¹⁰ and Amnesty International issued an appeal to the interim

⁸ ibid

⁹ <https://tinyurl.com/vxd38e9a>

¹⁰

government to protect the minorities¹¹. Many mainstream media journalists¹² and independent analysts have provided robust evidence of mobs going on a rampage, unchecked by police and army, and robbing, plundering, and killing at will. A 15-year-old boy Utshob Mondal was lynched by Islamist mobs in Khulna on 4th September 2024 in a police station in the presence of the army¹³. The violence mainly targeted minorities, and some political workers of the deposed Awami League party¹⁴.

The Indian Express reported “The Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Oikya Parishad (BHBCOP), a prominent organisation advocating for minority rights, issued an open letter to Chief Adviser Prof. Muhammad Yunus, detailing 205 incidents of persecution across 52 districts since the fall of the Sheikh Hasina government on 5th August, according to The Dhaka Tribune newspaper”¹⁵. In a Press Conference on 19th September 2024 at Dhaka Reporters’ Unity’s Nasrum Hamid auditorium, BHBCOP presented details of 2,010 incidents of communal violence between 4th August and 20th August in 68 out of 76 districts in Bangladesh. Nirmal Rozario, Vice President of BHBCOP said that Khulna Division was the worst affected where four women are reported to have been raped¹⁶. On 5th November in Chittagong, after a minor riot had subsided the previous day, Bangladesh army, Border Guards Bangladesh and Chittagong police raided a Hindu locality, broke into Hindu homes, arrested all Hindu males, assaulted Hindu women, and looted valuables¹⁷. What has been most disheartening is the whitewashing of violence against minorities by the Head of the Interim Government Prof Muhammad Yunus by calling it exaggerated¹⁸.

¹¹ Amnesty International. (2024, August 14), Bangladesh: Interim government must take immediate actions to protect Hindu and other minority Communities.

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/08/bangladesh-interim-government-must-take-immediate-actions-to-protect-hindu-and-other-minority-communities/>

¹² Pathai, K., Garjon E., & Ganguly, S. (2024, August 13) The violence in Bangladesh after Hasina’s ouster stirs fear within the country’s Hindu minority. AP News. <https://apnews.com/article/bangladesh-violence-hindu-sheikh-hasina-85fe6619c38e1b07e407441cb054a74e>

¹³ <https://swarajyamag.com/news-brief/bangladesh-blasphemy-case-explained-utsab-mandal-the-hindu-teenager-almost-beaten-to-death>

¹⁴ Banarjee S.(2024, August 21) The cycle of violence against minorities in Bangladesh, Devpolicy blog . <https://devpolicy.org/the-cycle-of-violence-against-minorities-in-bangladesh20240821/#:~:text=The%20Bangladesh%20National%20Hindu%20Grand,killed%20and%2039%20women%20raped>

¹⁵ PTI (2024, August 11). Minority Bangladeshi Hindus stage protest demanding protection amid attacks on temples & homes. The Indian Express. <https://indianexpress.com/article/world/bangladesh-hindus-stage-protest-demand-protection-amid-attacks-on-temples-9506989/>

¹⁶ Swarajya Staff (2024, September 21) Over 2,000 communal attacks on Hindus and other religious minorities in Bangladesh between 4 and 20 August: Minority rights group. <https://swarajyamag.com/news-brief/over-2000-communal-attacks-on-hindus-and-other-religious-minorities-in-bangladesh-between-4-and-20-august-minority-rights-group>

¹⁷ <https://swarajyamag.com/world/bangladesh-wary-of-republican-rebuke-interim-govt-may-walk-back-on-punitive-action-against-iskcon>

¹⁸ Al Jazeera (2024, August 11). New Bangladesh government says working to ‘resolve’ attacks on minorities. . <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/8/11/new-bangladesh-government-says-working-to-resolve-attacks-on-minorities>

The situation was obviously so dire that the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) sent a delegation to Dhaka for a month-long fact-finding mission¹⁹. United States Congressmen denounced the atrocities against religious minorities and urged the Government of Bangladesh to take urgent action to stop this violence.

Box 1: US Congressmen and Senators from both political parties denounce atrocities against religious minorities in Bangladesh

United States Senators Ben Cardin, Chris Murphy, Jeffery Merkley, and Chris Van Hollen wrote to Prof. Muhammad Yunus, on 20 September 2024 pointing out documented reports of violence targeting of Hindu community and urged serious action to stop it.

