

27 November 2024

Dr. Masatsugu Asakawa

President

Asian Development Bank

6 ADB Avenue, Mandaluyong

Metro Manila 1550, Philippines

through email sgdeguzman@adb.org

Dear President Mr. Asakawa,

Re: Bangladesh: Atrocities against Hindus and other religious minorities

We write as a diverse coalition of non-governmental organizations and individuals who are scholars, religious leaders, human rights advocates, and civil rights leaders to express our strong concerns regarding human rights violations and atrocities against religious minorities in Bangladesh, particularly since July 2024.

We respectfully urge you to require Bangladesh to comply with the Asian Development Bank's Environmental and Social Framework to mitigate social risks to vulnerable groups that include religious minorities and indigenous peoples.

We also urge you to implement your policy on "Gender and Development" in Bangladesh with respect to Gender-Based Violence crimes targeted against girls and women of religious minorities. In the absence of accountability of institutions to protect minorities, your specific targets, though laudable, included in your "Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Operational Plan 2013-2020" will appear to be meaningless to the helpless girls and women of minorities in Bangladesh who are being subjected to inhuman atrocities.

Human rights of religious minorities are being trampled upon with impunity. The Asian Development Bank should require stoppage, and rehabilitation of the victims, of such gross violations of its policies before lending to the Republic of Bangladesh.

The attached report highlights the violence, rapes, murders, destruction of homes and businesses, destruction of temples, and stopping religious minorities from observance of their religious rites. Since 5th August 2024 when the former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was deposed, more than 50 Hindus have been murdered in cold blood, 12 minor girls from minorities were gang-raped, several women have reported being brutalized, homes burnt down, temples destroyed, and religious minorities forced to flee. Young children are particularly vulnerable to rape, violence, and victimization to terrorize the minorities into submission.

Bangladesh army and police have remained mute spectators allowing rampaging mobs to target religious minorities with impunity. A young man was lynched inside a police station in the presence of Bangladesh army who were complicit in persecution of religious minorities. The incidents of crimes against minorities have not stopped and Bangladesh army colluded with the rioters in Chittagong on 5th November 2024 from where we are receiving reports of more than 200 people held in detention by the army being tortured.

Religious minorities face systematic persecution and violence, and their religious freedom is severely restricted by the government through discriminatory laws, inaction and often complicity by the State and its institutions. The government's apathy toward large-scale anti-minority violence by radical militant organizations has allowed such groups to operate with impunity. Even the saintly monks of International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), a peaceful Hindu religious organization that has distributed aid and volunteered during every disaster in Bangladesh, is being persecuted. Persecution of Hindus, Christians, Buddhists, has been going on for over five decades since independence of Bangladesh in 1971 and their population has seen a genocidal proportion of decline from more than 20% in 1971 to less than 8% in 2020.

We are thankful to His Excellency the Secretary General Guterres for sending an OHCHR fact-finding mission to Bangladesh. The mandate of the Mission is limited to reviewing incidents of violence between 5th to 15th August 2024 which should be expanded to cover the violence until the end of October 2024. The ADB should do its own due diligence as a part of any lending to Bangladesh. We urge you to diligently implement the ADB's ESF and Gender Strategy in Bangladesh.

Excellency, thank you for your attention to this urgent matter and to ensure inclusive and sustainable development by protecting human rights of vulnerable minorities in Bangladesh. Should you need additional information or other materials on this subject, please contact Utsav Chakravorty, info@hindu-action.org, at your convenience. We will appreciate it if you can designate a senior official from your office to follow up with us.

Respectfully,

Mohinder Gulati
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Richa Sinha

Chairperson

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info@scottishhindufoundation.com

Mr. Donald Bobiash
Director
Asian Development Bank
6 ADB Avenue, Mandaluyong
Metro Manila 1550, Philippines
through mtpagkaliwangan@adb.org

Dear Director Mr. Bobiash,

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Mr. Supak Chaiyawan
Director, Board of Directors
Asian Development Bank
6 ADB Avenue, Mandaluyong
Metro Manila 1550, Philippines
through sarbues@adb.org

Dear Director Mr. Chaiyawan,

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Mr. Helmut Fischer
Director, Board of Directors
Asian Development Bank
6 ADB Avenue, Mandaluyong
Metro Manila 1550, Philippines
through rbvelasquez@adb.org

