

Bangladesh at a Crossroads: Policy Brief 2013 - 2014

I. Introduction

Bangladesh is at a critical juncture in its history. As recent events demonstrate, widespread chaos and violence are threatening to undermine the country's stability and secular democracy. The plight of religious minorities, in particular, has become increasingly precarious as 2013 witnessed a marked increase in religiously motivated violence. This recent escalation in anti-minority attacks has been accompanied by growing religious intolerance and the ascension of radical Islamist groups, such as Jamaat-e-Islami (Jel), its student-wing Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS), and a relatively new group known as Hefazat-e-Islam. These groups are intent on carrying out a narrow sectarian agenda through violent means and have extensive connections to transnational terrorist groups operating in South Asia.¹

Throughout 2013, the right-wing opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and its Islamist allies, Jel and ICS, launched violent riots and carried out targeted attacks on Hindu homes, businesses, and temples following convictions of their leaders by the International Crimes Tribunals (ICT).² Similarly, towards the end of 2013, BNP and Jamaat mobilized thousands of supporters in coordinated protests against the current Awami League (AL) government and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's refusal to resign and transfer power to a caretaker government.³ During the protests, BNP and Jamaat supporters set off dozens of bombs, removed tracks from major railways, attacked security personnel, and forcibly shut down businesses, disrupting life for ordinary Bangladeshis.⁴ The violence left at least 33 people dead and hundreds injured.⁵

Despite announcing it would boycott the elections, the BNP-Jamaat alliance continued its campaign of violence and attempted to interfere with the January 5th polls by intimidating voters and attacking polling stations.⁶ Hindus, in particular, were subjected to threats and attacks by mobs of BNP, Jel, and ICS members immediately prior to and subsequent to the elections, causing widespread fear and panic in the community.⁷ In the Upazilla (subdistrict or county) of Sathkira Sadar (a Jamaat stronghold), for example,

¹ Bertil Lintner, "Bangladesh Extremist Islamist Consolidation," South Asia Terrorism Portal, <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/publication/faultlines/volume14/Article1.htm>; Roy, Swadesh, "Broken Goddess and the War Crime Verdict of Bangladesh," Sri Lanka Guardian, (March 13, 2013), <http://www.srilankaguardian.org/2013/03/broken--goddess--and-war--crime--verdict--of.html>.

² "Bangladesh: Wave of Violent Attacks Against Hindu Minority," (March 6, 2013), Amnesty International <https://www.amnesty.org/en/for-media/press-releases/bangladesh-wave-violent-attacks-against-hindu-minority-2013-03-06>.

³ "Bangladesh Opposition Boycotts Elections," (December 2, 2013), Al Jazeera, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia/2013/12/bangladesh-opposition-boycott-elections-2013122900876856.html>.

⁴ "Bombs Detonated, Rail Lines Removed in Bangladesh Over Poll Date," Dawn (November 26, 2013), <http://www.dawn.com/news/1058699/bangladesh-opposition-blocks-roads-railways-in-vote-protest>.

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ "Polling Stations and Police Attacked as Bangladesh Votes," (January 5, 2014), NDTV, <http://www.ndtv.com/article/world/polling-stations-and-police-attacked-as-bangladesh-votes-467115>.

⁷ Allchin, Joseph, "The Hindus of Bangladesh Fear for their Future," (January 14, 2014), Time World, <http://world.time.com/2014/01/14/the-hindus-of-bangladesh-are-fearing-for-their-future/>

at least 20 Hindu families received anonymous letters threatening them to leave their homes.⁸ Minority groups assert that Islamists are targeting Hindus in an attempt to force them and other minorities to leave Bangladesh.⁹

Given current conditions, Bangladesh's future trajectory will not only have important implications for its own citizens, but will significantly impact stability in the sub-continent and affect U.S. strategic interests in the region. The following provides a short background on Bangladesh, a brief overview of the current crisis, and recommendations for U.S. policy makers.