Congressman Raja Krishnamurthy has urged all government officials, police chief, and the people of Bangladesh to end the violence, including targeting of the Hindus, their homes, businesses, and their temples, and demanded that those responsible must be brought to justice. He has also written to Secretary Anthony Blinken to hold a briefing before 31st October 2024.

Representative Pat Fallon has condemned the targeting of Hindus, Buddhists, Christians and any other religious minorities and asked for those instigating and participating in violence to be held responsible.

Congressman Shri Thanedar wrote to Secretary Blinken pointing out more than 300 murders and over 20,000 injured in the violence and that Hindus temples have been burned and destroyed, and large number of them forced to flee to Indian border to escape violence. He has asked for hearings to be held when US Congress returns from recess about failure of Bangladesh to protect Hindus and other minorities and how to prevent these horrific actions from taking place again in the future.

Congressman Rich McCormick expressed his deep dismay at the reports of sectarian violence targeting Hindu minority in Bangladesh.

Representative Ro Khanna has condemned violence targeting Hindus and implored Prof. Muhammad Yunus to act.

Congresswoman Yvette D. Clarke has written to Secretary Blinken to ask Bangladesh to hold their Rapid Action Battalion (an armed force of Bangladesh) accountable for the atrocities.

Congressman Thoman Suozzi, Member of Committee on Homeland Security has written to Secretary Blinken expressing concern over violence targeting religious minorities and asked for a briefing.

(See Annex 1 for their letters and messages)

¹⁹ India Today 17 Sept 2024 on UN visit to Bangladesh.

<https://www.indiatoday.in/world/story/bangladesh-hindus-minorities-in-united-nations-human-rights-probe-2600994-2024-09-17>

4. A History of Unending Atrocities Against Minorities in Bangladesh

There has been a systematic effort by the fundamentalist Islamists, often ignored or clandestinely supported by the local politicians, and police to force Hindus to leave and sell their homes and assets at throwaway prices. More often than not, Hindus' lands and assets are simply grabbed by the local musclemen and Islamists. In October 2021, riots were engineered by Islamists by placing a Quran in a Durga Puja celebration and making it viral on social media^{20, 21 22}

The Vatican News published on 10th July 2024 an annual report by the Bangladesh Hindu, Buddhist, Christian Unity Council (BHBCUC) for the period July 2023 to June 2024 detailing 1,045 cases of violence against minorities that included 25 gangrapes, 45 deaths, 10 attempted murders, 36 death threats²³. The reports state a total of 479 people were attacked, physically abused or injured, and 11 were victims of extortion. The violence included 25 gang rapes, while 12 people were abducted, went missing or forced to convert. Eight were arrested on false charges of blasphemy. The report further states 70-75 percent of the violence is centred on land grabbing, often under the influence of political parties and with the complicity of government agencies. The findings reported 47 incidents of land and homestead encroachment and 45 cases of land occupation, eviction activities, and threats, as well as 11 threats or attempts of expulsion.

Rana Dasgupta, Secretary of BHBCUC noted that the influence of extremist groups is growing in all areas²⁴, including the government administration, politics, and society, making minority communities more insecure and distrustful, forcing many of their members to leave the country. Before the 1971 Bangladesh war of independence against Pakistan, the minority population was about 19 percent. "Now it has come down to 8.6 percent," Dasgupta said, cited by AsiaNews agency.

²⁰ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/10/21/bangladesh-deadly-attacks-hindu-festival>