Dear Director Mr. Fischer,

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Mr. Bertrand Furno

Director, Board of Directors

Asian Development Bank

6 ADB Avenue, Mandaluyong

Metro Manila 1550, Philippines

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Mr. Weihua Liu
Director, Board of Directors
Asian Development Bank
6 ADB Avenue, Mandaluyong.
Metro Manila 1550, Philippines

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Mr. Sangmin Ryu
Director, Board of Directors
Asian Development Bank
6 ADB Avenue, Mandaluyong
Metro Manila 1550, Philippines

Dear Director Mr. Ryu,

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Mr. Vikas Sheel
Director, Board of Directors
Asian Development Bank
6 ADB Avenue, Mandaluyong
Metro Manila 1550, Philippines

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Director
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6 ADB Avenue, Mandaluyong
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The attached report highlights the violence, rapes, murders, destruction of homes and businesses, destruction of temples, and stopping religious minorities from observance of their religious rites. Since 5th August 2024 when the former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was deposed, more than 50 Hindus have been murdered in cold blood, 12 minor girls from minorities were gang-raped, several women have reported being brutalized, homes burnt down, temples destroyed, and religious minorities forced to flee. Young children are particularly vulnerable to rape, violence, and victimization to terrorize the minorities into submission.

Bangladesh army and police have remained mute spectators allowing rampaging mobs to target religious minorities with impunity. A young man was lynched inside a police station in the presence of Bangladesh army who were complicit in persecution of religious minorities. The incidents of crimes against minorities have not stopped and Bangladesh army colluded with the rioters in Chittagong on 5th November 2024 from where we are receiving reports of more than 200 people held in detention by the army being tortured.

Religious minorities face systematic persecution and violence, and their religious freedom is severely restricted by the government through discriminatory laws, inaction and often complicity by the State and its institutions. The government's apathy toward large-scale anti-minority violence by radical militant organizations has allowed such groups to operate with impunity. Even the saintly monks of International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), a peaceful Hindu religious organization that has distributed aid and volunteered during every disaster in Bangladesh, are being persecuted. Persecution of Hindus, Christians, Buddhists, has been going on for over five decades since independence of Bangladesh in 1971 and their population has seen a genocidal proportion of decline from more than 20% in 1971 to less than 8% in 2020.

We are thankful to His Excellency the Secretary General Guterres for sending an OHCHR fact-finding mission to Bangladesh. The mandate of the Mission is limited to reviewing incidents of violence between 5th to 15th August 2024 which should be expanded to cover the violence until the end of October 2024. The ADB should do its own due diligence as a part of any lending to Bangladesh. We urge you to diligently implement the ADB's ESF and Gender Strategy in Bangladesh.

Excellency, thank you for your attention to this urgent matter and to ensure inclusive and sustainable development by protecting human rights of vulnerable minorities in Bangladesh. Should you need additional information or other materials on this subject, please contact Utsav Chakravorty, info@hindu-action.org, at your convenience. We will appreciate it if you can designate a senior official from your office to follow up with us.

27 November 2024

Ms. Charlotte Justine Sicat
Director, Board of Directors
Asian Development Bank
6 ADB Avenue, Mandaluyong
Metro Manila 1550, Philippines

Dear Director Ms. Sicat,

Re: Bangladesh: Atrocities against Hindus and other religious minorities

We write as a diverse coalition of non-governmental organizations and individuals who are scholars, religious leaders, human rights advocates, and civil rights leaders to express our strong concerns regarding human rights violations and atrocities against religious minorities in Bangladesh, particularly since July 2024.

We respectfully urge you to require Bangladesh to comply with the Asian Development Bank's Environmental and Social Framework to mitigate social risks to vulnerable groups that include religious minorities and indigenous peoples.

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27 November 2024

Ms. Rachel Thompson
Director, Board of Directors
Asian Development Bank
6 ADB Avenue, Mandaluyong
Metro Manila 1550, Philippines

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27 November 2024

Mr. Made Arya Wijaya
Director, Board of Directors
Asian Development Bank
6 ADB Avenue, Mandaluyong
Metro Manila 1550, Philippines

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