II. History/Background

1971 War and the International Crimes Tribunals

- Bangladesh was created from the eastern wing of Pakistan in 1971 after a brutal conflict, where an estimated three million ethnic Bengalis (mainly Hindus) were killed, more than ten million displaced, and 200,000 women raped.¹⁰
- According to the then American Consul-General in Dhaka, Archer Blood, the Pakistani military was engaged in the "mass killing of unarmed civilians, the systematic elimination of the intelligentsia and the annihilation of the Hindu population."¹¹ A report by the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) confirmed that the Pakistani army and local paramilitary Islamist militias were responsible for acts of genocide under the Geneva Convention 1949 [1948].¹²
- In 2010, Bangladesh established the ICT to investigate war crimes committed during the 1971 war by members of the local Islamist militias that collaborated with the Pakistani army.
 - 10 individuals have thus far been convicted by the Tribunals for committing crimes against humanity, many of whom are members of Jel and the BNP.¹³
 - Senior Jel leader, Abdul Qader Molla, who was the first war criminal to be executed in late 2013, was convicted on charges of rape and the mass murder of 350 unarmed civilians.¹⁴
 - Convicted (in absentia) war criminal, Ashrafuzzaman Khan, is a U.S. citizen and currently resides in Queens, New York. Despite an arrest warrant following the war, Khan left

⁸ "Time Has Come' Threat to Sathkira Hindus," Dhaka Tribune, (January 28, 2014), <http://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/2014/jan/28/time-has-come-threat-sathkira-hindus>

⁹ "Islamists Target Hindu Minority in Bangladesh," (January 28, 2014), Worldcrunch, <http://www.worldcrunch.com/world-affairs/islamists-target-hindu-minority-in-bangladesh/bangladesh-pakistan-religion-muslims-hindus-minorities-awami-league-/c1s14830/#.Uuf33hDTnIV>

¹⁰ Bass, Gary Professor, *"The Blood Telegram: Nixon, Kissinger, and a Forgotten Genocide."*

¹¹ Rabindranath Trivedi. "The Legacy of the Plight of Hindus in Bangladesh," (July 24, 2007), The Asian Tribune, <http://www.asiantribune.com/index.php?q=node/6663>.

¹² Akram, Tanweer, "A Critical Evaluation of the International Commission of Jurists' Report on the Bangladesh Genocide," (April 14, 2007), Social Studies Research Network, http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=981254.

¹³ "Bangladesh Hangs 'Butcher of Mirpur' for 'War Crimes,'" (December 12, 2013), The Telegraph, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/bangladesh/10514784/Bangladesh-hangs-Butcher-of-Mirpur-for-war-crimes.html>.

¹⁴ "Bangladesh Executes Top Islamist Leader Abdul Qader Molla for War Crimes," (December 12, 2013), NDTV, <http://www.ndtv.com/article/world/bangladesh-executes-top-islamist-leader-abdul-quader-molla-for-war-crimes-458072>.

- Bangladesh and has refused to return to face trial for the murder of 18 civilians.¹⁵
- Another indicted war criminal and high-ranking JEF functionary, Mir Quasem Ali, hired the U.S. based lobbying firm, *Cassidy and Associates*, to lobby Congress and the Administration against the Tribunals. Ali reportedly paid Cassidy \$180,000, and his brother, Mir Masum Ali, who is a U.S. citizen, paid the firm \$140,000 in 2012 and \$210,000 in 2011.¹⁶
- Although the Tribunals contain due process flaws and are far from perfect, they are widely popular in Bangladesh and are viewed by many Bangladeshis as long overdue and necessary for the nation to heal. The Tribunals are seen as the only avenue of providing justice to the victims and holding the perpetrators accountable for committing war crimes, in the absence of a tribunal established by the international community.¹⁷

