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# Recent Political Developments in Bangladesh: Background and Issues for Congress

June 5, 2026

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On February 12, 2025, Bangladesh, a Muslim-majority South Asian country of 176 million, held parliamentary elections and a concurrent referendum. Sixty-eight percent of voters endorsed the July National Charter, which proposed changes to “reconstruct the state on the foundation of democracy and human dignity.” At the same time, voters gave one of the country’s two historically dominant political parties, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), a parliamentary supermajority. The party’s leader, Tarique Rahman, was sworn in as Prime Minister on February 17. The elections follow a period of turbulence; in August 2024, student-led protests led to the ouster of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina of the Awami League (AL), seven months into her fourth consecutive term in office. After Hasina fled to India, an interim government headed by Muhammad Yunus, a Nobel Peace Prize-winning economist, assumed power and initiated a reform process. Although the interim government enjoyed general support, Yunus’s administration encountered ongoing challenges that the new government now faces, including crime, inflation, human rights concerns, and the rise of Islamist groups. Rahman has committed to bolstering democracy in Bangladesh, but some observers have questioned the extent to which his party may implement the July Charter. This report discusses recent political developments in Bangladesh, including the 2024 demonstrations that led to the collapse of Sheikh Hasina’s government, the interim government under Yunus, and ensuing parliamentary elections, as well as changes that have taken place in Bangladesh’s politics and foreign policy, economic challenges, and human rights concerns.

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## Overview

Bangladesh is a Muslim-majority South Asian country bordering India and Burma (Myanmar) on the Bay of Bengal (see **Figure 1**). The world's eighth-most-populous country, with approximately 176 million people, it has a land area about the size of Iowa. Since winning independence from Pakistan in 1971, Bangladesh has faced many challenges, including political violence, weak governance, corruption, poverty, demographic and environmental strains, and Islamist militancy. The United States and Bangladesh have partnered on various issues, including trade and security, and have worked together to promote shared interests in South Asia and the broader Indo-Pacific region. The United States is a major economic partner for Bangladesh, which historically has been among the largest recipients of U.S. foreign assistance in South Asia. This report discusses recent political developments in Bangladesh and their potential implications for U.S. interests in the country.

In August 2024, student-led protests in Bangladesh led to the ouster of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who had begun a fourth consecutive five-year term in office following January 2024 parliamentary elections, which were boycotted by major opposition parties and described by the U.S. Department of State as “not free or fair.”<sup>1</sup> An interim government headed by Muhammad Yunus, a Nobel Peace Prize-winning economist and recipient of the Congressional Gold Medal, assumed power in August 2024 and initiated a process of political reform. On February 12, 2026, Bangladesh held parliamentary elections and a concurrent referendum on a reform agenda outlined by the interim government in the July National Charter. A 68% majority of voters endorsed the Charter, which proposes constitutional and administrative changes intended to “reconstruct the state on the foundation of democracy and human dignity.”<sup>2</sup> At the same time, voters gave one of the country's two historically dominant political parties, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), a parliamentary supermajority. The party's leader, Tarique Rahman, was sworn in as prime minister on February 17. Rahman has committed to bolstering democracy in Bangladesh and implementing the July Charter. Nevertheless, some observers question the extent to which the BNP government will pursue reform.<sup>3</sup>

## Background

### Bangladesh Under Sheikh Hasina

For most of the period since independence, Bangladesh's politics has been dominated by two parties, the Awami League (AL) and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). When in opposition, both parties at times used demonstrations, labor strikes, and transport blockades, as well as the ballot box, to regain control of government. Both parties have been accused of repression and corruption when in power. According to Human Rights Watch, after returning to power in 2009, the AL “gradually consolidated power by silencing critics, harassing activists, and arbitrarily arresting, forcibly disappearing, and killing members of the opposition or civil society who spoke out against” the party's leader, former Prime Minister Hasina (in office 1996-2001 and

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of State, “Parliamentary Elections in Bangladesh,” January 8, 2024.

<sup>2</sup> National Consensus Commission, *July National Charter 2025*, October 17, 2025 (Unofficial Translation Commissioned by International IDEA), <https://constitutionnet.org/sites/default/files/2025-11/Bangladesh%20July%20National%20Charter%202025%20%28English%20translation%29.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Imran Siddiq, “A Mandate Deferred: The Ruling Party's Obstruction of Constitutional Reform in Bangladesh,” *ConstitutionNet*, April 15, 2026.

2009-2024).<sup>4</sup> Some critics argued that Bangladesh, officially a parliamentary democracy, was becoming—or had already become—a one-party regime with elements of both authoritarianism and democracy.<sup>5</sup>

**Figure 1. Map of Bangladesh**



**Source:** Map created by CRS using data from the Global Administrative Areas (GADM) database, U.S. Department of State, and ESRI.

In advance of the January 2024 parliamentary elections, some observers questioned whether the AL would allow the elections to proceed freely and fairly.<sup>6</sup> In its 2023 *Country Report on Human Rights Practices*, the State Department noted that the government of Bangladesh “mobilized law enforcement resources to level civil and criminal charges against opposition party leaders and activists” and “interfered with the right of opposition parties to organize public functions and restricted broadcasting of opposition political events,” and that “AL-affiliated organizations, particularly its student wing, the Bangladesh Chhatra League, carried out violence and intimidation around the country with impunity against nonpartisan individuals as well as opposition groups and others deemed critical of the government.”<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Human Rights Watch, “After the Monsoon Revolution,” January 27, 2025.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, Ali Riaz and Saimun Parvez, “Anatomy of a Rigged Election in a Hybrid Regime: The Lessons from Bangladesh,” *Democratization* vol. 20, no. 4 (2021).

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, Human Rights Watch, “Bangladesh: Violent Autocratic Crackdown Ahead of Elections,” November 26, 2023.

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*, 2023.

The months leading up to the elections saw violent protests and the arrests of thousands of opposition party members; some outside observers criticized the government crackdown on the BNP and other opposition forces.<sup>8</sup> Major opposition parties boycotted the vote, yielding a commanding majority for the AL and a fourth consecutive term for Hasina—the AL secured 223 of 300 parliamentary seats; a further 62 seats went to independent candidates, many of whom were aligned with the AL, and 11 went to the Jatiya Party, an AL ally. The U.S. Department of State concluded that the elections “were not free and fair” and expressed concern about reported irregularities and the arrests of thousands of political opposition members but noted that “the United States remains committed to partnering with Bangladesh to advance our shared vision for a free and open Indo-Pacific, to supporting human rights and civil society in Bangladesh, and to deepening our people-to-people and economic ties.”<sup>9</sup> One commentator described the electoral results as a “pyrrhic victory” for the AL; others posited that the conduct and outcome of the elections raised concerns for governance and political stability in Bangladesh.<sup>10</sup> While Hasina oversaw rapid economic development in Bangladesh, some analysts argued that corruption concerns and mounting economic pressures in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia’s 2022 invasion of Ukraine could fuel discontent with the AL government and bring the risk of further political violence.<sup>11</sup> Following the elections, 12 U.S. Senators sent a letter to Hasina urging her to end “the pattern of abusing laws and the justice system to target critics of the government,” including Muhammad Yunus, who was convicted of violating labor laws in a January 2024 court ruling that the Senators and some international organizations characterized as politically motivated.<sup>12</sup>

## U.S. Policy Responses

During Hasina’s tenure, the United States imposed human rights- and democracy-related sanctions on a Bangladeshi law enforcement entity and multiple Bangladeshi individuals. In December 2021, the U.S. Department of the Treasury sanctioned Bangladesh’s Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), a paramilitary formation implicated in hundreds of disappearances and extrajudicial killings, and six current and former RAB officials for engaging in serious human rights abuses.<sup>13</sup> The State Department concurrently designated for visa restrictions two former RAB officials for their involvement in a gross violation of human rights.<sup>14</sup> In May 2023, the State Department announced a new visa policy allowing the United States to restrict visa issuance for any Bangladeshi nationals it found to be undermining Bangladesh’s democratic election process.<sup>15</sup> The Department denoted actions that undermined Bangladesh’s democratic election process, including vote rigging, voter intimidation, the use of violence to prevent people from

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<sup>8</sup> Human Rights Watch, “Bangladesh: Violent Autocratic Crackdown Ahead of Elections.”

