



CENTRE FOR DEMOCRACY, PLURALISM AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Ursula von der Leyen
President, European Commission
Brussels, Belgium

October 23, 2021

Subject: Request to Safeguard Rights of Minorities in Bangladesh

Dear Madam

Centre for Democracy, Pluralism and Human Rights is in complete shock as yet another series of violent attacks were carried out on Hindus, the largest religious minority of Bangladesh in October 2021. Durga Puja, the biggest festival of Hindus in Bangladesh saw a spurt of ferocious attacks on puja pandals and temples. The places of worship of Hindus were vandalized, idols desecrated, hundreds of shops and houses looted and torched as mobs of Jihadi elements went on communal violence spree against the minority Hindus. The incident began in Camilla but soon spread to other districts of the country. Yet again women were raped. Not even a girl of 10 was spared who later succumbed to major blood-loss. At least six persons have reportedly been killed and hundreds injured.

This is not a singular incidence of atrocities on religious minorities as around 3600 attacks on minorities have taken place since 2013. In the recent cases it has been reported that some of the attackers were from the local units of *Jamaat-e-Islami*, the ruling party of Bangladesh. Successive governments have failed in giving protection to religious and ethnic minorities in the country, despite the fact that Bangladesh has been a signatory of UN rights treaties. Unfortunately, startling statistics of violation of human rights have not alarmed the international community to the extent it should have done. Population of minorities has drastically come down from around 30% in 1947 to 22.89% in 1951 to around 9.3 percent in 2011. One single legislation of the government, Vested Property Act, has taken away thousands of acres of land of Hindus. The legislation itself is anti-human and anti-democracy.

Details of human rights violation of minorities and women in Bangladesh and our organisation's elaborate recommendations can be accessed by clicking on CDPHR's human rights report on Bangladesh at the following link: <https://www.cdphr.org/bangladeshreport.pdf>

In view of the recent attacks on minorities, Centre for Democracy, Pluralism and Human Rights (CDPHR) demands from your office:

1. To intervene in ensuring human rights of minorities and providing safe and secure environment in the country.
2. To ensure that the victims get justice as non-delivery on this front has further strengthened culprits over these years.
3. Specific efforts should be made to ensure safety and dignity of minority girls and women.
4. To make honest efforts in bringing out an effective long-term solution to the grave violations of human rights of minorities. Please refer to page # 10-13 of the above report of the CDPHR for detailed recommendations, which includes formation of a ministry of minority affairs, check on indoctrination of young minds into radical Islam, and operative repeal of the Vested Property Act among others.

Looking forward to immediate steps by your office in this regard.

With profound regards


Prerna Malhotra
President, CDPHR