

Date: 29 October 2025

Press Release

International Virtual Conference on "Turning Point: Bangladesh after the July–August Uprising"

On 29 October 2025, Wednesday at 9:00 am (NY Time) a day-long International Virtual Conference on "Turning Point: Bangladesh after the July–August Uprising" was held, organized by the Global Centre for Democratic Governance (Canada) and the South Asia Democratic Forum (Belgium), with the collaboration of NEVER AGAIN Association, Poland; European Bangladesh Forum, UK; Rights & Risks Analysis Group, India; International Forum for Secular Bangladesh, Switzerland; 71@Heart, UK; Ekattorer Prohori, USA; Center for USA-Bangladesh relations, USA; Centre for Gender Justice and Women Empowerment, Switzerland.

The conference expressed deep concern about the grave human rights violations in Bangladesh over the past 15 months and drew the attention of both national and international stakeholders to this issue. At the same time, the participants reaffirmed their strong commitment to establishing democracy, good governance, and human rights in Bangladesh.

A Critical Analysis of the fact-finding report of the United Nations Human Rights Office on Human Rights Violations and Abuses related to the protests of July-August 2024 in Bangladesh. The speakers criticized the publication by OHCHR for failing to follow the UNO editorial policy. Moreover, the report suffers from methodological opacity, imbalance in context, insufficient rigorous analysis, and a lack of impartiality.

Based on the opinions of the conference speakers, the following declaration was made:

1. Restoration of Civil Rights and Judicial Independence

We call for the full restoration of civil, political, and religious rights and the protection of fundamental freedoms. The judiciary must be independent and free from political interference to ensure equal justice for all.

2. Accountability for Human Rights Violations

All reports of killings, detentions, torture, and violence against women, children, minorities, and political opponents must be investigated fairly and transparently. Every victim deserves justice.

3. Freedom of the Press and Protection of Journalists

We strongly condemn media censorship and attacks on journalists. We call for an immediate end to intimidation, imprisonment, and censorship, and demand full freedom of expression and protection for all journalists.

4. Combating Extremism and Safeguarding Regional Stability

Participants emphasize the need for united action against extremism, promoting inclusive governance, human rights, and regional cooperation to ensure lasting peace and stability in Bangladesh and the broader South Asian region.

5. Free, Fair, and Inclusive Elections

We emphasize the urgent need for an inclusive, free, fair, and transparent national election under a neutral and credible caretaker government, ensuring the participation of all political parties and restoring public confidence in democratic institutions.

The meaningful participation of all political parties and ensuring the democratic will of the people.

In the conference, Rev. Dr. Robert B. Lancia, Former Legislator, Rhode Island House of Representatives, USA; William Sloan, International Human Rights Lawyer & Constitutional Expert, Canada; Prof. Veena Sikri, Former High Commissioner of India to Bangladesh, India; Paulo Casaca, Founder and Executive Director, South Asia Democratic Forum, Belgium; Chris Blackburn, Communications Director, European Bangladesh Forum, UK; Charlotte Jacquemart, Senior Editor, Schweizer Radio und Fernsehen (SRF), Switzerland; Alan Rides, Director, West London Chamber of Commerce, UK; Suhas Chakma, Director, Rights & Risks Analysis Group, India; Natalia Sineaeva, Representative, NEVER AGAIN Association, Poland; Shun-ichi FUJIKI, Managing Director, International Career Support Association, Japan; Dr. Chongsi Ayeah Joseph, President/CEO, Centre for Human Rights and Peace Advocacy, Cameroon; Prof. Dr. Rafal Pankowski, Rotary Peace Fellow, Makerere University, Uganda; Pushpita Gupta, President, Secular Bangladesh Movement, UK; Dr. Nuran Nabi, Heroic Freedom Fighter & Ekushey Award-winning academician, USA; Prof. Engr. Dr. Md. Abdur Rashid, Massey University (Rtd.), New Zealand; Prof. Dr. Mohammad Shahidullah, University of Arizona, USA; Dr. S. M. Masum Billah, Human Rights Lawyer and Visiting Professor, University of Cote D'Azur, France; Dr. Md. Abu Naser, Chairman, Dept. of Communications, California State University, USA; Barrister Tapas Kanti Baul, International Human Rights Lawyer & defender, Germany; Rahman Khalilur Mamun, President, International Forum for Secular Bangladesh, Switzerland delivered speeches.

This conference was presided over by Prof. Dr Md Habibe Millat, President, Global Center for Democratic Governance, Canada.

As media partners, Global Bangla (UK), Bridge Bangla24 (UK), Narrativa360 (UK), nrbnews24 (UK), Alfa TV (Canada), Probash Darpan (UK), DristiKon71 (Canada), and Bangla News Network (USA) took on the responsibility.

Priyajit Debsankar (Geopolitical analyst & Author, UK), Eng Rana Hassan Mahmud (Political Analyst & Columnist, USA), and Debadyuti Dasgupta (War Historian & Author, India) acted as moderators, and Md. Golam Kibria, Executive Director, Global Center for Democratic Governance, Canada, gave a vote of thanks.

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