



**INSIGHT UK**  
- SOCIAL MOVEMENT OF BRITISH HINDUS & INDIANS -

# PERSECUTION OF HINDUS IN BANGLADESH

**Why is the world silent on the ongoing atrocities  
committed against Hindus in Bangladesh?**

**PERSECUTED...**  
**OPPRESSED...**  
**KILLED...**



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The Hindu population in Bangladesh has faced persistent persecution, raising serious concerns about their fundamental rights, safety and security.

In 1941, approximately 28% of the population of East Bengal (now Bangladesh) was Hindu. The Hindu population has declined significantly since 1971, the year Bangladesh gained independence from Pakistan. 13.5% of the population of Bangladesh was Hindu in 1974, and only approximately 8% of the population of Bangladesh was Hindu in 2022.<sup>1</sup> This decline highlights the ongoing persecution of Hindus in Bangladesh. Why would the Hindu population in Bangladesh decline if it is a country that is tolerant and respects the rights of its minorities?

Hindus in Bangladesh have faced persistent persecution and have been victims of targeted attacks. During the Bangladesh Liberation War in 1971, the Pakistan Army launched a military operation called “Operation Searchlight”, which led to the Bangladesh genocide in 1971 when millions of Hindus were killed. There have also been countless instances of targeted violence against Hindus following the Bangladesh genocide in 1971. For instance, there was anti-Hindu violence in 1990 when Islamist mobs set fire to Hindu mandirs (temples) in Chittagong and Dhaka and anti-Hindu violence in 2013 that was instigated by Jamaat-e-Islami, Bangladesh’s largest Islamist political party, which opposed Bangladesh’s independence from Pakistan.

Hindus in Bangladesh have also suffered from state-sponsored land-grabbing. The so-called Vested Property Act (formerly known as the Enemy Property Act during Pakistani rule), allowed authorities to take over ‘enemy’ land, much of it belonging to Hindus. This led to the expropriation of as much as 2.6 million acres between 1965 and 2006, with devastating effects for an estimated 1.2 million Hindu households.<sup>2</sup>

The international community should be concerned about the risk of Bangladesh following a dangerous path towards state failure, similar to that of Afghanistan and Pakistan, which are countries that have become synonymous with Islamist extremism, militant violence and intolerance. The significant issues in Bangladesh need to be under the microscope in order to prevent the country from following a similar path.

# THE FACTS

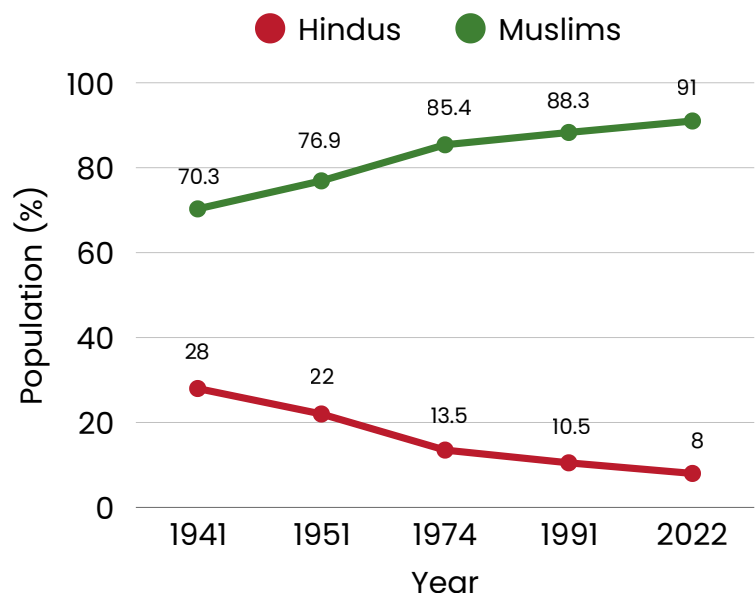
## PERSECUTION OF HINDUS IN BANGLADESH

Hindus have been continuously persecuted in Bangladesh. Islamist extremists have systematically targeted Hindus, their places of worship and their livelihoods.

INSIGHT UK is committed to spreading awareness of the oppression and violence that Hindus in Bangladesh have experienced and continue to experience.

### Ethnic Cleansing of Hindus

Millions killed and displaced



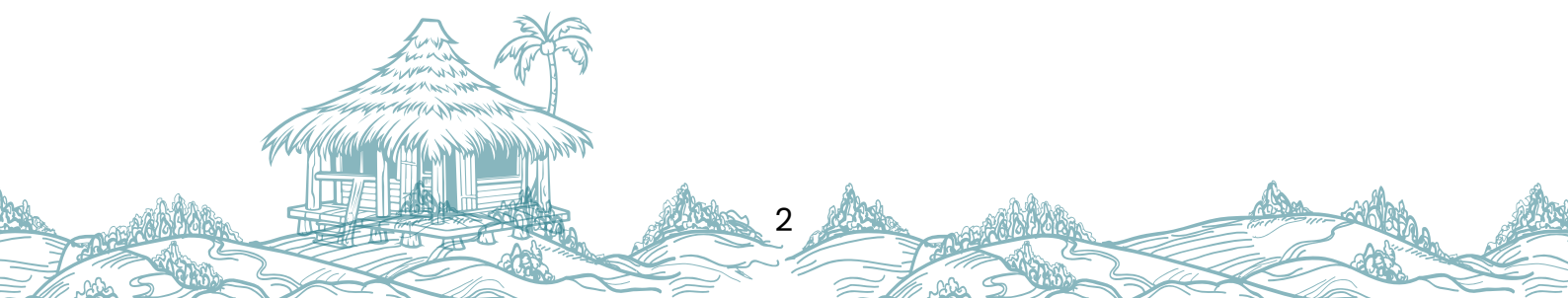
Sources: Bangladesh Population census 1991: Religious Composition 1901-1991, Bangladesh Population and Housing Census 2011 & 2022



### Land Grabbing

**2.6 million acres of land belonging to Hindus**

illegitimately occupied and taken between 1965 and 2006.<sup>3</sup>



# HISTORY OF PERSECUTION



## **1946 – Noakhali anti-Hindu riots**

- Radical Muslim mobs perpetrated a series of organised massacres, rapes and forced conversions of Hindus in the districts of Noakhali in Chittagong.



## **1950 – East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) anti-Hindu riots**

- Massacre of Hindus perpetrated by the radical Muslims, Pakistani police, and the paramilitary. 500,000 Hindus were killed in the massacres, resulting in the exodus of 4.5 million Hindu refugees to India.<sup>4</sup>



## **1962 – Rajshahi massacres**

- Widespread ethnic violence and killings of Hindus following an inflammatory speech by the Governor of East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). More than 3,000 killed, numerous women abducted, property looted and set on fire.<sup>5</sup>



## **1964 – East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) Riots**

- A massacre and ethnic cleansing of Bengali Hindus in the wake of an alleged theft of what was believed to be an Islamic relic from the Hazratbal shrine in Jammu and Kashmir in India. Around 10,000 Hindus were killed in Narayanganj and Dhaka.<sup>6</sup> Hindus were also massacred in Khulna.<sup>7</sup>



## **1971 – Operation Searchlight: Genocide of Hindus by the Pakistan army**

- “Operation Searchlight”, launched by the Pakistan army, led to millions of Hindus being killed. Jamaat-e-Islami supported Pakistan and also committed atrocities against Hindus.
- The Ramna massacre in 1971 – a massacre of Hindus who lived in the region around the Ramna Kali Temple in Dhaka by the Pakistan army. The Ramna Kali Temple was then destroyed by the Pakistan army.
- Jathivanga massacre in 1971 – around 3,500 killed in the Thakurgaon district by the Pakistan army and local Islamist collaborators.<sup>8</sup>
- The Demra massacre in 1971 – a massacre masterminded by Motiur Rahman Nizami, former leader of Jamaat-e-Islami.

- The Chuknagar massacre in 1971 – a massacre of 10,000 to 12,000 in Khulna committed by the Pakistan army and local Islamist collaborators.<sup>9</sup>
- Krishnapur massacre in 1971 – Hindus were shot dead in Sylhet by the Pakistan army and local Islamist collaborators.
- Dakra massacre in 1971 – a massacre committed by radical Islamists.



### **1989 – Anti-Hindu attacks**

- A series of attacks against Hindus across Bangladesh. Thousands of Hindu homes and businesses were destroyed.<sup>7</sup>



### **1990 – Anti-Hindu violence**

- A series of attacks against the Hindus occurred in late October and early November. Numerous Hindu homes and temples, including the Dhakeshwari Temple (Bangladesh's national temple) attacked.



