

URGENT ACTION

THOUSANDS OF PROTESTERS ARRESTED ARBITRARILY

Rony Sheikh is one of more than 10,000 protesters (students, members of the opposition, as well as bystanders) who were arrested since July 2024, as part of the government's intense crackdown against protesters. His family claims that neither they nor their lawyers have been given access to Rony, and they fear that he may be subjected to torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment in custody. The government's harsh response has killed more than 400 people, including journalists and bystanders. The Bangladeshi authorities must immediately end the mass arrests, release all protesters detained solely for exercising their human rights, and ensure the right to fair trial for all detainees.

TAKE ACTION:

- Write a letter in your own words or using the sample below as a guide to one or both government officials listed. You can also email, fax, call or Tweet them.
- [Click here](#) to let us know the actions you took on **Second Urgent Action 71.24**. It's important to report because we share the total number with the officials we are trying to persuade and the people we are trying to help.

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Embassy of Bangladesh in the United States
His Excellency Ambassador Muhammad Imran
3510 International Dr NW,
Washington, DC 20008
Email: mission.washington@mofa.gov.bd
Salutation: Dear Ambassador Muhammad Imran

Dear Attorney General, or Dear Ambassador,

I am writing to express deep concern over the recent crackdown on **protesters in Bangladesh**. In addition to over 400 people being killed and thousands of others injured, more than 10,000 protesters have reportedly been arrested or arbitrarily detained in the last few weeks.

Among those who were arrested is 18-year-old **Rony Sheikh** who was arrested on July 22 while preparing for his exams. Rony is yet to meet with his family members or lawyer since his arrests.

The right to freedom of peaceful assembly is a human right, and these mass arrests and arbitrary detentions of protesters are alarming violations to this right. I urge the Bangladeshi authorities to immediately release Rony Sheikh and all other protesters who have been unlawfully detained solely for exercising their human rights. I ask that all protesters arrested for a recognizable offense receive a prompt and fair trial, and to grant access to their families and lawyers. Finally, I urge the Bangladeshi authorities to conduct a prompt, thorough, effective, independent, and impartial investigation into the deaths and injuries during the crackdown. Those found responsible for the unlawful use of force must be held accountable.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Since July 1, 2024, Bangladesh has been engulfed in widespread protests following the reinstatement of a controversial 30 percent quota in government jobs for the descendants of independence war veterans. This quota, previously abolished in 2018 due to similar protests, is seen by many, especially university students, as disproportionately favoring supporters of the ruling party. The protests, largely peaceful initially, turned violent after demonstrators were attacked, reportedly by members of the Bangladesh Chitra League (BCL) affiliated with the ruling party, on July 15 at Dhaka University and other institutions. These attacks included the use of rods, sticks, bricks, and firearms, leading to numerous injuries and escalating tensions across the country. Authorities have since arrested thousands of protesters.

On August 5, the former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina resigned and fled the country after 15 years of being in power. Over the weekend prior to that, some of the students were released on bail, and since Hasina's departure, more students have been released on bail. However, many are still in prison.

18-year-old **Rony Sheikh** was in the middle of his Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC – A/L equivalent) when he was arrested on July 22. According to his family members, the authorities came to his residence where he has rented a room, checked his mobile phone and arrested as he had videos of the protests in his mobile. He has not had access to his lawyer or family yet.

The situation deteriorated further on July 19, when the deadliest crackdown happened with 75 deaths reported in one day. The government responded by deploying the military and paramilitary forces such as the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) and Border Guards Bangladesh (BGB) and imposing a "shoot-on-sight" curfew along with a nationwide internet blackout. Amnesty International has verified multiple instances of unlawful force, including the death of [Abu Sayed](#), a 25-year-old student, who was shot by police officers from a distance of 15 meters while posing no threat. The Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) further escalated the situation by banning all rallies and processions in the capital, leading to [more aggressive tactics by security forces](#), including the unlawful use of tear gas, rubber bullets, and sound grenades and assault rifles.

As of July 31, 2024, more than 200 have been killed (the government statistics say 145), thousands injured and over 10,000 arrested. Most of them are charged in unnamed mass First Incident Reports.

This crisis underscores a broader pattern of repression in Bangladesh, where laws like the Digital Security Act 2018 and its successor, the Cyber Security Act 2023, are used to stifle dissent and free speech. The international community's intervention is crucial to pressuring the Bangladeshi government to uphold its human rights obligations and restore public trust in the rule of law.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: English, Bangla, or your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: November 30, 2024

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Rony (he/him) and other protesters

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa13/8388/2024/en/>