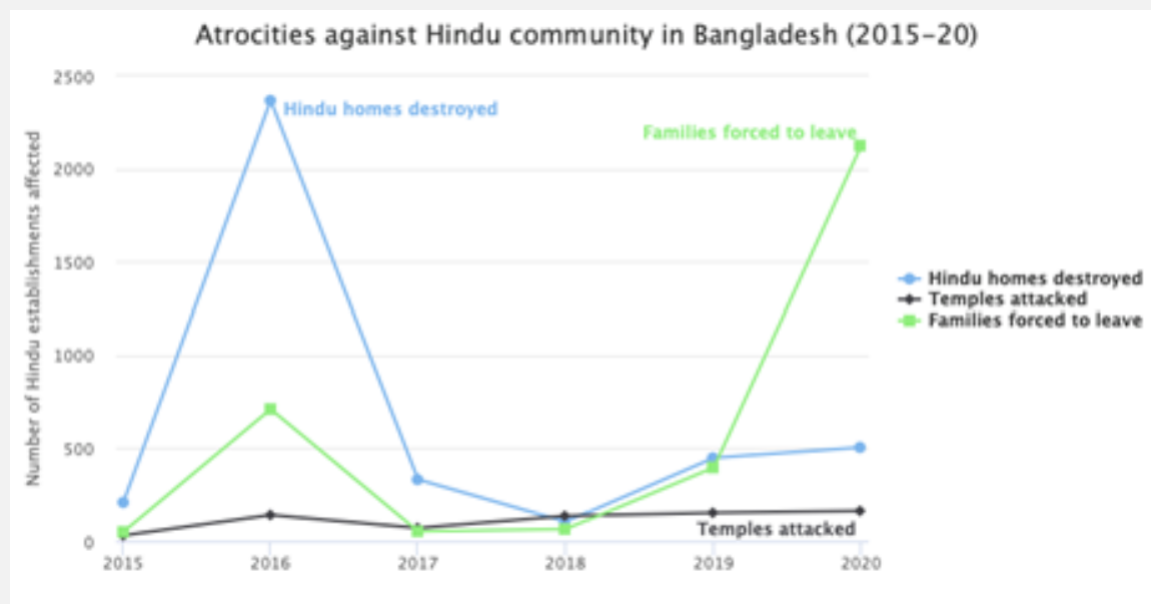
²¹ [Wikipedia-Bangladesh-anti Hindu violence 2021](#).

²² <https://www.indiatoday.in/world/story/bangladesh-comilla-quran-durga-puja-pandal-attack-accused-identified-police-1867240-2021-10-20>

²³ Vatican News (10th July 2024). <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/church/news/2024-07/1045-cases-of-violence-on-minorities-recorded-in-bangladesh.html>

²⁴ <https://www.asianews.it/news-en/In-the-past-year,-45-people-have-died-in-violence-against-religious-minorities-in-Bangladesh-61112.html>

Figure 1: Atrocities against Hindus in Bangladesh (2015-2020)



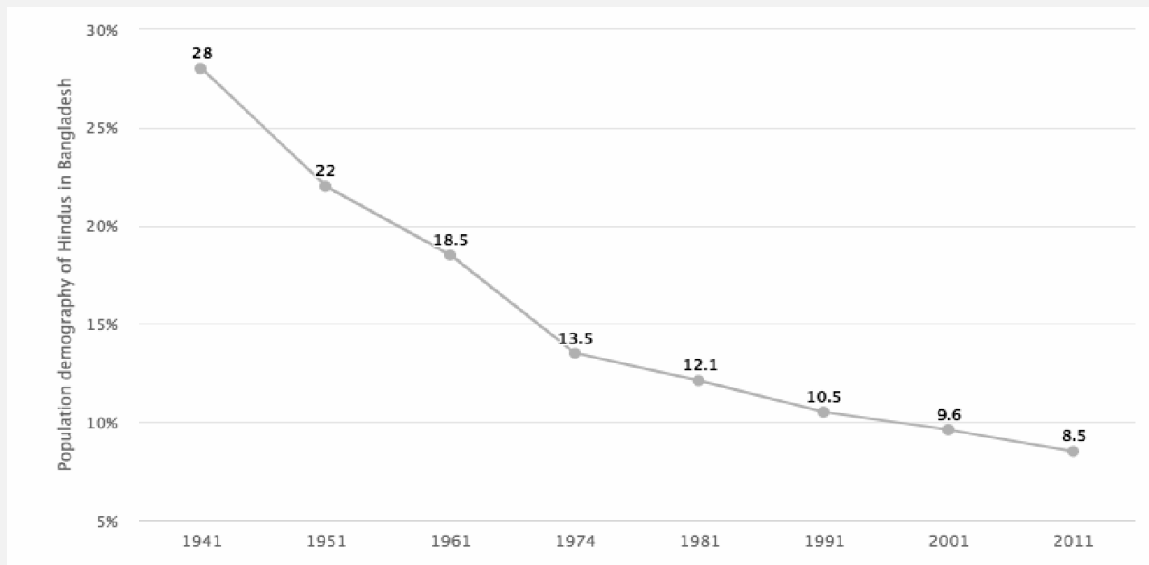
Source: Center for Integrated and Holistic Studies. "Bangladesh Violence Against Hindus"²⁵

The oppression of Hindus and other minorities in Bangladesh has been a constant feature in its history, both when it was still East Pakistan and since independence in 1971. According to the official 1951 census for East Bengal (East Pakistan) Hindus consisted of 22 percent of the total population of the province, it declined to 15 percent in 1991 and 8.5 percent in the 2011 census ²⁶. Starting as a secular nation under its Constitution of 1971, Bangladesh gradually turned into a fundamentalist Islamic State. A 1988 amendment (Eighth Amendment) of its Constitution made Bangladesh an Islamic State.