### **2001 – Hindus attacked, killed and raped after the general election results**

- Hindus were attacked across Bangladesh after the ruling party was defeated by the opposition party, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party.<sup>10</sup> Hindu houses were looted. 12-year-old girl Purnima Shil was brutally raped by an Islamist.<sup>11</sup>



### **2012 – Ramu violence**

- Islamists attacked Buddhist monasteries and Hindu temples after an image depicting the desecration of a Quran was uploaded to Facebook by a fake account under a Buddhist male name.<sup>12</sup> A Muslim, Tofail Ahmed, was subsequently named as the key suspect and accused of instigating the violence.<sup>13</sup>



### **2013 – Anti-Hindu violence post sentencing of war criminal**

- Anti-Hindu violence spread across Bangladesh after the International Crimes Tribunal sentenced Delwar Hossain Sayeedi, the vice-president of the Jamaat-e-Islami, to death for war crimes committed during the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War.



### **2014 – Post-election Anti-Hindu violence**

- Minorities targeted following the general election in January. Attackers vandalised hundreds of homes and shops owned by Hindus throughout Bangladesh.<sup>14</sup>
- In Chittagong, Jamaat-e-Islami's student wing set at least 150 Hindu houses on fire.<sup>15</sup>



### **2016 – Hindus attacked in Nasirnagar following social media misinformation**

- Hindus attacked in Nasirnagar over an allegedly defamatory social media post by a Hindu against Islam. Police subsequently said the post was not uploaded from the Hindu individual's mobile phone. Instead, they suspected it was uploaded from a cyber cafe owned by a Muslim who became the prime suspect.<sup>16</sup>



### **2021 – Anti-Hindu attacks during Durga Puja festival**

- Muslim mobs instigated communal violence against Hindu communities across Bangladesh during the Durga Puja festival following a viral video where the Quran was kept near a temple deity. A Muslim man, Iqbal Hossain, was subsequently arrested by the police for being the one who placed the Quran there.<sup>17</sup>



### **2024 – Anti-Hindu violence following the ousting of Sheikh Hasina**

- Attacks on Hindus, their homes, businesses and places of worship across Bangladesh. Over 2,000 instances of violence, vandalism and arson following the fall of the previous government of Bangladesh.<sup>18</sup> Hindu mandirs (temples) were desecrated and damaged.<sup>19</sup>
- Islamist extremists give provocative speeches, including one who demands that Hindus leave the country within 7 days.<sup>20</sup>

# ATROCITIES AGAINST WOMEN IN BANGLADESH



## **1946 – Brutal violence against women during the Noakhali genocide**

- Thousands of Hindu women were raped, many in front of their children and husbands, and taken into captivity.<sup>21</sup>



## **1971 – The Pakistan Army and local Islamist Razakar collaborators are involved in a systematic campaign of rape**

- During the Bangladesh Liberation War in 1971, there was a systematic campaign of genocidal rape committed by members of the Pakistani military and its Islamist Razakar collaborators who raped between 200,000 and 400,000 Bengali women and girls.<sup>22</sup>



## **1989 – Women attacked and molested**

- Hindu women were attacked and molested during the riots in Bangladesh.<sup>23</sup>



## **2001–2002 – Brutal violence against women**

- During the violence against the Hindu community in Bangladesh following the general elections of 2001, attackers entered Hindu homes, beat individuals, looted their property and in some cases, raped Hindu women.<sup>24</sup>
- A Christian woman from Boraigram was kidnapped and raped for several days.<sup>25</sup>
- 12-year-old girl Purnima Shil was brutally raped by an Islamist.<sup>26</sup>
- Female school student raped during the post-election violence in 2001. A court in Bangladesh subsequently sentenced 11 people to life imprisonment.<sup>27</sup>



## **2022 – Brutal rapes and molestation of Hindu women**

- According to Bangladesh Jatiya Hindu Mahajot, 39 Hindu women were raped, 27 were gang-raped, 17 were killed after rape, and 55 more were molested or faced attempted rape in 2022.<sup>28</sup>



## **2024-2025 – Atrocities following the fall of the previous government of Bangladesh**

- Twui Karmakar, a young Hindu student, has been missing since 23 June 2025 after leaving her home to attend a tuition class.<sup>29</sup>
- A 21-year-old Hindu woman was raped by Fazor Ali, who is reported to be affiliated with the opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), after he broke into her paternal home in the Cumilla district. Four others were also involved – one participated in the assault and three filmed and circulated a video of the assault.<sup>30</sup>
- Islamists abducted and gang-raped a Hindu teen girl. The traumatized girl attempted to commit suicide after the harrowing ordeal.<sup>31</sup>
- 17-year-old Hindu girl, Shrabani Sen, abducted in Thakurgaon, Bangladesh. Her father subsequently approached the Thakurgaon Sadar Police Station and filed a complaint in an attempt to rescue his daughter. However, the police failed to take effective action, and the girl was not recovered.<sup>32</sup>

# INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

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## Human Rights Watch

A joint letter to the UN, *"Requesting urgent action towards UN human rights monitoring and investigation in Bangladesh"*, by Human Rights Watch, was signed by 13 NGOs calling for UN monitoring.<sup>33</sup>

## Amnesty International

Amnesty International stated in August 2024 that authorities must conduct a swift, thorough, impartial and independent investigation into the crimes against Hindu, Ahmadi and other minorities, calling on Bangladesh's interim government to take immediate protective actions.<sup>34</sup>

## Limited International Media Coverage

International media coverage has been notably scarce. Those that did cover failed to acknowledge the gravity of the situation, whilst others even downplayed the atrocities as politically motivated rather than religiously motivated.

## Gaps in Global Accountability

Our research reveals significant gaps in sustained international attention. While Human Rights Watch called for UN monitoring mechanisms, there's limited evidence of comprehensive follow-through. The UK government's specific response to these issues, despite providing aid to Bangladesh, appears notably absent from recent international coverage, highlighting a potential accountability gap in how donor nations address minority rights concerns in recipient countries.

The international response appears fragmented, with human rights organisations issuing statements and reports, but lacking coordinated, sustained pressure for concrete protective measures or accountability for religious persecution in Bangladesh.

# **WHY IT MATTERS FOR THE UK**

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The persecution of Hindus in Bangladesh carries significant implications for the United Kingdom through several interconnected factors. The UK's substantial Hindu diaspora maintains deep cultural, familial and economic ties with Bangladesh, making developments there of direct concern to British communities.

With its human-rights commitments and diaspora links, as well as a nation that positions itself as a global leader in human rights advocacy, the UK has both a moral obligation and strategic interest in addressing religious persecution abroad.

Furthermore, the situation presents important policy considerations across multiple areas, including migration patterns, asylum claims and the broader framework of minority rights protection that influences UK domestic and foreign policy decisions.

# WHAT CAN I DO?

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## AWARENESS

Spread awareness among the people around you and talk about this issue with your family, friends, peers and colleagues.

Like, comment and share the posts highlighting the persecution of Hindus in Bangladesh.

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## ADVOCACY

Advocate and be the voice for Hindus in Bangladesh by reaching out to and meeting your MP. Present this report and highlight the recommendations in this report to policymakers.

Send an email to your MP using our easy-to-use email campaign tool at [campaign.insightuk.org](https://campaign.insightuk.org).

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## CAMPAIGN

Campaign for change by contacting your local representatives with a message that condemns the ongoing persecution of Hindus in Bangladesh.

Organise and join demonstrations and vigils in your local town and city.



# KEY STATEMENTS



"Hindus across Bangladesh are being subjected literally to death by their houses being burnt. Their temples are being burnt."

~ **Bob Blackman**, UK Member of Parliament, December 2024



"In Bangladesh in 2024, over 400 attacks were carried out in places belonging to Hindus and other religious minorities, including some 25 temples...There were reports of rape and mob lynchings, including the very brutal killing of an 18-year-old in the presence of police and military personnel."

~ **Jim Shannon**, UK Member of Parliament and Chair of APPG for International Freedom of Religion or Belief, January 2025



"Since the fall of the previous Government in August, Bangladesh has seen more than 2,000 incidents of violence, most of which have been targeted against the minority Hindu community...There are reports of police and army standing by, as more than 20 places of minority Hindu and Sufi worship were vandalised and their worshippers attacked."

~ **Barry Gardiner**, UK Member of Parliament, December 2024



"What we are witnessing now is uncontrolled violence in many quarters. We are watching with horror and shock as further violence spreads in Bangladesh."

~ **Priti Patel**, UK Member of Parliament, December 2024



"Many constituents in Aylesbury have raised concerns about the safety of Hindus in Bangladesh. They have shown me extremely concerning social media content containing threats to Hindus to leave the country or face extermination."

~ **Laura Kyrie-Smith**, UK Member of Parliament, December 2024



"Since last August, there have been reports of more than 2,000 incidents of violence, most of which have been targeted at the minority Hindu community [in Bangladesh]."

~ **Jas Athwal**, UK Member of Parliament, February 2025



"Several of my constituents have been in touch, who are incredibly concerned about family members in Bangladesh. Those family members have been living in extreme fear for some time, but particularly since August, and reports of increasing violence against the Hindu community are disturbing."

