

8/26/04

SANSAD Condemns Extremist Attacks in Bangladesh

SANSAD strongly condemns the recent attack on the Leader of the Opposition in Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina, by the Islamic extremists, which left 19 people dead, and another 300 wounded. The growing wave of extremism and religious intolerance in Bangladesh is of extreme concern to all those who believe in secularism, democracy and equal rights. A culture of terrorism and violence has been established in Bangladesh as a result of the systematic murder, intimidation and harassment of people who dare to challenge the agenda of religious fanatics. The prevailing lawlessness and grave deterioration of democratic order in Bangladesh has serious consequences for the rest of South Asia, particularly India and Pakistan, where secular democratic ideals and people are also under threat.

The alliance between the ruling establishment and the forces of religious extremism has been pushing Bangladesh towards intolerance and violence. The campaign of violence against democratic and secular voices in Bangladesh has led to the recent attacks and death threats to many academics, journalists and civil society activists in Bangladesh. We are greatly concerned that the ruling party has failed to check such incidents. The government's inability or unwillingness to stop violent attacks on the defenders of human rights has particularly added to the insecurity of the religious minorities in Bangladesh whose lives and property are under threat.

SANSAD further condemns the recent brutal attack on Dr. Humayun Azad, a prominent writer and academic, which left him near death and the subsequent death threats issued by religious fanatics to his family members, asking them not to go to the airport to collect his dead body. We also condemn the killing of journalist Kamal Hossain by extremists, and the death threats to journalists and editors of the largest Bangla daily, Prothorn Alo for conducting investigative stories on religious seminaries. Bangladesh is rapidly moving toward a fascistic Islamist state of the kind that we saw in Afghanistan. We urge the government of Bangladesh to curb the growing violence and intolerance and to protect secularism, which is one of the four pillars of the Bangladesh constitution.

SANSAD

South Asian Network for Secularism and Democra

Suite 435, 205 - 329 North Road, Coquitlam, BC, Canada. V3K 6Z8

phone : (604) 420-2972; FAX: (604) 420-2970

Electronic mail : sansad@sansad.org

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