²⁵ <https://cihs.org.in/bangladesh-violence-against-hindus/>

²⁶ Minority Rights Group <https://minorityrights.org/communities/hindus/>

Figure 2: Decline in the population of Hindus in Bangladesh (1941-2011)²⁷



Source: Census of India (1941)²⁸ , Census of East Pakistan (1951, 1961)²⁹ , Bangladesh Government Census (1974-2011)³⁰ .

The most frequent and officially tolerated means of depriving Hindus, Buddhists, and Christians of their lands and properties has been the use of the Vested Property Act of 1965. Hopes that the law would be repealed on gaining independence from Pakistan in 1971 were dashed when the law was instead further strengthened in 1974. A legacy of the Vested Property Act is the migration of millions of Hindus to India in the face of land grabbing and displacement from their homes. Scapegoating and targeting of Hindus has occurred with every protest and after almost every national election in Bangladesh. Framing their persecution as primarily political overlooks the horrors of communal discrimination at play.

The violence against Hindus by Muslim majority in Bangladesh has been going on since the pre-partition period. In October 1946, Noakhali district of the then Bengal erupted into a communal frenzy against Hindus. On November 4, 1946, the House of Commons of British Parliament was told that the dead people in Noakhali and contiguous Tipperah districts had not yet been counted. Thousands of Hindu women were abducted and married to Muslims against their will. Hindu men were compelled

²⁷ <https://cihs.org.in/hindu-genocide-unfolding-in-bangladesh-3/>

²⁸ https://censusindia.gov.in/census_and_you/old_report/census_1941.aspx

²⁹ <http://111.68.102.42:8080/xmlui/handle/123456789/14510>

³⁰ <http://catalog.ihsn.org/index.php/catalog/115>

to grow beard and recite Quran Hindu temples desecrated. (Louis Fischer in The Life of Mahatma Gandhi).

As Spring ended in March 1971, the Pakistan army turned East Pakistan into a massive killing field for Hindus. The Pakistan army launched a barbaric pogrom for complete cleansing of the Bengali and Hindu identity of East Pakistan and called it Operation Searchlight. Since the days of Holocaust, this genocide orchestrated by Pakistan army was the most diabolic ethnic cleansing. Three million civilians were killed, 200,000 to 300,000 women were raped³¹. Anthony Mascrenhas, then Pakistan correspondent of Sunday Times, London was given a chance to be embedded with the 9th Division of Pakistan army. He wrote “For six days I travelled with the officers of the 9th Division headquartered at Comilla. I witnessed at close quarters the extent of the killing. I saw Hindus, hunted from village to village and door to door, shot off-hand after a cursory “short-arm inspection” showed they were uncircumcised”.

Since the birth of Bangladesh in 1971, Hindus have seen only fleeting moments of peace. The promise of religious co-existence started falling apart in 1978 after assassination of its founding father Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Violence against Hindus has been more severe and persistent in rural areas compared to big towns of Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, and Khulna. Bangladesh was declared an Islamic State in 1988.

A government order in 1992³² directed commercial banks to control large withdrawal of funds by Hindus from their deposit accounts and restrict business loans to them³³. In 2013, anti-Hindu riots erupted after Jamaat-e-Islami leader Delwar Sayeedi was convicted of war crimes by the International Crimes Tribunal³⁴, the 2016 Black Diwali³⁵ and the 2021 Durga Puja³⁶ both saw violence triggered by social media blasphemy allegations. 1971 has not yet ended for Hindus of Bangladesh. If anything, it has gotten worse in August 2024.

³¹ Shahidul Hasan Khokhon “Bangladesh: from Bloodbath to Birth”.

