

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 20, 2024

H.E. Professor Muhammad Yunus
Chief Adviser of the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.
Office of the Honorable Chief Adviser
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Tejgaon, Dhaka.

Dear Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus,

We are writing to congratulate you on becoming the interim leader of Bangladesh during this historic time. In recent weeks, the people of Bangladesh have courageously demonstrated the transformative power of collective action to their own government and the global community. When citizens unite, their voices can compel even the most entrenched and authoritarian leaders to relinquish power.

But this historic moment did not come without costs. Rather than engage the legitimate grievances of the protestors, the Bangladesh security forces – including the Rapid Action Battalion – responded with brute force, killing hundreds of protestors, and arresting and injuring thousands more. We mourn the lives that were lost and urge your interim government to create a credible process to conduct an independent and impartial investigation into the security services' human rights violations. This will be vital both as a demonstration of your commitment to respecting the rights of the protestors and signal your interim government's intention to work in good faith to address their grievances.

This transition presents a historic opportunity to reform institutions in Bangladesh, to ensure that human rights, such as freedoms of expression and peaceful assembly, are protected; to allow for inclusive participation in government representative of the diversity of the country; to support civil society and independent media; and to hold individuals accountable for the violence committed against the citizens of Bangladesh. The people of Bangladesh deserve a government that honors their voices, safeguards their rights, and upholds their dignity.

While many celebrate this new chapter in Bangladesh, a concerning volume of those celebrations have turned violent, with documented reports of reprisals targeting police as well as minority Hindu communities and those perceived to be supporters of Sheikh Hasina's government. As a result, the country has witnessed gaps in law enforcement and lack of protections for those facing violent attacks, including members of the Hindu community and Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazaar. We urge you to take these threats and incidents of violence seriously, just as we applaud your recent promise to continue supporting the million-plus Rohingya people sheltered in

Bangladesh. It is only by ensuring that all communities residing in Bangladesh are protected under the law that Bangladesh can meet its promising future.

Now, more than ever, it is important for Bangladeshis to unify – by coming together and by rebuilding an inclusive government, that fully harnesses Bangladesh’s tremendous potential. In a world that has recently witnessed repeated assaults on democratic ideals, Bangladesh has a rare opportunity to respond by delivering on the ‘second liberation’ many protestors have called for through the formulation of a government that respects democratic values and institutions.

We stand ready to assist Bangladesh during this critical period to ensure a successful transition to a democracy truly representative of the will of the Bangladeshi people.

Sincerely,



Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



Chris S. Murphy
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator