

27 November 2024

Honorable Jean-Pierre Lacroix
Under Secretary General for Peacekeeping Operations
United Nations
1 UN Plaza, New York, USA 10017

through Mr. Nick Birnback, Chief Strategic Communications, birnbackn@un.org

Your Excellency,

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 internationally urge you to require Bangladesh to honor the United Nations Human Rights Declaration and comply with Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) signed and ratified by it.

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 attached report highlights the violence, rapes, murders, destruction of homes and businesses, destruction of temples, and stopping religious minorities from observing 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.

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. We are receiving reports from the field that in more recent incidents in Chittagong on 5th November, the Bangladesh army has detained more than two hundred Hindus who are being tortured in detention.

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. 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.

A question for your consideration is: Should the UN Department of Peace Operations deploy the Bangladesh army as peacekeepers when it is complicit in violence against religious minorities in its own country. It is incumbent on the Department of Peace Operations headed by you to do its due diligence of the Bangladesh armed forces and not deploy them as Peacekeepers. We urge you to launch a transparent public enquiry into its conduct during the recent genocide of religious minorities in Bangladesh.

Excellency, we thank you for your attention to this urgent matter and to protecting human rights of vulnerable minorities in Bangladesh. Should you need additional information or other materials on this subject, please contact Mohinder Gulati at admin@ghtnus.org or +1-202-875-1253 at your convenience. We would appreciate it if you could designate a senior official from your office to follow up with us.

Respectfully,

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27 November 2024

Honorable Mr. Volker Türk
High Commissioner for Human Rights
United Nations
Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10,
Switzerland

through Media Advisor, Investigative Missions, todd.pitman@un.org

Your Excellency

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 honor the United Nations Human Rights Declaration and comply with Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) signed and ratified by it.

We are thankful to you for your recent visit and 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 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.

The attached report highlights the violence, rapes, murders, destruction of homes and businesses, destruction of temples, and stopping religious minorities from observing 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.

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. We are receiving reports from the field that in more recent incidents in Chittagong on 5th November, the Bangladesh army has detained more than 200 Hindus who are being tortured in detention.

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. 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 suggest that the fact-finding mission talks to the minority's leaders and victims on camera to protect them from retribution. We urge you to launch a transparent public enquiry into its conduct during the recent genocide of religious minorities in Bangladesh. We would appreciate it if you could designate a senior official from your office to follow up with us.

Excellency, we thank you for your attention to this urgent matter and to protecting human rights of vulnerable minorities in Bangladesh. Should you need additional information or other materials on this subject, please contact Mohinder Gulati at admin@ghtnus.org or +1-202-875-1253 at your convenience. We would appreciate it if you could designate a senior official from your office to follow up with us.

27 November 2024

Honorable Dr. (Ms.) Sima Sami Bahous
Executive Director
United Nations Women
United Nations Secretariat
405 East 42nd Street New York,
NY 10017-3599
through media.team@unwomen.org

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We thank you for your tweet message today on violence against women in Bangladesh.

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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. 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 suggest that the fact-finding mission pays attention to the violence against young children, particularly young girls and talks to the minority's leaders and victims on camera to protect them from retribution. We urge you to launch a transparent public enquiry into its conduct during the recent genocide of religious minorities in Bangladesh. We would appreciate it if you could designate a senior official from your office to follow up with us.

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27 November 2024

Honorable Ms. Catherine Russell
Executive Director
United Nations Children's Fund
3 United Nations Plaza 44th Street, New York

through Chief of Media, Kurtis Cooper, kacooper@unicef.org

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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. 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 suggest that the fact-finding mission pays attention to the violence against young children, particularly young girls and talks to the minority's leaders and victims on camera to protect them from retribution. We urge you to launch a transparent public enquiry into its conduct during the recent genocide of religious minorities in Bangladesh. We are taking the liberty of copying this letter to Honorable Sanjay Wijesekera, Regional Director, South Asia for his urgent attention. We would appreciate it if you could designate a senior official from your office to follow up with us.

Excellency, thank you for your attention to this urgent matter and to protecting human rights of vulnerable minorities in Bangladesh. Should you need additional information or other materials on this subject, I am available at your convenience.

27 November 2024

Honorable Mr. Sanjay Wijesekera
Regional Director
United Nations Children's Fund
Regional Office for South Asia (ROSA)
P.O.Box 5815, Lekhnath Marg,
Kathmandu, Nepal

through rosa@unicef.org

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Excellency, thank you for your attention to this urgent matter and to protecting human rights of vulnerable minorities in Bangladesh. Should you need additional information or other materials on this subject, I am available at your convenience.