

Mr Muhammad Yunus
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Interim Government, Bangladesh
Dhaka

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Your Excellency,

Subject: Political affiliations or religion cannot justify ethnic cleansing of Hindus and other minorities in Bangladesh.

Greetings and felicitations. We at Centre for Integrated and Holistic Studies (CIHS), a non-partisan think tank based in New Delhi, India has been closely following developments in Bangladesh.

We have read your recent remark that attacks on Hindus in Bangladesh have been "exaggerated." It becomes crucial to analyse the validity of this assertion against grim backdrop of documented violence and persecution faced by the Hindu minority in Bangladesh.

Your claims that attacks are more political than communal suggest that Hindus support for the now-ousted Awami League government led to their victimisation. This narrative oversimplifies a much deeper issue: long-standing, systematic violence against Hindus in Bangladesh often motivated by Islamist extremism and ideological hostility.

One of the central claims made by you is that attacks on Hindus in Bangladesh are linked to their perceived political alignment with Awami League. Do political affiliations justify violence in a democracy? It is possible that some Hindus may have supported Awami League. Even if it's true, can your unelected interim government legitimise the violent retribution they face?

Aligning with a political party, especially in a democracy, does not warrant murder, assault, rape, forced resignations from elected offices, public assignments or destruction of religious sites. This argument dilutes the very principles of human rights and justice. Even if political factors are at play, targeted killings and destruction of Hindu properties are clear cases of communal violence leading to ethnic cleansing and not merely political backlash.

Your claim that attacks on Hindus are "exaggerated" contradicts documented incidents of violence. If we delve into history, then there have been hundreds of attacks on Hindu individuals, families, temples and businesses in Bangladesh. These include several instances where Islamist extremist groups have specifically targeted Hindus for their faith.

However, during extremist protest of 2024 which resulted in regime change has been reported by several incidents of targeted attacks. On August 13, 2024, Associated Press despatch from Dhaka quoting Bangladesh Hindu Christian Unity Council said, "In the week since Hasina was ousted on August 5, there have been at least 200 attacks against Hindus and other religious minorities across 52 districts."

From the beginning of so-called students protest till date hundreds of attacks have come forth, be it Sylhet and Chittagong temple attacks, Gang rapes in Khulna and Jessore, Vandalism of Hindu-owned businesses

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in Dhaka, Arson in Barisal, Seizure of Hindu Properties in Satkhira, Massacre of Hindus in Pirojpur or Assassination of Hindus being allegedly linked with Awami League.

Based on all these targeted attacks, I would like to ask you if targeted attacks on Hindu professors in Bangladesh is also an exaggeration of issues? And, the attack on Ganesh Puja at Firangi Bazaar Sevak Colony, Chittagong, Sadarghat is also an exaggeration of issues?

While you assert that the violence is politically motivated, the involvement of extremist groups and their handlers cannot be ignored. Radical Islamists in Bangladesh have long exploited political instability to push their agenda, often using violence to target religious minorities, including Hindus.

Outfits like Hifazat-e-Islam and Jamaat-e-Islami have publicly called for violence against Hindus, provoking their supporters to attack Hindu temples and seize Hindu-owned property. These attacks, often justified under the pretext of political alignment are deeply rooted in religious intolerance and extremism.

Even Hindu students and individuals who have no overt political affiliations have been victims of violence which indicates that targeting of Hindus extends beyond mere perceived political retaliation. Rather, it is part of a larger effort that seeks to marginalise, suppress and unleash genocide of the Hindu minority.

Your claim that attacks on Hindus have occurred due to their alleged political connection with Awami League raises a crucial question: Does political affiliation justify violence? If this theory is true, are we endorsing a system in which political loyalty serves as justification for killing, persecution and ethnic cleansing of people? The right to support and express one's political views is fundamental to democracy. Nevertheless, minorities in Bangladesh such as the Hindus always faced threats to their independence.

Hindus in Bangladesh have long been victims of religious discrimination which is made worse by ideological and political forces. Their situation necessitates a thorough response that recognises influence of religious extremism and seeks to protect the rights of minorities.

Bangladesh's interim government needs to acknowledge seriousness of genocide like situation and take decisive action to safeguard Hindus and other minority groups from violence driven by both political and religious reasons instead of placing responsibility on political dynamics.

Bharat's concerns should not be ignored; rather, they should serve as a reminder of the responsibility of international community to protect everyone's human rights, irrespective of their political affiliation or practice of faith.

With best regards,



K.A. Badarinath
Director & Chief Executive