<sup>9</sup> U.S. Department of State, “Parliamentary Elections in Bangladesh,” January 8, 2024.

<sup>10</sup> Donald Camp, “Bangladesh’s 2024 National Elections: A Pyrrhic Victory,” Center for Strategic and International Studies, January 5, 2024; Ramisa Rob, “A Setback for US-Bangladesh Relations,” *The Daily Star*, January 16, 2024.

<sup>11</sup> International Crisis Group, *Beyond the Election: Overcoming Bangladesh’s Political Deadlock*, January 4, 2024.

<sup>12</sup> See the January 22, 2024, letter at [https://www.durbin.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/senate\\_letter\\_to\\_pm\\_hasina\\_re\\_profyunus.pdf](https://www.durbin.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/senate_letter_to_pm_hasina_re_profyunus.pdf).

<sup>13</sup> U.S. Department of the Treasury, “Treasury Sanctions Perpetrators of Serious Human Rights Abuse on International Human Rights Day,” December 10, 2021.

<sup>14</sup> U.S. Department of State, “The United States Promotes Accountability for Human Rights Violations and Abuses,” December 10, 2021.

<sup>15</sup> U.S. Department of State, “Announcement of Visa Policy to Promote Democratic Elections in Bangladesh,” May 24, 2023.

exercising their right to free association and assembly, and attempts to prevent political actors (such as parties and voters) from speaking freely about their views.<sup>16</sup>

In September 2023, the State Department announced that it was “taking steps to impose visa restrictions on Bangladeshi individuals responsible for, or complicit in, undermining the democratic election process in Bangladesh.”<sup>17</sup> The announcement stated that those targeted included “members of law enforcement, the ruling party, and the political opposition,” but it did not say how many individuals were subject to the restriction. Some Members of Congress expressed concern about the deterioration of human rights in Bangladesh in advance of the January 2024 elections.<sup>18</sup> In May 2024, the State Department announced visa restrictions against the former Chief of the Bangladesh Army Staff for “significant corruption.”<sup>19</sup>

## 2024 Protests

In July 2024, Bangladesh descended into widespread unrest that was fueled at least in part by the Hasina government’s violent response to student demonstrations and the Prime Minister’s harsh anti-protest rhetoric.<sup>20</sup> A previous quota system that reserved 56% of government positions for members of specific groups (including 30% for descendants of those who fought in Bangladesh’s 1971 war of independence against Pakistan) fueled resentment among Bangladesh’s large youth population, among whom unemployment exceeded 9% in 2024.<sup>21</sup> Hasina had abolished the quota system in 2018 in response to student mobilization, but the country’s supreme court reinstated the 30% quota in June 2024.<sup>22</sup> This move sparked student protests that were compounded by a faculty strike over pension reform.<sup>23</sup>

After Hasina made remarks interpreted by some as characterizing student protestors as *razakars*—a term used to denote those who supported Pakistan during Bangladesh’s 1971 war of independence—government security forces and the Bangladesh Chhatra League violently attacked demonstrators, spurring further protests.<sup>24</sup> A February 2025 United Nations (UN) report concluded that Bangladeshi authorities “systematically engaged in serious human rights violations, including hundreds of extrajudicial killings, other use of force violations involving serious injuries to thousands of protesters, extensive arbitrary arrest and detention, and torture and

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<sup>16</sup> U.S. Department of State, “Taking Steps to Impose Visa Restrictions on Individuals Involved in Undermining the Democratic Election Process in Bangladesh,” September 22, 2023.

<sup>17</sup> U.S. Department of State, “Taking Steps to Impose Visa Restrictions on Individuals Involved in Undermining the Democratic Election Process in Bangladesh.”

<sup>18</sup> See, for example, Representative Bill Keating’s June 13, 2023, statement, available at <https://x.com/usrepkeating/status/1668669402038906893?s=46>; and Representative Bob Good, “Rep. Good Joins Call for End to Human Rights Abuse in Bangladesh,” June 2, 2023, <https://good.house.gov/media/press-releases/rep-good-joins-call-end-human-rights-abuse-bangladesh>.

<sup>19</sup> U.S. Department of State, “Designation of Former Bangladeshi Official for Significant Corruption,” May 20, 2024.

<sup>20</sup> Alia Chughtai and Marium Ali, “How Bangladesh’s ‘Gen Z’ Protests Brought Down PM Sheikh Hasina,” *Al Jazeera*, August 7, 2024; Pierre Prakash, “Bangladesh on Edge After Crushing Quota Protests,” International Crisis Group, July 25, 2024.

<sup>21</sup> Naznin Tithi, “An Unrealistic Quota System,” *The Daily Star*, March 5, 2018; Federal Reserve Economic Data, Youth Unemployment Rate for Bangladesh, <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/SLUEM1524ZSBGD>.

<sup>22</sup> “Cancellation of 30pc Quota for Freedom Fighters’ Children in Civil Service Illegal: HC,” *The Daily Star*, June 5, 2024.

<sup>23</sup> Mahiya Tabassum, “The Protttoy Pension Scheme Will Exacerbate Brain Drain,” *The Daily Star*, July 7, 2024.

<sup>24</sup> Chughtai and Ali, “How Bangladesh’s ‘Gen Z’ Protests Brought Down PM Sheikh Hasina,” *Al Jazeera*; Abid Hussain, “Who Were the Razakars and Why Are They Central to Bangladesh Protests?” *Al Jazeera*, July 22, 2024; Kamal Ahmed, “As Bangladesh Boils Over, Sheikh Hasina’s Peril Is of Her Own Making,” *Himal*, July 21, 2024.

other forms of ill-treatment” during the protests, and placed the death toll at up to 1,400.<sup>25</sup> On August 5, 2024, after the army refused to enforce a nation-wide curfew declared by civilian authorities, Hasina fled Bangladesh for India, a friendly neighbor that had supported her government.<sup>26</sup> President Mohammed Shahabuddin, whose indirectly elected position is largely ceremonial, dissolved Bangladesh’s parliament on August 6. The student movement proposed longtime Hasina critic Muhammad Yunus, then 84, as the country’s interim leader, and he was sworn in as Chief Advisor (a position functionally equivalent to interim prime minister) on August 8.<sup>27</sup>

## Interim Government

As Chief Advisor, Yunus oversaw an advisory council (functionally equivalent to a cabinet) that included two student protest leaders as well as academics, lawyers, and former government officials.<sup>28</sup> Some scholars raised questions about the constitutionality of the interim government, although the Appellate Division of Bangladesh’s Supreme Court ruled that an interim government could be formed in the absence of parliament.<sup>29</sup> Yunus promised to pursue accountability for the perpetrators of anti-protestor violence and to implement economic and governance reforms before new elections were held, while the BNP and other political parties urged speedy elections. Some analysts questioned whether the interim government had the authority to implement major policy decisions and whether it would be able to maintain legitimacy.<sup>30</sup> Polling conducted by the International Republican Institute (IRI) in September and October 2025 showed high levels of support for Yunus and the interim government.<sup>31</sup>

## Reform Program

As Chief Advisor, Yunus maintained that fundamental political and governance reforms were necessary before free and fair elections could be held. Although the interim government received support from across the political spectrum, analysts noted tensions between political parties over the extent and implementation of proposed reforms.<sup>32</sup> In September 2024, Yunus announced the formation of six reform commissions tasked with proposing changes to the judiciary, the electoral system, state administration, the police, countercorruption efforts, and the constitution. In February 2025, the interim government announced the formation of a National Consensus Commission (NCC), chaired by Yunus and consisting of representatives of the six reform commissions. That same month, some student protest leaders announced the creation of a new

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<sup>25</sup> Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), *Fact-Finding Report: Human Rights Violations and Abuses Related to the Protests of July and August 2024 in Bangladesh*, February 12, 2025.

<sup>26</sup> “Exclusive—Bangladesh Army Refused to Suppress Protest, Sealing Hasina’s Fate,” Reuters, August 7, 2024.

<sup>27</sup> Faisal Mahmud, “Will Yunus-Led Interim Government Bring Bangladesh Out of Its ‘Dark Era’?” *Al Jazeera*, August 9, 2024.