Growing Religious Intolerance in the Post-Independence Era

- The new state of Bangladesh emerged as a democracy with a secular Constitution and equal rights for all its citizens. Shortly after independence, however, Islam began to play a greater role in public life, and the Constitution was amended to elevate the status of Islam above other religions.¹⁸
- Religious minorities, including Hindus, Christians, Buddhists, and Ahmadiyya Muslims, were subsequently subjected to greater restrictions on their religious freedom, discriminatory property laws, and violence by both state and non-state actors. This resulted in a precipitous decline of the Hindu population from 14% in 1974 to approximately 9% today.¹⁹
- The process of Islamization and religious repression accelerated with the 2001 election of the BNP-Jamaat alliance. Following elections, the BNP coalition and its supporters unleashed a

¹⁵ "Bangladesh War Crimes Trial Proceeds Without ICNA Official." (July 24, 2013), Investigative Project on Terrorism, <http://www.investigativeproject.org/4098/bangladesh-war-crimes-trial-proceeds-without-icna>; "Bangladeshis in New York Demand his Deportation," (December 24, 2013), The Daily Star, <http://www.thedailystar.net/bangladeshis-in-new-york-demand-his-deportation-3738>; Bangladesh Convicts UK Muslim Leader, US Citizen of War Crimes," (November 3, 2013), The Times of India, http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2013-11-03/south-asia/43628267_1_the-international-crimes-tribunal-war-crimes-death-penalty;

¹⁶ Lobbying Spending, Open Secrets, <http://www.opensecrets.org/lobby/clientsum.php?id=F9808&year=2012>; Pecquet, Julian, "Bangladesh Probes U.S. Lobby Firm's Work on Behalf of Alleged War Criminal," (August, 27, 2012), The Hill, <http://thehill.com/blogs/global-affairs/human-rights/245789-bangladesh-probes-us-lobby-firms-work-on-behalf-of-alleged-war-criminal>.

¹⁷ Ramachandran, Sudha, "Flawed Justice in Bangladesh," (October 31, 2013), The Diplomat, <http://thediplomat.com/2013/10/flawed-justice-in-bangladesh/2/>; Dhume, Sadanand, "Bangladesh on the Brink," (May 9, 2013), The Wall Street Journal, <http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB100014241278873237446045784725232260433>.

¹⁸ Bangladesh Parliament Votes to make Islam State Religion," (June 8, 1988), The New York Times,

¹⁸ <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=940DE5D71530F93BA35755C0A96E94826>; Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, CommonLII, <http://www.commonlii.org/bd/legis/const/2004/part1.html#1>.

¹⁹ "Bangladesh: Discrimination and Displacement of Religious Minorities," (August 8, 2003), Refugees International, <http://www.refugeesinternational.org/content/article/detail/891/>; "Bangladesh: Minorities Increasingly at Risk of Displacement," (March 28, 2006), Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, <http://www.internal-displacement.org/>; Saleem Samad, an Ashoka Fellow (USA), is a journalist, press watchdog, and correspondent of Paris-based Reporters Sans Frontières (RSF), Paris, Special Correspondent of Bangladesh Observer and Daily Times (Lahore); S.K. Datta, "The Recent Plight of Minorities in Bangladesh: A Post-election Perspective," Paper presented by the former Director, Central Bureau of Investigation, India at an international seminar organized by the Centre for Research in Indo-Bangladesh Relations; "Bangladesh: International Religious Freedom Report 2007," Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, Department of State, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2007/90226.htm>.

campaign of terror targeting the Hindu community that lasted more than 150 days, resulting in more than 10,000 cases of human rights abuses and approximately 500,000 refugees.²⁰

According to Refugees International, "Scores of Hindu women and girls were raped. In some cases, they were gang raped in front of their male relatives..."²¹

- Since 2001, Bangladesh has witnessed an explosion of madrasas (Islamic seminaries), estimated at more than 64,000, teaching the same fundamentalist version of Islam, that inspired the Taliban, with the intention of undermining "Bangladesh's culture of religious tolerance."²²

