

Statement to the current situation in Bangladesh

Dear members of the student body,

as representatives of the student body, we would like to take a stand on the current situation in Bangladesh and the student protesting. We strongly condemn the recent violence against student protesters in Bangladesh and expresses solidarity with all affected, including current, past, and prospective Bangladeshi students of TUHH. We advocate for an immediate cessation of violence and a peaceful resolution, led by the government and law enforcement sectors.

Context and Background

The protests began as a demand for the reform of a discriminatory quota system that reserved 30% of government jobs for the families of freedom fighters from the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War. Students argued that both the first and second generations of these families had already benefited and called for a more merit-based system to ensure equal opportunities for all, including the underprivileged. Unfortunately, these peaceful demonstrations were met with violence from the loyalist youth wing of the ruling party, known as the Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) which was endorsed by the government, resulting in severe injuries to many students, including women. This aggression, coupled with subsequent police violence, led to the tragic deaths of six students, escalating the crisis.

Escalation of Violence

The situation worsened as government forces employed live ammunition, tear gas, and imposed a nationwide curfew. Reports indicate that over 200 people, including children, have been killed, and more than 20,000 have been injured. There are also alarming reports of police conducting nighttime raids, harassing, and detaining individuals without warrants, and coercing student leaders into making statements under duress. This aggressive crackdown has included the shutdown of internet services, further isolating protesters and limiting communication.

International and Institutional Condemnation

The international community, including the UN Human Rights Office, has condemned these actions, labeling them as shocking and unacceptable. The use of violence against peaceful protesters, including minors, and the harassment of injured individuals seeking medical care stand in stark contrast to the principles of human rights and democracy. The UN has called for an impartial investigation into these events by the UN or the International community to ensure accountability.

StuPa's Stance and Call to Action

The StuPa of TUHH condemns the use of live ammunition and the resultant deaths, advocating for an immediate halt to such actions. We call on other international student bodies and universities to denounce these unjust actions and to stand in solidarity with the students of Bangladesh. We also support the UN's call for an independent investigation to ensure justice for the victims and accountability for the perpetrators.

We reaffirm our commitment to supporting students globally in their fight for justice and human rights. We hope for a peaceful and just resolution to the current crisis in Bangladesh and stand ready to assist in amplifying the voices of those affected.

Sources:

New York Times: <https://www.nytimes.com/article/bangladesh-student-protests.html>

CBN News: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/bangladesh-news-protests-deaths-mass-arrests-job-quotas/>