<sup>28</sup> Mahmud, “Will Yunus-Led Interim Government Bring Bangladesh Out of Its ‘Dark Era’?” *Al Jazeera*.

<sup>29</sup> Tariq Ahmad, “Interim Government and the Constitution of Bangladesh,” Library of Congress, August 29, 2024, <https://blogs.loc.gov/law/2024/08/interim-government-and-the-constitution-of-bangladesh/>.

<sup>30</sup> Shafi Md Mostofa, “Can the Interim Government Ensure Justice and Bring Radical Changes in Bangladesh?” *The Diplomat*, October 15, 2024; Sanjay Pulipaka and Mohit Musaddi, “Is Bangladesh’s Interim Government State Building by Stealth?” *The Diplomat*, October 14, 2024.

<sup>31</sup> IRI, “National Survey of Bangladesh, September–October 2025,” <https://www.iri.org/resources/national-survey-of-bangladesh-september-october-2025/>.

<sup>32</sup> Saqlain Rizve, “One Year After Sheikh Hasina’s Fall: How Is Bangladesh Holding Up?” *The Diplomat*, August 5, 2025.

party, the National Citizen Party (NCP), with the stated aim of creating a new political system and a new, more democratic constitution.<sup>33</sup>

The NCC consolidated proposed reforms into the July Charter, which laid out a plan for “comprehensive reforms of Bangladesh’s overall state structure including the Constitution, electoral system, judicial system, public administration, policing system, and anti-corruption mechanisms.”<sup>34</sup> Of the Charter’s 84 reform proposals, 47 would require constitutional amendments.<sup>35</sup> The Charter was signed in October 2025 by the NCC and representatives of 24 political parties, although the process was contentious and the BNP and other parties raised objections to some of the Charter’s provisions.<sup>36</sup>

## Domestic Security and Rule of Law

The Yunus administration faced a range of challenges, including increased crime, a sluggish economy, human rights violations, and increased activities by Islamist groups.<sup>37</sup> The interim government also faced reported online disinformation efforts by the AL and Indian media.<sup>38</sup> While Yunus pledged to uphold human rights and democratic values, some analysts raised concerns about rule of law and transparency under the interim government. In July 2025, Human Rights Watch assessed that “some of the fear and repression that marked Sheikh Hasina’s Awami League Party’s 15-year rule, and abuses such as widespread enforced disappearances, appear to have ended,” but noted that “the interim government has used arbitrary detention to target perceived political opponents and has yet to deliver systemic reforms to protect human rights.”<sup>39</sup> Lower-level unrest has persisted since Hasina’s ouster, with sporadic protests and instances of mob violence.

In May 2025, the interim government suspended all political activity by the AL, citing national security.<sup>40</sup> Some Members of Congress urged Yunus to revisit this decision in the interest of holding free and fair elections.<sup>41</sup> (Bangladesh’s new parliament institutionalized restrictions on the AL in April 2026. See “Outlook” below.) In July 2025, a special tribunal indicted Hasina in absentia on charges of crimes against humanity in connection with the extrajudicial killings of protesters, and she was sentenced to death in November 2025.<sup>42</sup> Bangladesh has formally requested that India extradite Hasina (see “Relations with India” below). Some international

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<sup>33</sup> Shamim Chowdhury, “As Bangladesh Gears up for Election, a New Political Player Emerges,” NPR, March 27, 2025; Saqlain Rizve, “Nahid Islam on Bangladesh’s New Youth-Led Political Party,” *The Diplomat*, March 17, 2025; “Bangladeshi Students Who Led Uprising That Ousted Ex-Premier Sheikh Hasina Form New Political Party,” Associated Press (AP), February 28, 2025.

<sup>34</sup> *July National Charter 2025*, p. 54.

<sup>35</sup> *July National Charter 2025*, pp. 6-52.

<sup>36</sup> Sangita F Gazi and Arafat Hosen Khan, “Why Bangladesh’s Referendum Is a Gamble,” *The Diplomat*, February 9, 2026.

<sup>37</sup> Rizve, “One Year After Sheikh Hasina’s Fall: How Is Bangladesh Holding Up?” *The Diplomat*.

<sup>38</sup> Rushad Faridi, “Indian Media’s Misinformation Campaign on Bangladesh,” *The Diplomat*, December 5, 2024; Shahadar Shadhin, “Rumor Night: The Yunus Government’s Struggle with Disinformation in Post-Revolution Bangladesh,” *The Diplomat*, December 6, 2024.

<sup>39</sup> Human Rights Watch, “Bangladesh: Year Since Hasina Fled, Rights Challenges Abound,” July 30, 2025.

<sup>40</sup> Arafatul Islam, “Bangladesh: What Does the Ban of Sheikh Hasina’s Party Mean?” *Deutsche Welle*, May 12, 2025; Saif Hasnat, “Bangladesh Bans the Political Party of Its Ousted Former Ruler,” *New York Times*, May 11, 2025.

<sup>41</sup> House Foreign Affairs Committee, “Meeks, Huizenga, Kamlager-Dove Lead Letter to Bangladeshi Interim Government on the Importance of Inclusive, Free and Fair Elections,” December 23, 2025.

<sup>42</sup> Julhas Alam, “Bangladesh Tribunal Indicts Ousted Prime Minister Hasina Over Deaths of Protesters,” AP, July 10, 2025.

organizations have raised concerns about cases brought against individuals connected to the AL on charges such as murder or attempted murder during the 2024 protests as arbitrary and politically motivated.<sup>43</sup> Individuals with connections to the AL have faced harassment and violence. While the interim government condemned such acts, some observers assessed that the Yunus administration was “unable to fully control political retribution.”<sup>44</sup>

Instances of violence targeting minorities in Bangladesh have drawn international attention and condemnation. According to Freedom House, “indigenous people in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), religious and linguistic minorities, and other ethnic groups remain subject to physical attacks, property destruction, land grabs by Bengali settlers, occasional abuses by security forces, and social discrimination.”<sup>45</sup> Bangladesh’s Hindu minority, which comprises about 8% of the population, has faced continued violence since Hasina’s ouster.<sup>46</sup> In December 2025, a Hindu garment worker was accused of blasphemy and lynched by a mob.<sup>47</sup> A statement from the interim government condemned the killing, saying “there is no space for such violence in new Bangladesh,” and urged “all citizens of Bangladesh to resist all forms of mob violence committed by a few fringe elements.”<sup>48</sup>

In August 2024, the interim government lifted a ban imposed by Hasina on the Islamist party Jamaat-e-Islami (JI). Some experts have noted a shift away from secularism in Bangladeshi politics, and some have voiced concerns about the rise of Islamist groups in the country.<sup>49</sup> Extremist groups including the U.S.-designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations al-Qaida in the Indian Subcontinent and Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan are reportedly recruiting in Bangladesh.<sup>50</sup> According to the International Crisis Group, “weak law enforcement and the political tumult during [the interim government’s tenure] created an environment conducive to extremist mobilization.”<sup>51</sup> Bangladeshi media have reported increased violence against women and harassment of women in public spaces, a development some activists connect to the resurgence of conservative Muslim groups and political parties.<sup>52</sup> One women’s rights advocate criticized the interim government as “normaliz[ing] this violence through its silence.”<sup>53</sup> In the lead up to the February 2025 elections, the NCP announced that it would enter into an electoral alliance with JI,

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<sup>43</sup> Human Rights Watch, “Bangladesh: Year Since Hasina Fled, Rights Challenges Abound”; Freedom House, *Freedom In The World 2025: Bangladesh*, <https://freedomhouse.org/country/bangladesh/freedom-world/2025>.

<sup>44</sup> Freedom House, *Freedom In The World 2025: Bangladesh*.

<sup>45</sup> Freedom House, *Freedom In The World 2025: Bangladesh*.

<sup>46</sup> Julhas Alam, Al Emrun Garjon, and Sheikh Saaliq, “Bangladesh’s Hindu Minority in Fear as Attacks Rise and a National Election Nears,” AP, February 4, 2026.

<sup>47</sup> Saif Hasnat and Mujib Mashal, “Lynching of a Hindu in Bangladesh Fans Fears of Rising Intolerance,” *New York Times*, December 22, 2025; Soutik Biswas, “‘Dragged Out and Set on Fire’—The Bangladesh Mob Killing that Shocked the World,” *BBC*, February 15, 2026.