Radical Islamist Groups

- Jel and ICS have a long history of radicalism and violence against minorities and secular Bangladeshis and strive to create a Taliban style regime in Bangladesh. Jel is the most powerful Islamist group in the country and has been the ideological center and recruiting base for several terrorist groups, including Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (HuJI), a State Department designated Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO),²³ and Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB).²⁴
- Jel and ICS also enjoy extensive links with the wider Islamist militant network in South Asia and reportedly receive funding and support from Pakistan's ISI spy agency and from Saudi Arabia.²⁵
- A special court recently found Jel Chief Motiur Rehman Nizami (and several other members of the Jamaat-BNP ruled government from 2001 - 2006) guilty of importing 10 truck loads of arms, ammunitions, and explosives (4,930 sophisticated firearms, 840 rocket launchers, 300 rockets, 27,020 grenades, 2000 grenade launching tubes, 6,392 magazines and 11.41 million rounds of bullets) to supply to terrorist groups operating in India in 2004.²⁶
- Jel and ICS members and supporters have been implicated in several of the recent incidents of violence against minorities and for planting bombs during protests and opposition strikes.²⁷
- In August 2013, a High Court imposed a partial ban on Jel (upon the petition of a Sufi Muslim group) declaring that the Islamist party's charter violated the constitution. The ruling, however, only prohibits Jel from participating in national elections, and has failed to limit its other

²⁰ Nazrul Islam, "10,000 incidents of minority repression in Bangladesh since 2001," (October 12, 2005), NewKerala.com, <http://www.newkerala.com/newsdaily.php?action=fullnews&id=34363>; "Over 10,000 Communal Tortures in Govt's 4yr," (October 11, 2007), The Daily Star, <http://www.thedailystar.net/2005/10/11/d51011011310.htm>

²¹ "Bangladesh: Discrimination and Displacement of Religious Minorities," (August 8, 2003), Refugees International, <http://www.refugeesinternational.org/content/article/detail/891/>.

²² Tannock, C., "Bangladesh's drift into chaos," (July 21, 2005), Daily Times, http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=story_21--7--2005_pg3_5.

²³ "Foreign Terrorist Organizations," (September 28, 2012), U.S. Department of State, <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/other/des/123085.htm>.

²⁴ Terrorist and Extremist Groups – Bangladesh, South Asia Terrorism Portal, <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/bangladesh/terroristoutfits/index.html>.

²⁵ Bertil Lintner, "Bangladesh Extremist Islamist Consolidation," South Asia Terrorism Portal, <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/publication/faultlines/volume14/Article1.htm>; Ahmed Rajib Haider - Committee to Protect Journalists, (February 15, 2013), <http://www.cpj.org/killed/2013/ahmed-rajib-haider-1.php>; Roy, Swadesh, "Broken Goddess and the War Crime Verdict of Bangladesh," Sri Lanka Guardian, (March 13, 2013), <http://www.srilankaguardian.org/2013/03/broken--goddess--and-war--crime--of.html>.

²⁶ South Asia Analysis Group, "Bangladesh Court Establishes BNP-Jamaat Fountainhead of Terrorism -- Analysis," Eurasia Review (February 3, 2014), <http://www.eurasiareview.com/03022014-bangladesh-court-establishes-bnp-jamaat-fountainhead-terrorism-analysis/>

²⁷ Bangladesh Terrorist Outfits: Islami Chhatra Shibir, SATP, <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/bangladesh/terroristoutfits/ics.htm>.

activities.²⁸

- Beyond Jel, Hefazat-e-Islam attained national prominence in 2013 after publicly calling for the execution of “atheist bloggers.” Hefazat has a support base of millions and has control over the majority of the country’s madrasas. It has aggressively demanded the imposition of a 13-point Islamist agenda, including anti-blasphemy laws, the segregation of men and women in public, and the creation of a special place for Islam in the Constitution.²⁹

