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Congress of the United States
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October 16, 2024

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street Northwest
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken,

I am writing to request a briefing on the deeply disturbing rise in harassment and violence against Hindus and other religious minorities in Bangladesh, particularly following the ousting of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and reports of vandalism, violence, and intimidation leading up to Bangladesh's largest Hindu festival of Durga Puja. This year's festival took place from October 9 and October 13, 2024, and there are reports of harassment and attacks on Hindus, who make up about 8 percent of the country's nearly 170 million people, leading up to and during the festival. I am deeply concerned about religious minorities' safety and security in the current political climate. Therefore, I respectfully request a briefing on efforts to protect minority groups, including Hindus, in Bangladesh.

I commend your September meeting with Bangladesh's interim government Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus, where you stressed the need to protect minority communities in Bangladesh. As you are aware, Bangladesh's Hindu community has historically faced challenges, but recent incidents following the ousting of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina have heightened concerns about their safety. The Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council recently reported over 2,000 incidents of communal violence targeting minorities, mostly Hindus, across the country from August 4 to August 20, 2024. This included nine deaths of people belonging to minority groups, rapes, and attacks on 69 places of worship, which were vandalized or set on fire.

Given the alarming rise in violence against religious minorities, I respectfully request a briefing by October 31, 2024 on the treatment of religious minorities in Bangladesh and the State Department's efforts to promote security and safety of religious minority in Bangladesh, including during the Durga Puja festival, in addition to an assessment of the efforts of Bangladesh's government to combat violence against religious minorities and prevent additional attacks.

I appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress