

CSI: Religious Minorities in Bangladesh under threat

ZURICH, SWITZERLAND, August 9, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Statement from CSI International President, Dr. John Eibner

CSI is alarmed by the upsurge of violence against non-Muslim religious minorities in Bangladesh following the overthrow of the country's secular-oriented Awami League government on August 5.

Islamist groups, including actors associated with the radical Jamaat-e-Islami political party, are attacking Hindus, Ahmadiyya Muslims, Christians, and political activists across the country. The attacks include sexual violence. Security forces have largely stood down and anarchy is spreading.

The Bangladesh Hindu-Buddhist-Christian Unity Council reports attacks on numerous Hindu temples and hundreds of homes belonging to religious minorities, mostly Hindus. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at reports that attackers have driven Ahmadiyya families from their homes in Sherpur district. Attacks on 47 Christian sites, including at least 11 churches, have also been reported.

Bangladesh's Jamaat-e-Islami is an Islamist party committed to creating an Islamic state in Bangladesh. During Bangladesh's war of independence in 1971, Jamaat-e-Islami militias participated in the Pakistani military's genocidal campaign against Bengals and Hindus.

For decades, religious pluralism and tolerance has been a characteristic of both state and society in Bangladesh, despite the increasingly autocratic tendencies of the outgoing Awami League government. Yet even before August 5, CSI had observed a rise in cases of violence and legal persecution of Christians in Bangladesh. The government's fall opens the door to violence and persecution on a much larger scale.



Christians in Bangladesh pray for peace in the wake of the government's overthrow this week.

CSI supports the National Council of Churches in Bangladesh's call for prayers for ethnic and religious minorities that are currently under attack in different parts of the country.

CSI expresses its condolences for the hundreds of Bangladeshis, including student protestors, who have been killed in recent weeks.

CSI calls on the interim government of Bangladesh to take immediate steps to protect religious minorities in Bangladesh, and encourages it to remain firm in its publicly-stated commitments to democracy and equal rights.

CSI calls on all powers with influence in Bangladesh, especially the United States, to condemn the perpetrators of violence against religious minorities in Bangladesh and to prioritize the security of religious minorities in their dealings with the Bangladeshi state.

Dr. John Eibner
International President
CHRISTIAN SOLIDARITY INTERNATIONAL

Joel Veldkamp
Christian Solidarity International
+41 76 258 15 74

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