<sup>48</sup> Chief Advisor of the Government of Bangladesh, <https://x.com/ChiefAdvisorGoB/status/2001955874567581756?s=20>.

<sup>49</sup> Shafi Md Mostofa, “The Fall of Secular Bengali Nationalism,” *The Diplomat*, October 23, 2024; Iftekharul Bashar, “Bangladesh’s Evolving Security Crisis: The Rise of Religious Extremism Amid Political Transition,” *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses*, vol. 17, no. 4 (June 2025), pp. 23-28.

<sup>50</sup> Shafi Md Mostofa, “Terror Alert in Bangladesh: Between Denial and Reality,” *The Diplomat*, May 6, 2026; Bashar, “Bangladesh’s Evolving Security Crisis,” pp. 23-28.

<sup>51</sup> International Crisis Group, *Bangladesh’s New Government Gets Down to Business*, April 23, 2026.

<sup>52</sup> Nilima Jahan, “Harassment of Women in Public Spaces on Rise,” *The Daily Star*, October 8, 2024; “Violence Against Women in First Half of 2025 Shows Sharp Increase Over Previous 2 Years,” *The Business Standard*, July 17, 2025.

<sup>53</sup> Abhimanyu Bandyopadhyay, “Silenced, Transferred, Threatened: Nadira Yeasmin on Facing Threats amid Bangladesh’s Growing Extremism,” *Global Voices*, July 2, 2025.

spurring objections from within the NCP and prompting one woman in NCP's senior leadership to leave the party.<sup>54</sup>

Bangladesh faced ongoing political violence during the interim government's tenure. In December 2025, Sharif Osman Hadi, a leader of the 2024 student protests, was fatally shot in Dhaka by two assailants on a motorcycle. He had intended to run for parliament in the February 2026 elections and was a vocal critic of India's influence in Bangladesh. News of Hadi's death sparked violent protests throughout Bangladesh. In Dhaka, protestors set fire to the offices of major news outlets, reportedly chanting anti-India slogans, and attacked a prominent Bengali cultural institution.<sup>55</sup> Some commentators criticized the interim government as failing to act to contain mob violence.<sup>56</sup>

## February 2026 Parliamentary Elections

Bangladesh held parliamentary elections on February 12, 2026, concurrently with a referendum on the July Charter, which 68% of voters endorsed. At 60%, reported voter turnout in 2026 was higher than in 2024, when some critics asserted that the government's reported count (42%) was inflated, but lower than in the 2018 elections, when 80% of eligible voters reportedly participated.<sup>57</sup> In Bangladesh's 350-seat unicameral legislature, 300 deputies are elected directly, while the remaining 50 seats are reserved for women and elected by members of parliament through proportional representation. The BNP secured 209 of the 300 elected seats, with three additional seats going to the party's alliance partners. JI won 68 seats, an unprecedentedly strong showing for that party, and now represents the bulk of the parliamentary opposition. The NCP secured 6 seats as part of an 11-party alliance led by JI that won 77 seats overall. Hasina denounced the vote as "a pre-planned election of deception and farce."<sup>58</sup> Although the July Charter included a commitment to nominate women as at least 5% of parliamentary candidates, no party met this threshold. Women accounted for 4% of candidates overall, and several parties, including JI, fielded no female candidates. A total of 7 women were elected to parliamentary seats.<sup>59</sup>

Despite political violence in the leadup to the elections, international observers described election day as generally peaceful and orderly. IRI's election observation mission concluded that "election administration was technically sound" but "the broader political environment remains fragile."<sup>60</sup> The European Union's election observation mission described the vote as "credible and

<sup>54</sup> Md Belal Hossen, "Tasnim Jara Quits NCP to Run Independently as Jamaat-NCP Alliance Almost Finished," *The Business Standard*, December 27, 2025.

<sup>55</sup> "Violent Protests in Bangladesh After Pro-Democracy Figure Dies in Hospital," Agence France-Presse, December 19, 2025; "Unbowed," *The Daily Star*, December 19, 2025.

<sup>56</sup> Siam Sarower Jamil, "Is the Bangladeshi State Incapable or Unwilling to Control Mobs?" *The Diplomat*, December 22, 2025.

<sup>57</sup> Sarah Shamim, "Bangladesh Election Results 2026: Who Won, Who Lost, What's Next?," *Al Jazeera*, February 13, 2026; International IDEA, Voter Turnout Database: Bangladesh, [https://www.idea.int/data-tools/data/question-country?question\\_id=9188&country=19&database\\_theme=293](https://www.idea.int/data-tools/data/question-country?question_id=9188&country=19&database_theme=293); Ethirajan Anbarasan and Kelly Ng, "Bangladesh Election: PM Sheikh Hasina Wins Fourth Term in Controversial Vote," *BBC News*, January 8, 2024.

<sup>58</sup> Bangladesh Awami League, "Election of Deception and Farce: Statement by the People's Leader Sheikh Hasina," February 15, 2026, <https://albd.org/articles/news/41687/Election-of-Deception-and-Farce:%0D%0AStatement-by-the-People%E2%80%99s-Leader-Sheikh-Hasina>.

<sup>59</sup> Shadique Mabub Islam, "Female Representation: How Political Parties Failed the July Charter's First Test," January 9, 2026; Rituja Ghosh, "Bangladesh's 2026 Election: Where Are the Women?" *The Diplomat*, February 27, 2026.

<sup>60</sup> IRI, "IRI Preliminary Findings of Bangladesh's 2026 Elections Mark Important Step Forward for Bangladesh," February 14, 2026.

competently managed,” stating that it was “genuinely competitive” despite “sporadic localized political violence.”<sup>61</sup> Some analysts question whether an election without AL participation can be considered fully credible.<sup>62</sup> Some Members of Congress have expressed similar concerns.<sup>63</sup>

## Outlook

According to a BNP statement, Prime Minister Rahman has publicly asserted that the July Charter “will be fully implemented.”<sup>64</sup> Nevertheless, some analysts foresee “political hesitation” in implementing the Charter, which would, among other reforms, curb the powers of the prime minister.<sup>65</sup> The BNP objected to some provisions and BNP deputies have refused to join the Constitution Reform Council, the body responsible for instituting the proposed reforms.<sup>66</sup> Some observers suggest the BNP’s supermajority is potentially detrimental to democratic institutions.<sup>67</sup> Rahman, who returned from self-imposed exile in London in December 2025, is the son of BNP founder Ziaur Rahman and former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, and some have questioned whether his victory heralds true change.<sup>68</sup> Some analysts argue that failure by the BNP to meet public expectations for reform could lead to renewed instability in Bangladesh.<sup>69</sup> According to one assessment, “the inability of the student-led NCP to turn itself into a major electoral force only strengthened the hand of those trying to maintain as much of the status quo as possible.”<sup>70</sup>

Jl’s emergence as the main opposition force after years of political marginalization marks a shift in parliamentary dynamics and represents a potential challenge to any BNP policies at odds with Jl’s Islamist conservatism.<sup>71</sup> Whether and how the AL will resume political activity remains unclear.<sup>72</sup> In press interviews, AL leaders have maintained that the party retains substantial support among its base.<sup>73</sup> In April 2026, Bangladesh’s parliament passed an amended version of the country’s Anti-Terrorism Act that legally designated the AL and its affiliates as “terrorist organizations” and enshrined into legislation the interim government’s May 2025 ban on the

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<sup>61</sup> European Union Election Observation Mission Bangladesh 2026, “A Credible Electoral Process Propels the Renewal of Democracy,” February 14, 2026.

<sup>62</sup> Masum Billah, “Can Bangladesh’s Awami League Survive Election Ban, Ex-PM Hasina’s Exile?” *Al Jazeera*, January 30, 2026.

<sup>63</sup> House Foreign Affairs Committee, “Meeks, Huizenga, Kamlager-Dove Lead Letter to Bangladeshi Interim Government on the Importance of Inclusive, Free and Fair Elections,” December 23, 2025; India Today, “Bangladesh Election 2026: US Lawmaker Suhas Subramanyam Warns of Anti-Hindu Violence,” February 10, 2026, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0\\_8uMcAuga4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0_8uMcAuga4); House Foreign Affairs Committee Democrats, statement on X, February 13, 2026, <https://x.com/HouseForeign/status/2022386968613511569>.

