

# Statement on repression in Bangladesh

Sunday 21 July 2024, by [CADTM International](#) (Date first published: 21 July 2024).

**The CADTM denounces the use of unlawful force and brutality against student demonstrators who are opposing government job quotas in Bangladesh. More than 150 deaths attributed to repression have been reported. Thousands of demonstrators have suffered injuries. In a nation where nearly 40% of young people lack employment and have limited access to education, the student movement is still active in the streets, demonstrating against the decision that permits admission quotas into civil service positions. The prime minister imposed a nationwide curfew, gave the military orders to shoot at sight, and shut down almost all forms of communication, including the internet.**



*“Noor Hossain at 10 November 1987 protest for democracy in Dhaka (01)” by Dinu Alam Toronto, Canada is licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0.*

The CADTM denounces any actions the Bangladeshi government takes that undermine civil liberties. Despite the use of tear gas, stun grenades and bullets by the police against protestors across the country, students are still taking to the streets.

The mass student protests erupted when the government, following a Supreme Court ruling, announced the reintroduction of ‘quotas’ for public employment, indicating that 30% of those jobs would be reserved for descendants of those who are considered ‘heroes of the independence war’ (1971). This ‘quota’ system had been suspended since 2018 when a wave of protests against it also filled the streets.

Thousands of students from all universities spontaneously flooded the streets of Dhaka, Chittagong, and other cities. From Dhaka University, Jahangirnagar, Rangpur, and Cumilla, young people staged sit-ins on the main avenues of the capital of 30 million people. The movement gained traction fast and attracted high school students and colleges in the nation’s interior.

Once the poster child for neoliberal reforms, Bangladesh’s economy has been experiencing a crisis since the middle of 2022. This crisis has resulted in high unemployment, inflation, and declining foreign exchange reserves, which have compelled the government to seek bailouts from the IMF.

The ruling Sheikh Hasina-led Awami League government, a darling of national and international capital, had already unleashed severe autocratic measures, virtually wiping out the very few vestiges of popular democracy in this politically fragile republic. The brutal attack on the student protests surpasses all earlier bestialities.

CADTM stands in solidarity with the families of dead and injured students. We also demand:

- A public apology by the Prime Minister of Bangladesh for the deaths of the students.
- The resignation of ministers responsible for repression and incitement of violence.
- A thorough and impartial investigation into the role of police officials in indiscriminate firing on students resulting in deaths and hundreds of injuries.
- Compensation for death and injuries.
- Resumption of academic activities.
- No harassment of students for participating in the protests.
- An independent international inquiry about the role of the Bangladesh government in this massacre.

**CADTM International**

Date: July 22, 2024

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- CADTM. 21 July 2024:  
<https://www.cadtm.org/CADTM-STATEMENT-ON-REPRESSION-IN-BANGLADESH>