III. Escalating Anti-Minority Violence

Election Related Violence

- As noted above, members of the Hindu minority were subjected to widespread attacks and threats by heavily armed mobs of BNP, Jel, and ICS members in both pre and post-election violence.
- According to the Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council, 495 Hindu homes were damaged, 585 shops were attacked or looted, and 169 temples were vandalised since November 2013.³⁰ Reports further indicate that Hindu women were allegedly gang-raped as retaliation for their family members voting in Hazrail village in Jessore district.³¹
- The election violence affected close to 2,500 Hindu families and took place primarily in Jessore, Dinajpur and Satkhira districts.³² Attacks on Hindus were also reported in several other areas, such as Thakurgaon, Rangpur, Bogra, Lalmonirhat, Gaibandha, Rajshahi and Chittagong.³³
- Human rights activists investigating the election violence were also harassed and physically assaulted by police in Dinajpur and Thakurgaon, according to information received from

²⁸ “Bangladesh HC Cancels Registration of Right-Wing Party Jamaat-e-Islami,” Times of India (August 1, 2013), http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2013-08-01/south-asia/40960522_1_bangladesh-hc-jamaat-e-islami-1971-liberation-war; “Bangladesh Court Declares Jamaat-e-Islami Illegal,” The Express Tribune with the International New York Times (August 1, 2013), <http://tribune.com.pk/story/585048/bangladesh-court-declares-jamaat-e-islami-illegal/>.

²⁹ Bouissou, Julien, “Bangladesh’s Radical Muslims Uniting Behind Hefazat-e-Islam,” (July 30, 2013), The Guardian, (<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jul/30/bangladesh-hefazat-e-islam-shah-ahmad-shafi?INTCMP=SRCH>); “Bangladesh: Muslim Group Demands Execution of ‘Atheist’ Bloggers,” (April 7, 2013) IBN Live, <http://ibnlive.in.com/news/bangladesh-muslim-group-demands-execution-of-atheist-bloggers/383738-2.html>.

³⁰ “Bangladesh HC Asks Govt to give Adequate Protection to Hindus,” Zee News, (January 15, 2014), http://zeenews.india.com/news/south-asia/bangladesh-hc-asks-govt-to-give-adequate-protection-to-hindus_904339.html.

³¹ “Rishipara Victims Reel from Shock,” The Daily Star, (January 25, 2014), <http://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/rishipara-victims-reel-from-shock-8299>; Chatterjee, Garga, “Bengali Hindus in Muslim Majority Bangladesh,” The Hindu, (January 16, 2014), <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/bengali-hindus-in-muslimmajority-bangladesh/article5579528.ece>.

³² “Bangladesh HC Asks Govt to give Adequate Protection to Hindus,” Zee News, (January 15, 2014), http://zeenews.india.com/news/south-asia/bangladesh-hc-asks-govt-to-give-adequate-protection-to-hindus_904339.html; Chatterjee, Garga, “Bengali Hindus in Muslim Majority Bangladesh,” The Hindu, (January 16, 2014), <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/bengali-hindus-in-muslimmajority-bangladesh/article5579528.ece>

³³ Chatterjee, Garga, “Bengali Hindus in Muslim Majority Bangladesh,” The Hindu, (January 16, 2014), <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/bengali-hindus-in-muslimmajority-bangladesh/article5579528.ece>.

Bangladesh Minority Watch.³⁴

- The government failed to provide security to the Hindu community during the elections, eliciting an order from the High Court following the post-election attacks demanding that the government afford adequate protection to Hindus.³⁵ In some violence affected areas, Hindu families were offered financial assistance and members of the Border Guard Bangladesh began rebuilding homes and renovating temples.³⁶

Attacks on Minorities (2012-2013)