~ **Sam Carling**, UK Member of Parliament, December 2024



"Since 1971, when Bangladesh got its freedom from Pakistan, there have been numerous occasions where minority Hindus have been attacked."

~ **Congressman Shri Thanedar**, December 2024



"It broke my heart to see such hate and violence being directed towards devotees of God in their temples in Bangladesh. For these jihadists to believe that it is pleasing to God to burn and destroy temples...shows how far away from God they really are."

~ **Tulsì Gabbard**, United States Director of National Intelligence, October 2021



"The Hindus in Bangladesh have lived in terror. We cannot just sit quiet and allow this to continue. This problem must be fixed."

~ **Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev**, Spiritual Guru, Isha Foundation, February 2025



"[Bangladeshi Hindus] have been the victims of an unprecedented genocide, their properties continue to be illegally usurped, their temples continue to be desecrated."

~ **Vivek Gumaste**, Author and Journalist, February 2020



"[The] Hindu population has suffered significantly at the hands of Islamic extremists, resulting in their further exodus into West Bengal in India."

~ **Minority Rights Group**, July 2018



"I am deeply concerned about religious minorities' safety and security in the current political climate...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."

~ **Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi**, Letter to U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, 16 Oct 2024<sup>35</sup>



"Reports of a spate of attacks by angry mobs against members of the Hindu community, their homes, temples and puja pandals during the country's biggest Hindu festival are symptomatic of the growing anti-minority sentiment in the country. Such repeated attacks against individuals, communal violence, and destruction of the homes and places of worship of minorities in Bangladesh over the years show that the state has failed in its duty to protect minorities."

~ **Saad Hammadi**, Amnesty International's South Asia Campaigner, Oct 2021



"Since 1947, the violence against Hindus in then Pakistan and now Bangladesh is a continuous phenomenon and followed religiously by the majority of Muslims irrespective of political parties."

~ **Dr. Atanu Mahapatra**, Vivekananda International Foundation, Jul 2014<sup>36</sup>



"Bangladesh's Hindu minority has historically been subjected to discriminatory practices or attacks by violent groups in the Muslim-majority country."

~ **Amnesty International Public Statement**, 2016<sup>37</sup>

# **POLICY** RECOMMENDATIONS

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1

**RAISE** minority protection benchmarks in all UK-Bangladesh dialogues and bilateral talks, requesting time-bound action plans (temple protection, fast-track prosecutions and justice).

2

**IMPLEMENT** conditions on funding allocated from the UK government to give in foreign aid to the state of Bangladesh.

3

**COMMISSION** an official report documenting the socio-economic state of Hindu and other minority communities in Bangladesh.

4

**PROVIDE** asylum pathways and safe havens for religious minorities in Bangladesh who have fallen victim to forced conversion, religious persecution and political oppression.

5

**PROVIDE** victims and their families with government support, calling on:

- the UK's Foreign Secretary
- Prime Minister's Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief
- Prime Minister's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict and Minister of State (Minister for South Asia and the Commonwealth)

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# ABOUT INSIGHT UK

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INSIGHT UK is a social movement dedicated to raising awareness, advocating and campaigning for the causes that concern and impact the British Hindu & Indian communities in the United Kingdom.

We conduct research studies, surveys, campaigns, seminars, and advocacy initiatives, alongside engaging with various stakeholders in society to further these causes, such as raising awareness, advocating and campaigning against anti-Hindu and anti-India hate and propaganda.

We have worked and are working on various issues, such as the violence committed against Hindus in Leicester, the oppression of Hindus in Bangladesh, the persecution of Pakistani Hindus and many more.

Hindus in Bangladesh have been continuously persecuted in Bangladesh and been victims of violent attacks, rape and murder. INSIGHT UK is committed to spreading awareness of the atrocities and brutality that Hindus in Bangladesh have experienced and continue to experience.

The U.S. Department of State's annual reports on International Religious Freedom have consistently documented incidents of violence and discrimination against religious minorities in Bangladesh, including Hindus. In addition, Hindu mandirs (temples) are frequently vandalised, and properties belonging to Hindus are often looted and set on fire.

INSIGHT UK is committed to highlighting the persecution of Hindus in Bangladesh to ensure lawmakers, the media and the wider public are aware of the atrocities being committed in Bangladesh. There needs to be stronger international pressure on the Bangladeshi government to ensure the safety and rights of minorities. We must secure justice and lasting peace for Hindus and other religious minorities in Bangladesh.



**INSIGHT UK**

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