<sup>64</sup> Bangladesh Nationalist Party, “PM Urges Countrymen to Remain Alert Against Confusion over Referendum,” July Charter,” April 26, 2026, <https://www.bnabd.org/all-news/69ef4cf25e240afcdfff47d0/>.

<sup>65</sup> Masum Billah, “The Chronicles of July Charter—and Its Shaky Future,” *The Business Standard*, February 18, 2026.

<sup>66</sup> Sabir Mustafa, “Tarique Rahman’s Journey Ahead Promises to Be a Bumpy Ride,” *The Business Standard*, February 22, 2026.

<sup>67</sup> Saqlain Rizve, “Bangladesh’s Election Is Over. Its Future Has Yet to Be Written,” *The Diplomat*, February 18, 2026.

<sup>68</sup> Arjuna Keshvani-Ham, “Bangladesh’s Old New Politics,” Engelsberg Ideas, February 24, 2026; Maruf Hasan, “Resentment Simmers in Bangladesh as the BNP Stalls Reforms,” *Himal*, May 7, 2026.

<sup>69</sup> International Crisis Group, *Bangladesh’s New Government Gets Down to Business*.

<sup>70</sup> International Crisis Group, *Bangladesh’s New Government Gets Down to Business*.

<sup>71</sup> Shafi Md Mostofa, “After Election, Jamaat Moves from the Margins to the Opposition in Bangladesh,” *The Diplomat*, February 16, 2026; Keshvani-Ham, “Bangladesh’s Old New Politics.”

<sup>72</sup> Billah, “Can Bangladesh’s Awami League Survive Election Ban, Ex-PM Hasina’s Exile?” *Al Jazeera*; Saqlain Rizve, “Where Does Bangladesh’s Once Dominant Awami League Stand Today?,” *The Diplomat*, May 28, 2026.

<sup>73</sup> Rizve, “Where Does Bangladesh’s Once Dominant Awami League Stand Today?,” *The Diplomat*.

party's political activities.<sup>74</sup> According to one scholar, this places Bangladesh “in the constitutionally untenable position of attempting to hold elections and consolidate democratic governance while a major political party and all its affiliates remain legally prohibited from participation.”<sup>75</sup> Similarly, the International Crisis Group has argued that a ban on the AL is “not sustainable in the long term” given the party’s “pivotal role in Bangladeshi politics since independence.”<sup>76</sup>

## Economy

Bangladesh is a lower-middle income country that has experienced rapid economic growth over the past two decades. Readymade garments account for over 80% of Bangladesh’s goods exports and the industry is a major economic driver.<sup>77</sup> According to the World Bank, the country’s poverty rate declined from 37.1% in 2010 to 18.7% in 2022.<sup>78</sup> Beginning in 2020, Bangladesh faced significant economic headwinds stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia’s 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine.<sup>79</sup> One expert argues that “the stabilization of a deeply distressed economy stands as one of the most significant achievements of the interim government.”<sup>80</sup> Analysts point to inflation, flagging growth, and weak revenues as economic challenges facing the new government, compounded by higher fuel and shipping costs and disruptions to maritime trade in light of conflict in the Middle East.<sup>81</sup>

One of the world’s poorest nations at the time of its independence in 1971, Bangladesh had been scheduled to graduate from the UN’s Least Developed Countries (LDC) list in November 2026. In February 2026, the Rahman government requested that the UN defer Bangladesh’s graduation date to 2029.<sup>82</sup> The UN Committee for Development Policy subsequently “concluded that an extension of the preparatory period by the General Assembly would be appropriate.”<sup>83</sup> A final decision on the extension is expected from the UN General Assembly in September 2026.<sup>84</sup> LDC graduation reflects significant economic progress, but also comes with the cessation of certain benefits, including preferential market access to some developed economies, technical assistance, and financial support.

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<sup>74</sup> Sangita Gazi, “A Case for Judicial Review of the Awami League Ban Under the ATA,” *The Diplomat*, May 11, 2026.

<sup>75</sup> Arafat Hosen Khan, “Bangladesh’s Broken Constitutional Moment Part II: The BNP’s Inheritance and the Foreclosed Constitutional Moment—Can Reform Be Salvaged?,” *International Journal of Constitutional Law Blog*, May 9, 2026.

<sup>76</sup> International Crisis Group, *Bangladesh’s New Government Gets Down to Business*.

<sup>77</sup> Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association, “Export Performance,” [https://www.bgmea.com.bd/page/Export\\_Performance](https://www.bgmea.com.bd/page/Export_Performance).

<sup>78</sup> World Bank, *Bangladesh’s Poverty And Equity Assessment: Navigating the Road to Prosperity*, 2025, p. 1.

<sup>79</sup> Sadia Binta Jalal, “Where Does the Bangladeshi Economy Stand After Covid-19 and the Russia-Ukraine War?,” *The Business Standard*, November 12, 2024.

<sup>80</sup> Avinash Paliwal, “Bangladesh’s Unfinished Revolution,” *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, May 28, 2026.

<sup>81</sup> Soumya Bhowmick, “Bangladesh’s Political Reset Meets a Goeconomic Reckoning,” *The Diplomat*, March 4, 2026; International Crisis Group, *Bangladesh’s New Government Gets Down to Business*; Md Mehedi Hasan, “Global and Energy Shocks to Weigh on Bangladesh Economy,” *The Daily Star*, May 12, 2026.

<sup>82</sup> FHM Humayan Kabir, “PM Writes to UN Secy Gen for LDC Graduation Deferral,” *The Financial Express*, April 7, 2026.

<sup>83</sup> UN LDC Portal, Bangladesh Graduation Status, <https://www.un.org/ldcportal/content/bangladesh-graduation-status/>.

<sup>84</sup> “UN Panel Recommends Shorter Extension for Bangladesh’s LDC Graduation Timeline,” *The Business Standard*, June 2, 2026.

## Foreign Relations

Positioned at the intersection of India, the People’s Republic of China (PRC, or China), Southeast Asia, and the Bay of Bengal, Bangladesh occupies a geo-strategically important location, and its foreign policy historically has promoted trade, economic development, and diplomatic linkages with a range of countries, including the United States and U.S. partners, as well as Russia and China. During the interim government’s tenure, Yunus stated that his administration was “reaching out to everybody.”<sup>85</sup> Some analysts noted a shift in Bangladesh’s foreign policy away from India, including through increased outreach to China, Pakistan, and Turkey, among other countries.<sup>86</sup> In his February 2026 farewell address, Yunus said his administration had restored sovereignty, national interests, and dignity as the pillars of Bangladesh’s foreign policy, asserting, “Bangladesh is no longer a country with submissive foreign policy or dependent on the instructions and advice of other countries.”<sup>87</sup>

Some observers predict a pragmatic and multipolar foreign policy under Rahman, arguing that he will seek constructive engagement with the United States, China, and India.<sup>88</sup> Rahman has described the BNP’s foreign policy approach as “Bangladesh First” and “an economy-based foreign policy that safeguard’s Bangladesh’s interests.”<sup>89</sup> Some analysts assert that India will seek to reset ties with Bangladesh after Hasina’s ouster and perceptions of India as pro-AL gave rise to tensions in the bilateral relationship; others forecast improved relations with Pakistan under the new BNP government, continuing a trend that began under the Yunus administration.<sup>90</sup> In June 2026, Khalilur Rahman, Bangladesh’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, was elected as the next president of the UN General Assembly. His one-year term is set to begin in September 2026.

## U.S. Bilateral Relations

The United States is among Bangladesh’s largest export markets and sources of foreign investment. According to the State Department, “the United States and Bangladesh share a vision for an inclusive, secure, and prosperous future.”<sup>91</sup> During a June 2025 call between Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Yunus, the two sides “affirmed their shared commitment to deepening economic ties between the United States and Bangladesh and to enhancing security and stability throughout the Indo-Pacific region.”<sup>92</sup> In March 2026, Secretary Rubio stated that “the United States values our longstanding partnership with Bangladesh, anchored in a shared vision for a free, open, secure, and prosperous Indo-Pacific. We look forward to strengthening our economic and security partnership for the benefit of both of our people.”<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Nazam Laila, “Bangladesh Is Helping to Create a Geopolitical Shift in South Asia,” Chatham House, July 25, 2025.

<sup>86</sup> Laila, “Bangladesh Is Helping to Create a Geopolitical Shift in South Asia.”

<sup>87</sup> “Bangladesh No Longer a Country with Submissive Foreign Policy: Yunus,” *The Daily Star*, February 16, 2026.

<sup>88</sup> “Bangladesh to Constructively Engage with India, China and US, Says Expert,” *Prothom Alo*, February 21, 2026; Intifahr Chowdhury, “Bangladesh Charts a New Multipolar Course,” Lowy Institute, February 20, 2026; Abid Hussain, “Could BNP’s Landslide Win Open a New Geopolitical Chapter for Bangladesh?,” *Al Jazeera*, February 14, 2026.

<sup>89</sup> Shahadat Shadhin, “An Interview With Tarique Rahman—Likely Bangladesh’s Next Prime Minister,” *The Diplomat*, February 4, 2026; Bangladesh Nationalist Party, “BNP Acting Chairman Tarique Rahman Gave An Interview to BBC Bangla Virtually From London (Part 2),” October 8, 2025.

<sup>90</sup> Grace Corcoran, “Bangladesh’s Election Gives India a Chance to Reset Relations,” Lowy Institute, February 18, 2026; Umair Jamal, “BNP’s Victory in Bangladesh Opens Door Wider for Islamabad,” February 20, 2026.

<sup>91</sup> U.S. Embassy in Bangladesh, “Policy & History,” at <https://bd.usembassy.gov/policy-history/>.

<sup>92</sup> U.S. Department of State, “Secretary Rubio’s Call with Bangladesh Chief Advisor Yunus,” June 30, 2025.

<sup>93</sup> U.S. Department of State, “Bangladesh National Day,” March 25, 2026.

Bangladesh's interim government concluded a trade agreement with the United States in February 2026. Some in Bangladesh questioned the future of the agreement in light of the U.S. Supreme Court's decision that same month striking down the use of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act to impose global tariffs, a key strategy used by the Trump Administration to secure trade deals.<sup>94</sup> The Trump Administration has reportedly emphasized implementation of the agreement in engaging the Rahman government (see "Issues for Congress" below).<sup>95</sup> As of January 21, 2026, citizens of Bangladesh seeking to travel to the United States on a business or tourist visa are required to pay a bond as part of a State Department pilot program.<sup>96</sup>

## Relations with China

Bangladesh-China ties expanded significantly following PRC leader Xi Jinping's 2016 visit to Dhaka, where Xi and Hasina agreed to upgrade the bilateral relationship to a "strategic partnership of cooperation."<sup>97</sup> In the wake of Hasina's ouster, China actively engaged the interim government and political parties across Bangladesh's political spectrum.<sup>98</sup> In his first foreign trip as Chief Advisor, Yunus traveled to China in March 2025 and signed an agreement on economic and technical cooperation, including duty-free access for goods from Bangladesh to China's market until 2028.<sup>99</sup> Yunus also secured a commitment of over \$2 billion in Chinese investments, loans, and grants.<sup>100</sup> Although Hasina also actively engaged China, some analysts have argued that Yunus moved to increase security cooperation with the PRC at the expense of alignment with India.<sup>101</sup> The PRC was already Bangladesh's primary supplier of defense articles under Hasina, accounting for 73% of arms imports between 2019 and 2023.<sup>102</sup>

## Relations with India

The Hindu nationalist government of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi was a staunch Hasina ally. During a 2024 visit by Hasina to India, the two sides described bilateral relations as an "all-encompassing partnership that transcends a strategic partnership, built upon shared values and interests, equality, trust and understanding and rooted in mutual sensitivity to each other's aspirations and concerns."<sup>103</sup> Some analysts assess that India has lost influence in Bangladesh due

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<sup>94</sup> "Dhaka-Washington Trade Deal May Lose Legal Basis as US Apex Court Rejects Trump's Tariffs," *The Business Standard*, February 21, 2026. On the Supreme Court decision, see CRS Legal Sidebar LSB11398, *Supreme Court Rules Against Tariffs Imposed Under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA)*, by Christopher T. Zirpoli.

<sup>95</sup> "Trump Congratulates Tarique, Hopes to Strengthen US-Bangladesh Trade Ties," *The Daily Star*, February 19, 2026; Raheed Ejaz, "Paul Kapur Emphasises Implementation of Trade Deal, Other Key Issues," *Prothom Alo*, March 9, 2026.

<sup>96</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Countries Subject to Visa Bonds," March 18, 2026; U.S. Department of State, "Visas: Visa Bond Pilot Program," 90 *Federal Register* 37378, August 5, 2025, <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/08/05/2025-14826/visas-visa-bond-pilot-program>.

<sup>97</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China Press Release, October 14, 2016, [https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/topics\\_665678/2016zt/XJPDJPZMJLJGJXGSFWBCXZYDGAJXDJZGJLDRDBCHW/201610/t20161018\\_704267.html](https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/topics_665678/2016zt/XJPDJPZMJLJGJXGSFWBCXZYDGAJXDJZGJLDRDBCHW/201610/t20161018_704267.html).

<sup>98</sup> Rakshith Shetty, "India Must Match China's Speedy Moves in Bangladesh's New Political Landscape," *The Diplomat*, October 3, 2024.

<sup>99</sup> Saqlain Rizve, "Bangladesh Tilts Toward China as Its Lead Economic Partner," *The Diplomat*, March 31, 2025; Laila, "Bangladesh Is Helping to Create a Geopolitical Shift in South Asia."

<sup>100</sup> Rizve, "Bangladesh Tilts Toward China as Its Lead Economic Partner," *The Diplomat*.

<sup>101</sup> Laila, "Bangladesh Is Helping to Create a Geopolitical Shift in South Asia."

<sup>102</sup> Data from SIPRI Arms Transfers Database.

<sup>103</sup> Government of India, Ministry of External Affairs, "India-Bangladesh Shared Vision for Future: Enhancing Connectivity, Commerce and Collaboration for Shared Prosperity," June 22, 2024.

to its perceived association with Hasina and note a rise in anti-Indian sentiment in Bangladesh since Hasina's ouster.<sup>104</sup> Indian authorities have closely monitored the status and security of Bangladeshi Hindus and decried "a disturbing pattern of recurring attacks on minorities" in Bangladesh.<sup>105</sup> According to India's Ministry of External Affairs, "India views Bangladesh as an important neighbour and development partner in South Asia and seeks positive, constructive and forward-looking engagement with the newly elected Government of Bangladesh to advance the shared interests of the people of both countries in the political, security, economic and cultural domains."<sup>106</sup> Bangladesh's Minister of Foreign Affairs visited India in April 2026.

In December 2024, the interim Government of Bangladesh formally requested that India extradite Hasina; Indian authorities reportedly did not respond beyond acknowledging receipt of the request.<sup>107</sup> Following Hasina's November 2025 conviction in absentia, India's Ministry of External Affairs stated, "India has noted the verdict announced by the International Crimes Tribunal of Bangladesh concerning former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina," and added, "As a close neighbour, India remains committed to the best interests of the people of Bangladesh, including in peace, democracy, inclusion and stability in that country. We will always engage constructively with all stakeholders to that end."<sup>108</sup> Bangladesh submitted a second formal extradition request after the verdict was issued.<sup>109</sup> In April 2026, India's Ministry of External Affairs stated, "the request is being examined as part of ongoing judicial and internal legal processes."<sup>110</sup>

## Relations with Pakistan

Bangladesh's relations with Pakistan historically have been strained due to a legacy of atrocities committed by Pakistan's armed forces during the 1971 liberation war and the conflict's ongoing reverberations in Bangladesh's domestic politics.<sup>111</sup> Following Hasina's ouster, Pakistan pursued high-level diplomatic engagement with the interim government, including multiple meetings between Yunus and Pakistan's prime minister.<sup>112</sup> Analysts noted increased trade, an easing of travel restrictions, and expanded military cooperation between the two countries under the Yunus

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<sup>104</sup> Shetty, "India Must Match China's Speedy Moves in Bangladesh's New Political Landscape," *The Diplomat*.

