

Rise of terrorism in the name of Islam: South Asian context & the need for Global Resistance

Focusing Bangladesh

A View point from religious minorities in Bangladesh

Presented by: Mihir Sarkar – Campaign for the Protection of Religious Minorities in Bangladesh (CPRMB)

Terrorism in the rise in Bangladesh

- All of us most likely agree that terrorism is rising in Bangladesh.
- Peace loving democratic secular minded people are asking the questions why?
- Also seeking the the answer how to face this terrorism to combat it.
- It is a very timely discussion. Thank you for organising the event and giving me the opportunity to talk.

Terrorism in the rise in Bangladesh

- Let us look at the very recent terrorist attacks in Bangladesh on secular minded people whom terrorist think are their enemies
- Attacks of terrorist
 - Asif Mohiuddin , 15 January 2013
 - Ahmed Rajb Haider, 15 February 2013
 - Sunyur Rahman, 7 March 2013
 - Shafiul Islam, 14 November 2014
 - Avijit Roy, 26 February 2014

Terrorism in the rise in Bangladesh

- Oyasiqur Rahaman, 30 March 2015
- Ananta Bijoy Das, 12 may 2015
- Niloy Neel, 7 Augst 2015
- Faisal Arefin Dipon, 31 October 2015
- Attack on Shia masque in Dhaka
- Kunio Hoshi, 3 October 2015
- Luke Sarker, 5 October 2015
- Cesare Tavella, 28 September 2015
- Moazzen Hussain, 26 November 2015

- Father Parolari, 17 November 2015
- Katanji Temple Attack, 6 December 2015
- ISKCON Temple Attack, 10 December 2015
- Rajshahi Ahmadiyaa Mosque Attack, 25 Dec 2015. Suicide boomer killed one.

History of terrorism in Bangladesh

- Those recent attacks are vicious and more brutal than ever before and almost unheard of in Bangladesh. Secular democratic minded people in Bangladesh are waking up to the reality that terrorism inflicted by certain section of Muslim community is upon them.
- They are feeling that they are not safe because the attacks by Islamic fanatics are no longer only targeted to venerable religious minorities.
- It is becoming a war in the name of Islam.

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History terrorism in Bangladesh

- Until start of the 2013 the attacks of terrorist were isolated and not systematic. From 2013 it is becoming systematic and following a certain pattern.
- The attacks are vicious and more brutal than ever before and almost unheard of in Bangladesh.
- Secular democratic minded people in Bangladesh are waking up to the reality that terrorism inflicted by certain section of Muslim community is upon them. It is becoming terrorism in the name of Islam in Bangladesh .

Destruction of Secularism in Bangladesh

- To understand the rise of terrorism in the name of Islam in Bangladesh we need to go back in history and need to look for the start of the religious base politics in Bangladesh.
- It was started in 1975 and it was started in the name of religion of Islam.
- It was the start of the destruction of the very core values on which Bangladesh was established. The seeds for the Islamic terrorism in Bangladesh were planted.

Destruction of Secularism in Bangladesh

- Now let us look at how the seeds planted in 1975 now became a big tree in 2015 and providing the fruits for foods and sheltering the terrorist in the name of Islam.
- 1972 – Bangladesh had the one of the best secular democratic constitution. Politics in the name of religion was banned.
- 1975 - Ziaur Rahman, an unelected military dictator abandoned secularism from the constitution of in the name the religion of Islam. Politics based on religion was licensed.
- 1988 - President Hussein Mohammed Ershad, another military dictator declared that Islam to be the State Religion of Bangladesh. It was done in the name of the religion of Islam. It is still there.

Rise of the communalism in Bangladesh

- Following those two big changes the communalism in Bangladesh was in the rise. It was not only tolerated but also actively promoted in Bangladesh.
- 1992 – First mass attacks on Hindus. More than 200 temples were destroyed. Hindus were attacked and many were raped and killed.
- 2001- “During the probe, we found a total of 355 politically motivated murders while 3,270 incidents of rape, arson, looting and other atrocities,” Judicial commission. BNP and Jamaat was involved.

