

Demonstration for Peace in Bangladesh Draws Large Crowd in Front of the European Parliament

BRUSSELS, BELGIUM, August 2, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A massive gathering took place on 31/07/2024 in front of the European Parliament in Brussels, organized by the Belgian Awami League and the Bangladeshi community. The protesters expressed their solidarity, respect, and condolences for the lives lost due to recent violence and destruction in [Bangladesh](#). The groups called for action against the extremist parties BNP and Jamat, who they claim are exploiting student movements for political purposes and undermining the country's stability.

Large Turnout and Emotional Tributes

In the demonstration a minute of silence in memory of the victims was held. The event featured powerful slogans advocating for peace and condemning the extremism of Jamat BNP. According to the speakers, including prominent leaders such as Shahidul Haque and Jahangir Chowdhury Ratan, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has advocated for quota reforms from the outset. The quotas were canceled or reformed through judicial rulings, leaving no further reason for student protests. The speakers emphasized that the violence and destruction of state resources have caused significant damage and that it will take time to recover from these losses.

Call for European Solidarity

The protesters urged the European Union to help promote peace and stability in Bangladesh as a friend of the country. They highlighted the importance of a united approach to resist propaganda against the state and to protect the ideals of Bangabandhu. A memorial was presented to the European Parliament on behalf of the expatriate community and the Belgian Awami League.



European and Bangladeshi communities united in front of the European Parliament, honoring the 147 lives lost in the recent attacks.

Key Participants and Speeches

The event was led by Shahidul Haque, president of the [Belgian Awami League](#), and general secretary Jahangir Chowdhury Ratan. The keynote speaker was [Andy Vermaut](#). Other prominent speakers included M. Nazrul Islam, president of the European Awami League, and Mostafa Zaman, leader of the Dutch Awami League. Also present were Murad Khan, Humayun Maqsood Himu (senior vice-president of the Belgian Awami League), Niranjana Roy (vice-president), Khokan Sharif (advisor), Abdus Salam Bhuiya (vice-president), Daud Khan Sohel (joint-general secretary), Khaled Minhaj (general secretary of the Youth League), Musharraf Hossain (MLA), Zaheer Khan (MLA), Firoz Babul (chairman of the Bangabandhu Council), Rabeya Zaman (women's secretary), Akhtaruzzaman (publicity secretary), Imran Ali (science and technology secretary), Niaz Murhed (education secretary), Jewel Jilani (leader of the Awami League), Ayesha Sarkar (cultural secretary), Asaduzzaman (joint secretary), Rice League president Ali, Pradeep Sarkar (executive parliament member), and Russell (sports chairman).

A heavy heart and a resolute Spirit

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Andy Vermaut

Human Rights Defender Andy Vermaut began his speech with a heavy heart and a resolute spirit, stating, "Today, I stand before you with a heavy heart and a resolute spirit. We are here to address the tragic events that have unfolded in Bangladesh. As we gather in this moment, we honor the memory of the 147 souls lost, the countless injured, and the many lives shattered by violence and terror." Andy Vermaut emphasized the importance of rising for justice and peace, declaring, "We must rise for justice, we must rise for peace."

The Dark Shadow Over Bangladesh

Andy Vermaut explained the somber situation, "The Government of Bangladesh has heard the outcry from the international community. The recent acts of violence and terrorism have cast a dark shadow over a nation striving for progress. Families are mourning, communities are in



Andy Vermaut addressing the crowd, expressing gratitude for international support and condemning the recent violence in Bangladesh.

turmoil, but amidst this grief, there is a promise of justice and a return to peace." He continued by detailing the betrayal, "The violence was not born of the people's will but from the machinations of a vested group—led by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami. They hijacked a peaceful student protest, turning a movement for reform into a battlefield of terror. This betrayal of trust transformed hope into chaos."

The Government's Efforts and Challenges

Andy Vermaut noted the challenges faced by the government, "Despite the government's efforts to meet the students' demands and align with their aspirations, the situation was set ablaze by inflammatory rhetoric and calculated provocation. Public life was disrupted, the economy was halted, and the very soul of the nation was attacked." He highlighted the Prime Minister's decisive actions, "The Prime Minister of Bangladesh has taken decisive action, ensuring that justice will be served. She is personally overseeing the rehabilitation of the injured and the support for the families of the deceased. An Inquiry Commission, led by a High Court Judge, is diligently working to hold those responsible accountable."

Combating Misinformation

Andy Vermaut called for clarity and truth, stating, "The international community must distinguish between the peaceful student movement and the subsequent acts of terror. The government's measures were necessary to protect lives and restore order. We must combat misinformation and uphold the truth." He reassured the audience about the government's commitment to fundamental rights, "The right to peaceful assembly and freedom of expression is a cornerstone



The peaceful student-led quota reform movement was appropriated by the BNP-Jamaat alliance, leading to violence and terrorism against public infrastructure.



A moment of silence honoring victims and emphasizing the commitment to justice and peace in Bangladesh.

of democracy. Throughout this crisis, the government ensured that media operations continued, providing transparency and a voice to the people. This commitment to fundamental rights remains steadfast." Andy Vermaut expressed the need for international cooperation, "As we look to the future, the Government of Bangladesh seeks to engage constructively with international partners. Together, we can rebuild a peaceful, just, and inclusive society. A society where the youth can voice their hopes and dreams, and realize their potential in a secure environment."

Minute of Silence

He then asked the audience to join him in honoring the victims, "Now, I ask each of you to join me in a minute of silence to honor the victims of this senseless tragedy. In the face of this adversity, let us commit to standing together, unwavering in our pursuit of justice, and unyielding in our quest for peace. The path ahead may be steep, but with unity and determination, we will rise above the darkness. Together, we can build a brighter future for Bangladesh and its people." He concluded his speech with a powerful message, "We must rise for justice, we must rise for peace."

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An Inquiry Commission led by a High Court Judge is investigating the violence and terrorist acts to ensure accountability and justice.