<sup>105</sup> Government of India, Ministry of External Affairs, "Question No. 2313: Violence Against Hindus in Bangladesh," March 12, 2026; Government of India, Ministry of External Affairs, Transcript of Weekly Media Briefing by the Official Spokesperson, January 9, 2026.

<sup>106</sup> Government of India, Ministry of External Affairs, "Question No. 310: Strategic Challenges to Neighbourhood Policy," March 13, 2026.

<sup>107</sup> Jannatul Naym Pieal, "The Complex Road to Extradition: Will India Agree to Send Sheikh Hasina Back to Bangladesh?" *The Diplomat*, February 20, 2025; "We Confirm That We Have Received Note Verbale from Bangladesh": MEA on Sheikh Hasina's Extradition Request," ANI, December 23, 2024.

<sup>108</sup> Government of India, Ministry of External Affairs, "Statement Regarding the Recent Verdict in Bangladesh," November 17, 2025.

<sup>109</sup> Keshav Padmanabhan, "Bangladesh Writes to India for Hasina Extradition; Its Second Push Since She Got the Death Penalty," *The Print*, November 24, 2025.

<sup>110</sup> Government of India, Ministry of External Affairs, Transcript of Weekly Media Briefing by the Official Spokesperson, April 17, 2026. See also Maria Siow, "India Opens Door to Sheikh Hasina Extradition Talks: A Delhi-Dhaka Thaw?," *South China Morning Post*, April 24, 2026.

<sup>111</sup> David Bergman, "The Politics of Bangladesh's Genocide Debate," *New York Times*, April 5, 2016; Snigdhendu Bhattacharya, "Bangladesh's Bid to Rewrite History," *The Diplomat*, December 26, 2024.

<sup>112</sup> Abid Hussain, "Why Pakistan Is Rushing to Mend Fences with Bangladesh," *Al Jazeera*, September 2, 2025; Shafi Md Mostofa, "Growing Pakistan-Bangladesh Relations Are Changing Regional Geopolitics," *The Diplomat*, September 1, 2025.

administration.<sup>113</sup> High-level engagement between Bangladesh and Pakistan has continued under the new Rahman government, though some analysts note that unresolved issues stemming from the 1971 conflict present potential challenges for the continued development of the bilateral relationship.<sup>114</sup>

## Issues for Congress

### Trade Relations

The U.S. goods trade deficit with Bangladesh was \$7.1 billion in 2025, driven primarily by imports from Bangladesh's ready-made garment sector.<sup>115</sup> In August 2025, the Trump Administration introduced a 20% tariff on imports from Bangladesh, negotiated down from a proposed 35% tariff after Bangladesh committed to purchasing 700,000 tons of wheat annually from the United States over the following five years.<sup>116</sup> The interim government of Bangladesh subsequently concluded an Agreement on Reciprocal Trade (ART) with the United States on February 9, 2026.<sup>117</sup> The agreement, which has not yet come into force, includes a 19% tariff on most imports from Bangladesh, with a 0% reciprocal tariff rate for some apparel and textiles; the volume of the carve-out would be determined by the quantity of U.S.-produced cotton and man-made fiber textile inputs imported by Bangladesh. The ART also includes a commitment by Bangladesh to purchase liquefied natural gas, agricultural products, civilian aircraft, and defense articles from the United States. Economic and national security provisions of the ART include cooperation on enforcing U.S. export controls and a commitment by Bangladesh to "limit the involvement in the design, development, and supply of software in the supply chains for sensitive technologies of countries of national security concern, as identified by the Parties."<sup>118</sup> The ART includes potential penalties "if Bangladesh enters into a new bilateral free trade agreement or preferential economic agreement with a non-market country that undermines this Agreement" and restricts the purchase of "nuclear reactors, fuel rods, or enriched uranium from a country that jeopardizes essential U.S. interests."<sup>119</sup> Some within Bangladesh have argued that the agreement would constrain the country's economic sovereignty and strategic autonomy.<sup>120</sup> Bangladesh's

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<sup>113</sup> Saqlain Rizve, "The Revival of Bangladesh-Pakistan Ties," Lowy Institute, February 3, 2025; Hussain, "Why Pakistan Is Rushing to Mend Fences with Bangladesh," *Al Jazeera*.

<sup>114</sup> Siam Sarower Jamil, "Can Pakistan Win Bangladesh's Trust Without Apologizing for the Genocide of 1971?," *The Diplomat*, June 1, 2026.

<sup>115</sup> Office of the United States Trade Representative, "Bangladesh," <https://ustr.gov/countries-regions/south-central-asia/bangladesh>.

<sup>116</sup> Executive Order 14326 of July 31, 2025, "Further Modifying the Reciprocal Tariff Rates," 90 Federal Register 37963, August 6, 2025; "Bangladesh Secures 20% US Tariff for Garments, Exporters Relieved," Reuters, August 1, 2025; "Bangladesh Signs US Wheat-Import Deal in Bid to Curb Tariff Pressure," Reuters, July 20, 2025.

<sup>117</sup> Agreement Between the United States of America and the People's Republic of Bangladesh on Reciprocal Trade, <https://ustr.gov/sites/default/files/files/Press/Releases/2026/U.S.%20BGD%20Agreement%20on%20Reciprocal%20Trade%20Final%2009FEB2026%20LETTER.pdf>. See also The White House, "Joint Statement on United States—Bangladesh Agreement on Reciprocal Trade," February 9, 2026.

<sup>118</sup> Agreement Between the United States of America and the People's Republic of Bangladesh on Reciprocal Trade.

<sup>119</sup> Agreement Between the United States of America and the People's Republic of Bangladesh on Reciprocal Trade.

<sup>120</sup> Shiamak Ali, "US-Bangla Trade Deal: Structurally Unequal Pact Eroding Sovereignty," *Daily Times of Bangladesh*, April 21, 2026; M.G. Quibria, "Rethinking the Bangladesh-US Trade Deal Following the Legal Blow," *The Daily Star*, February 24, 2026; "Reciprocal Trade Deal with US 'Highly Discriminatory': CPD," *The Daily Star*, February 28, 2026.

Minister of Foreign Affairs has been quoted in the press as stating that the ART is “not at all in conflict with the ‘Bangladesh First’ policy.”<sup>121</sup>

In response to the Supreme Court’s February 2026 ruling that the President cannot use the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) to impose tariffs, President Trump imposed a 10% global tariff, including on Bangladesh, for 150 days under Section 122 of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. §2132) “to address fundamental international payments problems.”<sup>122</sup> In March 2026, the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) announced two separate investigations of Bangladesh under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. §2411), one relating to structural excess capacity and production in manufacturing, and one related to the failure to impose and effectively enforce a ban on the importation of goods produced with forced labor.<sup>123</sup> Section 301 authorizes USTR to impose tariffs or other import restrictions to remedy a foreign trade practice.<sup>124</sup> On June 2, 2026, USTR determined that Bangladesh has “failed to impose and effectively enforce a prohibition on the importation of goods produced with forced labor,” specifically in relation to PRC-produced cotton that is “presumed to be produced with forced labor under U.S. law,” and recommended an additional duty of 10% on imports from Bangladesh.<sup>125</sup> USTR also proposed “a textile mechanism that would allow for a certain volume of apparel and textile imports from certain economies to enter the United States at a reduced Section 301 tariff rate,” with the volume of reduced-duty textile imports determined by the quantity of U.S. cotton, cotton products, and man-made and cotton fiber textile inputs exported to a given trading partner.<sup>126</sup> Congress could consider potential legislative action to extend the application of Section 122 tariffs,<sup>127</sup> amend various tariff authorities extended to the executive branch, or require notification to or consultations with Congress on the use of tariff authorities.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> “Country Not in Danger Due to US Trade Deal,” *The Daily Star*, March 5, 2026.

<sup>122</sup> Office of the White House, Proclamation 11012, “Imposing a Temporary Import Surcharge to Address Fundamental International Payments Problems,” 91 *Federal Register* 9339, February 20, 2026. For the details and a legal discussion of the Supreme Court ruling, see CRS Legal Sidebar LSB11398, *Supreme Court Rules Against Tariffs Imposed Under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA)*, by Christopher T. Zirpoli.

