

115TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 1156

Expressing concern about the threat posed to democracy and the democratic process by theocratic groups operating in Bangladesh.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NOVEMBER 20, 2018

Mr. BANKS of Indiana submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Expressing concern about the threat posed to democracy and the democratic process by theocratic groups operating in Bangladesh.

Whereas the nation of Bangladesh achieved independence in 1971 and established a secular democratic state, which is home to over 163,000,000 Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Christians, and atheists;

Whereas this freedom was won at the cost of approximately 3,000,000 deaths, more than 10,000,000 displaced, and 200,000 women raped, many at the hands of Islamist militants led by Jamaat-e-Islami;

Whereas Bangladesh plays a critical role in the safe and voluntary repatriation of over 800,000 Rohingya Muslims who have taken refuge in Bangladesh from religious and political persecution in Myanmar;

Whereas national elections are expected to take place in Bangladesh on December 30, 2018;

Whereas religious minorities were targeted by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, Jamaat-e-Islami, and Islami Chhatra Shibir, during previous elections, as a result of which 495 Hindu homes were damaged, 585 shops were attacked or looted, and 169 temples were vandalized between November 2013 and January 2014, according to the Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council;

Whereas Jamaat-e-Islami activists have been involved in recent attacks on religious minorities in Bangladesh;

Whereas religious extremists have also attacked Buddhists, Christians, and Ahmadi Muslims;

Whereas the extremist group Hefazat-e-Islam is organizing a movement to fundamentally transform Bangladesh from a secular democracy into a totalitarian theocracy;

Whereas Hefazat-e-Islam has threatened to carry out an armed jihad against the Government of Bangladesh if its demands are not met;

Whereas Jamaat-e-Islami, Hefazat-e-Islam, and other theocratic extremist groups pose an immediate and ongoing threat to Bangladesh's stability and secular democracy, and religious minorities remain at grave risk of continuing violence;

Whereas former NATO Allied Land Command leader General John W. Nicholson has expressed growing concern regarding al-Qaida activities in Bangladesh;

Whereas repeated attacks on religious minorities, expanding religious intolerance, and growing destabilization caused by radical groups, including JeI and Islami Chhatra

Shibir, undermine United States economic and strategic interests in Bangladesh;

Whereas there is a growing trend of Islamic extremism in Bangladesh tied to pro-Islamic State of Iraq and Syria activity, with several arrests of Islamists linked with the terrorist group made in recent years; and

Whereas the United States should more actively engage with the Government of Bangladesh over their shared interests in safeguarding human rights, religious freedom, and secular democracy in Bangladesh, while preventing the growth of religious extremism and militancy: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) acknowledges the victims of the 1971 War
3 of Independence and the spirit of secular democracy
4 on which Bangladesh was founded;

5 (2) calls on the Government of Bangladesh to
6 stop radical organizations, such as Jamaat-e-Islami,
7 Islami Chhatra Shibir, and Hefazat-e-Islam, who
8 pose an ongoing threat to the country's stability and
9 secular democracy;

10 (3) calls on the Government of Bangladesh to
11 heed the Bangladesh Election Commission's request
12 to ensure security for minorities and maintain com-
13 munal harmony for a peaceful election; and

14 (4) calls on the United States Agency for Inter-
15 national Development and the State Department to
16 halt all partnerships and funding arrangements with

- 1 groups affiliated with Jamaat-e-Islami, Islami
- 2 Chhatra Shibir, and Hefazat-e-Islam.