Attacks on Minorities in Bangladesh

- 2013 – “Wave of violent attack against Hindu minority” – Amnesty International 7th March 2013.
- Survivors told Amnesty International that the attackers were taking part following the rallies organised by the opposition Islamist party Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) and its student group Chhatra Shibir.
- Four people were killed and 34 were injured. 300 Hindu temples and 1500 business and properties destroyed – BHBCUC
- 2014 - After the 5th January elections, it is widely reported that workers and supporters of the opposition parties began attacking the minority.
- “They raped, looted, vandalized and set the Hindu houses on fire in several districts across the country” – BBC
- It was condemned nationally and internationally

Perpetrator never get punished

- There has been no judicial trial for any of the atrocities mentioned since 1990 except the trial of Purnima Shil. It happened because of personal intervention of Mr Sharier Kabir.
- In 2014 the Government supported rehabilitation far better than before.
- Justice is promised but yet to be delivered.
- All those are done in the name of the religion of Islam.

Who is behind those attacks?

- All the major political parties are blaming each other.
- Majority media reports blaming BNP and Jamaat –they always denied it.
- “*** is the instigator, ***** is the butcher, & ** along with these traitors is the property grabber”.
- They are criminals and cowards.

13% in 1974

8% in 2011

Effect of those attacks

- Mass migration of Hindus.
- Political representation is far below the percentage of population. No more than 12 MPs with only one women out of 30.
- No top posts ever in Judiciary, Army, Air Force, Navy, Police and Boarder Security Force.
- Recruitment in Army, Air Force and Navy is almost nil apart from medical core.
- Hindus are second class citizen in Bangladesh.

Equality = Discrimination

- Land grabbing has been going on since 1947 and continuing ever since.
- The Enemy Property Act 1965.
- Latest case reporting in last week. AL supporter involved.
- Thousands of family affected and progress is poor to return the land to the rightful owners.

Effect of Violence and Discrimination

- Low moral.
- Becoming poorer and powerless without any political and economic backing.
- Migrating in an ever increasing number. Less than 8% now from 13% in 1974.
- Their numbers is predicted to be nil in 20 years according to Chairman Prof Mizanur Rahman of NHRC

What Liberty and Equality means to Hindus in democratic Bangladesh ?

- Constant attacks since 1991.
- Attacks has been intensified in 2013 and 2014.
- “The Bangladesh Government has failed completely to protect the Hindus” Chairman NHRC
- No Justice for them. No trial of communal violence.
- Land grabbing since 1947 and the latest case reported in the last week.
- No proper political representation.
- No top posts ever in Judiciary, Army, Air Force, Navy, Police and Boarder Security Force.
- Recruitment in Army, Air Force and Navy is almost nil apart from medical core.

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Action to Protect Minorities

- Restoration of 1972 constitution.
- Safety and security - Immediate protection of the religious minorities by law enforcement agencies.
- Judicial Enquiry – To identify the perpetrator and bring them to justice. If there is any political party behind it they are to be named.
- Speedy Trial – Justice delayed is justice denied. Perpetrators to be put on trial quickly to set example to deter and assure the minority people.
- Minority Protection Act – In line with British Race Relations Act 1968.
- Minority Commission – To monitor and evaluate all minority issues.
- Jobs in Army and Public Sectors – To be monitored by all the departments and periodic reports to be published.
- Resource allocation – All initiatives to be adequately funded.

The Rise of Islamic Fanaticism in democratic secular Bangladesh

- Bangladesh is a secular democracy. Recent survey shows that majority of the people would like it to remain so.
- But a tiny minority of Islamic fanatics are holding the country as hostage. Sadly, it has been not only tolerated but also encouraged.
- The democratic, secular and religious minorities are terrified with the prospect of rising Islamic fanaticism in Bangladesh.
- The Western countries must understand from the mistakes in Afghanistan and Pakistan
- Once those fanatics are in power terrorism will be exported.

Questions for the Government

What Government will be doing to combat the religious fanaticism.

- If they believe in true democratic secularism then why are they afraid of taking action to ban politics in the name of religion.
- What they will be doing to bring madrassa under the general education system?
- What they will be doing in future to promote and recruit religious minorities in judiciary, military, and civil services?

Questions for the opposition

With the rise of Islamic fundamentalism some religious minorities have same questions:

- Can Hindus rely more on BNP than AL to protect them in the future?
- What is their relationship with the parties that do not believe in democratic secularism? Like Jamaat and Hefazat.
- What they will be doing to bring madrassa under general education system to stop the breeding fanatic minds?
- Will they set up an independent judicial inquiry to investigate atrocities on minorities?

Conclusion – THANK YOU

- Thank you for your attention.
- I hope that I have been able to make you aware of the sufferings of the minorities in Bangladesh.
- I have explained how Islamic fanatic religious forces are inflicting enormous damage to the minorities, destroying the true fabric of secular democratic Bangladesh and what is to be done to protect them.
- Minorities need your help for their survival.