- While conditions for minorities generally improved when the Awami League (AL) first came to power, there has been an upsurge in violence in recent years and violent Islamist groups continue to operate with impunity.
- The recent uptick in violence against religious minorities and atheists in Bangladesh has been perpetrated primarily by members of the BNP, Jamaat, and ICS.³⁷ For instance, five ICS members murdered an atheist blogger for his allegedly blasphemous speech in early 2013.³⁸
- In October/November 2013, there were at least three major incidents of religiously motivated violence against the Hindu community in Lalmonirhat and Pabna. More than 65 homes, 18 Hindu-owned shops, and at least one temple were attacked, looted, or set on fire by armed BNP and Jamaat supporters.³⁹ The incident in Pabna took place after a Hindu boy was falsely accused of defaming the Prophet Mohammed on Facebook.⁴⁰
- At the beginning of 2013, following convictions by the ICT, Hindu villages were systematically attacked by rampaging mobs of Jamaat and BNP supporters, with more than 50 temples destroyed and approximately 1,500 homes vandalized or burned to the ground. Media accounts further indicated that religious extremists also targeted several Buddhist villages and temples.⁴¹
- Similarly, in 2012 there were several large-scale attacks on minorities, including attacks on Hindus, Buddhists, Christians, and Ahmadiyah Muslims.⁴² For instance, in one incident in

³⁴ Based on reports received from Advocate Rabindra Ghosh, BDMW and Observer for Global Human Rights Defence.

³⁵ "Bangladesh HC Asks Govt to give Adequate Protection to Hindus," Zee News, (January 15, 2014), http://zeenews.india.com/news/south-asia/bangladesh-hc-asks-govt-to-give-adequate-protection-to-hindus_904339.html.

³⁶ "Attackers of Hindus to be Punished," The Daily Star, (January 24, 2014), <http://www.thedailystar.net/attackers-of-hindus-to-be-punished-8223>; "PM Distributes Cheques Among Affected Hindus," Dhaka Tribune, (January 23, 2014), <http://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/2014/jan/23/pm-distributes-cheques-among-affected-hindus>; "No Mercy to Attackers of Hindus: PM," The Daily Star, (January 23, 2014), <http://www.thedailystar.net/no-mercy-to-attackers-of-hindus-pm-8133>.

³⁷ Khalid, Saif, "Bangladesh Minorities Bear Brunt of Violence," (March 20, 2013), Al Jazeera, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2013/03/201332472510585942.html>.

³⁸ Ahmed Rajib Haider - Committee to Protect Journalists, (February 15, 2013), <http://www.cpj.org/killed/2013/ahmed-rajib-haider-1.php>

³⁹ Roy, Dilip S., "Hindus Targeted, Only," (October 29, 2013), The Daily Star, <http://www.thedailystar.net/beta2/news/hindus-targeted-only/>; Roy, Dilip S., "Refusal Leads to Attack on Hindus," (November 5, 2013), The Daily Star, <http://www.thedailystar.net/beta2/news/refusal-leads-to-attack-on-hindus/>; Kabir, Ahmed Humayun, "Hindus Attacked in Pabna(November 3, 2013), The Daily Star, <http://www.thedailystar.net/beta2/news/hindus-attacked-in-pabna/>.

⁴⁰ Kabir, Ahmed Humayun, "Hindus Attacked in Pabna(November 3, 2013), The Daily Star, <http://www.thedailystar.net/beta2/news/hindus-attacked-in-pabna/>.

⁴¹ Ethirajan, Anbarasan, "Bangladeshi Minorities 'Terrorised' After Mob Violence," (March 8, 2012), BBC News, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-21712655>.

⁴² "HC Summons SP, OC Over Torching Temples in Ctg" February 26, 2012, New Age Bangladesh, http://newagebd.com/newspaper1/archive_details.php?date=2012--02--26&nid=51668; "800 Sued for Hathazari Incidents," The

September, 22 Buddhist temples and two Hindu temples were attacked in southern Bangladesh by religious zealots after a picture of a burnt Koran was posted on the Facebook profile of a local Buddhist.⁴³

- Minority women have also been subjected to sexual violence, kidnappings, and forced conversions. For instance, on November 27, 2013, a 15 year-old Hindu girl was allegedly abducted and forcibly converted to Islam in Munshingonj district. The girl's relatives were allegedly threatened for filing a report, and the girl's whereabouts remain unknown.⁴⁴