³² https://sundayguardianlive.com/opinion/may-no-hindus-left-bangladesh-30-years?utm_source=chatgpt.com#google_vignette

³³ “Being Hindu in Bangladesh: The Untold Story” Deep Halder and Avishek Biswas, Harper Collins April 2023.

³⁴ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-21623170>

³⁵ <https://www.hinduamerican.org/press/hindu-americans-shocked-tragic-riots-bangladesh-diwali>

³⁶ ibid

5. What can the international community do to save Hindus in Bangladesh from immediate danger.

No circumstances can or should normalize genocide, even when it manifests as a protracted, slow-motion slaughter, as witnessed in Bangladesh over the past five decades. When we begin to rationalize such atrocities as some Western media outlets and Prof. Muhammad Yunus, the leader of the interim government, have shamefully done, we risk losing the very battle for human rights and gender justice. We urge the international community to leverage its influence to compel Bangladesh to safeguard the rights and dignity of its minority communities, ensuring their security and access to justice.

The Key Role of The United Nations, the United States of America, and the European Union

The United Nations

- a) We are grateful to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights for sending a delegation to Bangladesh to investigate violations of human rights between 1st July and 15th August 2024. Its scope of enquiry should cover the period until the end of September. This report should form the basis of discussion in the UN Security Council on the security situation in the region.
- b) Any financial support to the government should include monitorable metrics on protection and inclusion of minorities, repeal and amendment of highly discriminatory laws such as the Vested Property Law, special tribunals for investigation and trial of crimes against minorities.
- c) Endorse and support the following safeguards requested by minorities:
 - I. Bangladesh should set up a Minority Commission with statutory powers to subpoena, and order independent investigation and trial of crimes against minorities.
 - II. 10% of seats in Parliament to be reserved for minorities (*and to be rotated across all constituencies*).
 - III. Enactment of a Minority Protection Law that would also provide legal mandate for constitution of a Minority Commission.
 - IV. Special Tribunals to be set up for speedy trial of crimes against minorities.
 - V. Restoration of land, houses, and assets of minorities illegally grabbed by forcing them to flee, and reparations for houses, businesses, and temples destroyed by mobs.

The United States Congress

- a) Congressional Oversight: The United States Congress must urgently exercise its oversight authority to scrutinize the actions of the State Department and USAID in Bangladesh, ensuring that radical Islamist groups do not benefit from American economic and political support.
- b) The State Department should urge the Government of Bangladesh to take the following steps:
 - i. Protection of Minority Rights: Policies must be implemented to safeguard the rights of minorities in Bangladesh, with oversight from U.S.-based Hindu non-profits and aid organizations to ensure accountability.
 - ii. De-radicalization of Educational Curriculum: A thorough de-radicalization of Bangladesh's Islamic education curriculum should be established as a prerequisite for U.S. economic aid
 - iii. Timeline and Demographic Preservation: A clear timeline of goals should be set to prevent the demographic decline of Hindu and Buddhist minorities in Bangladesh. Should these efforts fail, the establishment of autonomous designated zones should be considered, similar to the recent precedents in Kosovo and the Native American reservations in the United States.

International Financial Institutions (World Bank, Asian Development Bank, Asian Infrastructure Bank, IMF)

- a) All financial support, including budgetary support, for education, healthcare, financial sector, infrastructure, should include monitorable metrics for inclusion of minorities, particularly girls and women of religious minorities. The local offices of IFIs should dedicate a staff from minorities to monitor and report compliance with requirements of inclusion, social justice, and gender justice as it relates to minorities. In the long term, the demographic health of the religious minorities must become a metric of measurement of their well-being.

The Socially Conscious Private Sector

- a) Buyers of goods from Bangladesh: please require your vendors and suppliers to demonstrate inclusion of religious minorities and just and equitable treatment in wages and working conditions. Vendors and suppliers must be vetted for links to radical Islamist groups like Jamaat-e-Islami, Tablighi Jamaat and their affiliates proscribed by the Department of States of the United States.

Crisis in Bangladesh

Response across US between August 4 and October 20

In a powerful demonstration of bipartisan concern and responding to the rapidly deteriorating situation in Bangladesh, several lawmakers from both Democratic and Republican parties have condemned the violence against Hindus and other religious minorities. Six senators from Senate Foreign Relations Committee and some Congressmen have written to Secretary of State Anthony Blinken for a hearing on the situation.

Letter by the Senators from Senate Foreign Relations Committee to Secretary Blinken.