<sup>123</sup> USTR, “USTR Initiates Section 301 Investigations Relating to Structural Excess Capacity and Production in Manufacturing Sectors,” press release, March 11, 2026.

<sup>124</sup> See CRS In Focus IF11346, *Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974*, by Danielle M. Trachtenberg.

<sup>125</sup> USTR, “Report in Section 301 Investigations: Acts, Policies, and Practices of Various Economies Related to the Failure to Impose and Effectively Enforce a Prohibition on the Importation of Goods Produced with Forced Labor,” June 2, 2026, pp.52-53.

<sup>126</sup> USTR, “Notice of Determinations and Request for Comments Concerning Actions in Section 301 Investigations of Acts, Policies, and Practices of Various Economies Related to the Failure to Impose and Effectively Enforce a Prohibition on the Importation of Goods Produced with Forced Labor,” <https://ustr.gov/sites/default/files/files/Press/Releases/2026/FRN%20-%20Section%20301%20Forced%20Labor%20Import%20Ban%20Actionability%20and%20Proposed%20Action%206-2-26%20FINAL.pdf>.

<sup>127</sup> See CRS In Focus IF13199, *Section 122 of the Trade Act of 1974*, by Christopher A. Casey, Danielle M. Trachtenberg, and Christopher T. Zirpoli

, *Section 122 of the Trade Act of 1974*, by Christopher A. Casey, Danielle M. “USTR Makes Findings and Proposes Action in 60 Section 301 Investigations Relating to Failures to Take Action on Trade in Forced Labor Goods,” **June 2, 2026** Trachtenberg, and Christopher T. Zirpoli.

<sup>128</sup> See CRS Report R48435, *Congressional and Presidential Authority to Impose Import Tariffs*, by Christopher T. Zirpoli.

## Minorities in Bangladesh

Some Members of Congress have expressed concern about violence targeting Hindus and other minority communities in Bangladesh during unrest leading up to and following Hasina's 2024 ouster.<sup>129</sup> The 2025 UN fact-finding inquiry concluded that, "during the protests and in their aftermath, human rights abuses were inflicted on some members of Bangladesh's Hindu, Ahmadiyya Muslim and indigenous communities," with cases of vandalism, looting, and burning of homes and businesses; attacks on places of worship; aggravated physical assaults; and at least one killing.<sup>130</sup> In the assessment of the UN, "the perpetrators acted with different and often overlapping motives, including political revenge against Awami League supporters among minorities, religious and ethnic discrimination, settlement of personal disputes, and localized communal conflict."<sup>131</sup> In March 2025 remarks, a State Department spokesperson stated that the Trump Administration has "welcomed measures taken by Bangladesh's interim government to ensure safety and security for all in Bangladesh."<sup>132</sup> A pre-election interview quotes Rahman as stating that his party would "promote peaceful coexistence in society and mutual respect in politics" and "uphold the rule of law, freedom of speech, and ensure human rights for all."<sup>133</sup>

Congressional action has resulted in a growing and evolving array of statutory provisions and associated policy tools that the U.S. government can use to address matters related to democracy and human rights in foreign contexts. These tools include democracy assistance programs; executive branch reporting requirements; U.S. engagement through international institutions and initiatives; restrictions on foreign assistance and arms sales; targeted sanctions; and import restrictions and export controls, among others.<sup>134</sup> In the 119<sup>th</sup> Congress, H.Res. 1130 would call on the President "to recognize the atrocities committed against ethnic Bengali Hindus by the Armed Forces of Pakistan during 1971 and its allies in the Jamaat-e Islami as crimes against humanity, war crimes, and genocide."

## Rohingya Humanitarian Response

Bangladesh hosts over one million ethnic Rohingya refugees from Burma, and the United States historically has supported the humanitarian response in Bangladesh.<sup>135</sup> Between FY2017 and

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<sup>129</sup> See, for example, Representative Raja Krishnamoorthi, "Protect Bangladesh's Religious Minorities," remarks in the House, *Congressional Record*, daily edition, vol. 171, no. 3 (January 7, 2025), p. H51; Office of Congressman Suhas Subramanyam, "Rep. Subramanyam Statement on Escalating Violence in Bangladesh," December 22, 2025; Senate Foreign Relations Committee, "Cardin, Murphy, Van Hollen, Merkley Issue Letter to Chief Advisor Muhammad Yunus, Urging Reforms and Accountability in Bangladesh," September 20, 2024. Office of Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi, "Congressman Krishnamoorthi Writes Letter Urging Secretary of State Blinken to Engage with Bangladesh's Government to End Outbreaks of Violence, Including the Targeting of Hindus," August 9, 2024; Congressman Shri Thanedar, statement on X, August 8, 2024, available at <https://x.com/RepShriThanedar/status/1821612198487298332>.

<sup>130</sup> OHCHR, *Fact-Finding Report: Human Rights Violations and Abuses Related to the Protests of July and August 2024 in Bangladesh*.

<sup>131</sup> OHCHR, *Fact-Finding Report: Human Rights Violations and Abuses Related to the Protests of July and August 2024 in Bangladesh*.

<sup>132</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Department Press Briefing—March 19, 2025."

<sup>133</sup> Shadhin, "An Interview with Tarique Rahman—Likely Bangladesh's Next Prime Minister," *The Diplomat*.

<sup>134</sup> See CRS Report R47890, *Democracy and Human Rights in U.S. Foreign Policy: Evolution, Tools, and Considerations for Congress*, by Michael A. Weber.

<sup>135</sup> According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), "despite living in Myanmar for many generations, the Rohingya are not recognized as an official ethnic group and have been denied citizenship since 1982, making them the world's largest stateless population." UNHCR, *Rohingya Refugee Crisis Explained*, August 22, 2024, at <https://www.unrefugees.org/news/rohingya-refugee-crisis-explained/>.

FY2023, U.S. humanitarian assistance in response to the Burma-Bangladesh crisis totaled more than \$2.2 billion.<sup>136</sup> In September 2025, the Trump Administration announced its “intent to provide more than \$60 million in assistance for Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh,” concurrently noting the Administration’s expectation for “meaningful policy changes by Bangladesh to allow livelihood opportunities and by aid organizations to increase cost efficiency.”<sup>137</sup> The government of Bangladesh sees the status of the Rohingya as temporary and has, for example, restricted refugee movement outside the camps, limited the use of durable materials for shelters, and created bureaucratic hurdles for international humanitarian organizations trying to register, apply for visas, and seek project approvals to provide assistance.<sup>138</sup> Like the AL, the BNP supports repatriating Rohingya to Burma.

In authorizing and appropriating aid, Members may accept, reject, or otherwise respond to Administration budget requests and legislative proposals; seek to decrease, increase, or otherwise direct foreign assistance toward sectors and countries they assess to be priorities; authorize aid initiatives and agencies; require the Administration to produce aid strategies and reporting; and prohibit or condition certain assistance. Congress also may focus oversight activity on the Administration’s adherence to statutory requirements for foreign assistance, as well as the accountability and effective oversight of aid programs.<sup>139</sup> The Burma GAP Act (H.R. 4140) would call on the Secretary of State to provide support for Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh.

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<sup>136</sup> U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), *Burma and Bangladesh—Regional Crisis Response*, Fact Sheet #2, September 30, 2023. USAID had previously combined its reporting on the “Burma-Bangladesh Complex Emergency” into one fact sheet; in FY2024, it began reporting on the Burma and Bangladesh crises in separate fact sheets. See also USAID/BHA, “Bangladesh Assistance Overview,” June 2024.

<sup>137</sup> U.S. Department of State, “Remarks at a High-Level Conference on the Situation of Rohingya Muslims and Other Minorities in Myanmar,” September 30, 2025.

<sup>138</sup> ACAPS, “Bangladesh: Rising Violence, Insecurity, and Protection Concerns in Cox’s Bazar Refugee Camps,” May 12, 2023; International Crisis Group, “Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh: Limiting the Damage of a Protracted Crisis,” October 4, 2023; and USAID, “Bangladesh—Complex Emergency, Fact Sheet #3,” August 23, 2024.

<sup>139</sup> See CRS In Focus IF10183, *U.S. Foreign Assistance*, by Emily M. McCabe and Nick M. Brown.

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