IV. U.S. Foreign Policy Objectives in Bangladesh

- Bangladesh's internal security and stability are essential to U.S. strategic interests in South Asia. These objectives are undermined by repeated attacks on religious minorities, expanding religious intolerance, and growing destabilization caused by Islamist groups, including Jamaat, Shibir, and Hefazat, who are closely connected to pan-regional militant groups.
- Promoting religious freedom, minority rights, and secularism in Bangladesh is consistent with America's commitment to human rights and prevents the growth of Islamic extremism in the region.
- Although Bangladesh is an important trading partner and a recipient of considerable U.S. foreign assistance (\$199 million for fiscal year 2013), American economic interests cannot be achieved without ensuring that human rights, religious freedom, and secular institutions are safeguarded.

V. Policy Recommendations

- The U.S. State Department and other government agencies should work constructively with the current Government of Bangladesh to ensure that attacks on Hindus and their institutions cease, past victims of violence are fully rehabilitated, and those responsible for attacks on Hindus are brought to swift justice.
- The U.S. should strongly encourage the Government of Bangladesh to declare Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Chhatra Shibir illegal organizations, based on their long-standing involvement in violence against religious minorities, and impose complete bans on their activities.
- Under section 212(a)(2)(G) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, the U.S. should deny entry to any officials from Jamaat-e-Islami that have engaged in particularly severe violations of religious freedom as defined by section 3 of the International Religious Freedom Act.⁴⁵

New Nation, <http://thenewnationbd.com/newsdetails.aspx?newsid=30876>; Bangladesh Quarterly Report, January -- March 2012, Global Human Rights Defence, <http://www.ghrd.org/>; Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council (BHBCUC) February Email Newsletter; "Bangladesh

⁴²Report 2012," GHRD, http://ghrd.org/FilesPage/4158/bangladesh_report_2012.pdf; BDMW Email Report (August 13, 2012); "Bangladesh Report 2012," GHRD, http://ghrd.org/FilesPage/4158/bangladesh_report_2012.pdf.

⁴³ "Muslims Attack Buddhist, Hindu Temples," (September 30, 2012), UPI, http://www.upi.com/Top_News/World--News/2012/09/30/Muslims--attack--Buddhist--Hindu--temples/UPI--98301349010670/; Karmakar, Rahul, "24 Buddhist, Hindu Temples Burnt in Bangladesh: Rights Body," (October 1, 2012), Hindustan Times, <http://www.hindustantimes.com/India--news/Guwahati/24--Buddhist--Hindu--temples--burnt--in--Bangladesh--rights--body/Article1--938261.aspx>.

⁴⁴ Based on a joint fact-finding report by BDMW and Bangladesh Centre for Human Rights Development (received from BDMW advocate Rabindra Ghosh on December 7, 2013).

⁴⁵ Ineligibilities and Waivers: Laws, Bureau of Consular Affairs -- U.S. Department of State, <http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/english/general/ineligibilities.html>.

- Despite the absence of an extradition treaty, the U.S. should repatriate Ashrafuzzaman Khan to Bangladesh to face justice for war crimes committed during the 1971 War. Alternatively, the Justice Department Office of Special Investigations should investigate Khan to see if he falsified information pertaining to his activities during the War when he applied for U.S. residency and naturalization. Khan was a wanted criminal in Bangladesh following the War and fled the country.⁴⁶
- Despite its flaws, the United States should support the International Crimes Tribunal as a means of achieving justice for the victims of genocide and crimes against humanity. It should further uphold the process to ensure accountability for the perpetrators and send a message that war criminals cannot act with impunity.

⁴⁶ “Bangladesh War Crimes Trial Proceeds Without ICNA Official.” (July 24, 2013), Investigative Project on Terrorism, <http://www.investigativeproject.org/4098/bangladesh-war-crimes-trial-proceeds-without-icna>; “Bangladeshis in New York Demand his Deportation,” (December 24, 2013), The Daily Star, <http://www.thedailystar.net/bangladeshis-in-new-york-demand-his-deportation-3738>.