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 20, 2024

H.E. Professor Muhammad Yunus
Chief Adviser of the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.
Office of the Honorable Chief Adviser
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Tejgaon, Dhaka.

Dear Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus,

We are writing to congratulate you on becoming the interim leader of Bangladesh during this historic time. In recent weeks, the people of Bangladesh have courageously demonstrated the transformative power of collective action to their own government and the global community. When citizens unite, their voices can compel even the most entrenched and authoritarian leaders to relinquish power.

But this historic moment did not come without costs. Rather than engage the legitimate grievances of the protestors, the Bangladesh security forces – including the Rapid Action Battalion – responded with brute force, killing hundreds of protestors, and arresting and injuring thousands more. We mourn the lives that were lost and urge your interim government to create a credible process to conduct an independent and impartial investigation into the security services' human rights violations. This will be vital both as a demonstration of your commitment to respecting the rights of the protestors and signal your interim government's intention to work in good faith to address their grievances.

This transition presents a historic opportunity to reform institutions in Bangladesh, to ensure that human rights, such as freedoms of expression and peaceful assembly, are protected; to allow for inclusive participation in government representative of the diversity of the country; to support civil society and independent media; and to hold individuals accountable for the violence committed against the citizens of Bangladesh. The people of Bangladesh deserve a government that honors their voices, safeguards their rights, and upholds their dignity.

While many celebrate this new chapter in Bangladesh, a concerning volume of those celebrations have turned violent, with documented reports of reprisals targeting police as well as minority Hindu communities and those perceived to be supporters of Sheikh Hasina's government. As a result, the country has witnessed gaps in law enforcement and lack of protections for those facing violent attacks, including members of the Hindu community and Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazaar. We urge you to take these threats and incidents of violence seriously, just as we applaud your recent promise to continue supporting the million-plus Rohingya people sheltered in

Bangladesh. It is only by ensuring that all communities residing in Bangladesh are protected under the law that Bangladesh can meet its promising future.

Now, more than ever, it is important for Bangladeshis to unify – by coming together and by rebuilding an inclusive government, that fully harnesses Bangladesh’s tremendous potential. In a world that has recently witnessed repeated assaults on democratic ideals, Bangladesh has a rare opportunity to respond by delivering on the ‘second liberation’ many protestors have called for through the formulation of a government that respects democratic values and institutions.

We stand ready to assist Bangladesh during this critical period to ensure a successful transition to a democracy truly representative of the will of the Bangladeshi people.

Sincerely,



Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



Chris S. Murphy
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator

Letter by Congressman Shri Thanedar to Secretary Blinken



Condemnation by Congressman Rich McCormick at a Congressional briefing.



Congressman Rich McCormick, MBA MD ✓
@RepMcCormick



11:46 PM · Aug 7, 2024 · 1,608 Views

Letter by Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi to Secretary Blinken



Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi ✓
@CongressmanRaja



As Bangladesh prepares to swear in its interim government, I urge all government officials, the new administration and police chief, and the people of Bangladesh to do all they can to end the violence that has emerged across the country, including the brutal targeting of the country’s Hindu minority, their homes, businesses, and their temples. The violence must stop and those responsible must be brought to justice to help the people of Bangladesh move forward as a nation. I will continue to closely monitor developments in Bangladesh in coordination with the U.S. State Department.

11:35 PM · Aug 7, 2024 · 411.7K Views

Congressman Krishnamoorthi wrote a second letter to the Secretary of State Anthony Blinken urging him for a Briefing before October 31st.

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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
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INTELLIGENCE
SUBCOMMITTEE:
THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

October 16, 2024

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street Northwest
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken,

I am writing to request a briefing on the deeply disturbing rise in harassment and violence against Hindus and other religious minorities in Bangladesh, particularly following the ousting of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and reports of vandalism, violence, and intimidation leading up to Bangladesh's largest Hindu festival of Durga Puja. This year's festival took place from October 9 and October 13, 2024, and there are reports of harassment and attacks on Hindus, who make up about 8 percent of the country's nearly 170 million people, leading up to and during the festival. I am deeply concerned about religious minorities' safety and security in the current political climate. Therefore, I respectfully request a briefing on efforts to protect minority groups, including Hindus, in Bangladesh.

I commend your September meeting with Bangladesh's interim government Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus, where you stressed the need to protect minority communities in Bangladesh. As you are aware, Bangladesh's Hindu community has historically faced challenges, but recent incidents following the ousting of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina have heightened concerns about their safety. The Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council recently reported over 2,000 incidents of communal violence targeting minorities, mostly Hindus, across the country from August 4 to August 20, 2024. This included nine deaths of people belonging to minority groups, rapes, and attacks on 69 places of worship, which were vandalized or set on fire.

Given the alarming rise in violence against religious minorities, I respectfully request a briefing by October 31, 2024 on the treatment of religious minorities in Bangladesh and the State Department's efforts to promote security and safety of religious minority in Bangladesh, including during the Durga Puja festival, in addition to an assessment of the efforts of Bangladesh's government to combat violence against religious minorities and prevent additional attacks.

I appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress

Statement by Congressman Pat Fallon



Rep. Pat Fallon ✓

@RepPatFallon



I strongly condemn the ongoing political violence and religious persecution that we are witnessing in Bangladesh. I implore the interim government to act in the shared interest of the Bangladeshi people and put an end to this violence at once.

The targeting of Hindus, Buddhists, Christians and any other religious minority is reprehensible. Those who have instigated and participated in these acts of violence must be held responsible.

9:21 PM · Aug 9, 2024 · **280.8K** Views

Congressman Ro. Khanna condemns violence targeting Hindus

Congressman Ro Khanna (D-CA) also voiced his concerns publicly on Twitter, emphasizing the need for the interim government to maintain law and order while protecting vulnerable communities.



Ro Khanna ✓

@RoKhanna



Bangladeshi students had just human rights concerns against PM Hasina. It's good she is gone. But the violence now targeting Hindus is wrong. PM Yunus must uphold the rule of law & prevent the targeting of temples or people of any political party or faith from violence.

7:47 AM · Aug 8, 2024 · **417.8K** Views

Congressman Thomas Souzzi, wrote to Secretary Blinken requesting State Department to depute someone to brief his constituents.

THOMAS R. SUOZZI

MEMBER OF CONGRESS
3RD DISTRICT, NEW YORK

COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY



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Washington, DC 20515

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August 8, 2024

The Honorable Antony J. Blinken
Secretary
United States Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken:

I continue to follow the situation in Bangladesh closely following the resignation of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. As an interim government is formed, it is important that decisions are made in an inclusive way that respects democratic principles, human rights, the rule of law, and the Bangladeshi people.

One important aspect of these principles is the protection of the rights of all citizens. I am deeply concerned about reports of continued violence, especially as it affects minorities communities in Bangladesh, as well as their places of worship, which are especially vulnerable. The Department of State should continue to underscore the importance of preventing violence and protecting vulnerable minorities to the authorities in Bangladesh at this critical time.

I again request that an appropriate official be made available to come to my district to report directly to my constituents and address their concerns, sometime in August.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Thomas R. Suozzi".

Thomas R. Suozzi
Member of Congress

Congresswoman Yvette D Clarke (D-NY) wrote to Secretary Blinken condemning violence in Bangladesh against religious minorities and asking its armed police Rapid Action Battalion to be held accountable.

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Yvette D. Clarke
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COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT, MANAGEMENT,
AND ACCOUNTABILITY

September 25, 2024

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken,

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the ongoing situation in Bangladesh. While political transitions are often challenging, this transition has been accompanied by alarming reports of escalating violence against religious minorities and other vulnerable communities. It is important that we encourage decisions that are inclusive and respects democratic principles, human rights, and all Bangladeshi people.

Last month, we witnessed Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's resignation and exodus from the country. In this pivotal movement, it is critical the United States takes the necessary steps to support our longtime ally and secure its national stability through this crisis. As a global leader, we have a moral obligation to underscore the importance of preventing violence and protecting vulnerable minorities at this critical time.

I commend the Biden-Harris Administration's past action to impose sanctions on the Rapid Action Battalion, which has become directly responsible for numerous abuses over recent weeks. It is imperative we continue to hold government officials accountable for the inhumane treatment of its citizens and condemn any further acts of violence that have, for too long, threatened democracy in Bangladesh and the individual freedoms of its people. The United States has a responsibility to support the transition from the incoming interim government to a new governmental body, centered in democratic ideals and the rights and liberties of every Bangladeshi.

I urge the State Department to work with Bangladesh to protect religious communities and support a peaceful political transition. Thank you for your attention to this important matter and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress

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