



**Bangladesh**

**Hindu Buddhist Christian  
Unity Council**

**In View of the  
Ongoing Communal Violence  
and  
Upcoming Thirteenth National Parliamentary Election  
Press Conference**

**of**

**Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council**

**Date: Thursday, 29 January 2026**

**Time: 11:00 AM**

**Venue: Tofazzal Hossain (Manik Mia) Auditorium, National Press Club, Dhaka**

**Dear Journalist Friends,**

Please accept our heartfelt greetings and welcome on behalf of Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council, a human rights organization opposing religious discrimination. We sincerely thank you all for responding to our call and for being present at today's press conference.

**Ongoing Communal Violence**

**Dear Members of the Press,**

As you are aware, for more than two decades, we have been presenting before you, year after year, the overall picture of communal violence in Bangladesh. Continuing this tradition, we previously presented the communal situation covering the period from 4 August 2024, one day before the political change, until December of that year. That report mentioned a total of 2,184 incidents of communal violence across the country during that period. In early 2025, these findings were also published and disseminated through the United Nations fact-finding report.

Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council has prepared a partial overview of incidents of communal violence published in national newspapers and various media outlets over the past year, from January to December 2025. According to this overview, the total number of communal violence incidents stands at 522. Among these are: 61 incidents of murder (with 66 victims killed); 28 incidents of violence against women, including rape and gang rape; 95 incidents involving attacks on places of worship, idol vandalism, looting, and arson; 21 incidents of occupation or attempted occupation of land belonging to places of worship; 102 incidents of attacks, vandalism, looting, and arson targeting homes and business establishments; 38 incidents of abduction, extortion demands, and torture; 47 incidents involving attacks, death threats, and torture; 36 individuals subjected to torture and arrest on allegations of so-called religious blasphemy; 66 incidents of forcible occupation of homes, land, and business establishments; and 29 other incidents.

**Dear Journalist Friends,**

On the other hand, regarding violence involving minorities in Bangladesh, it was recently stated through a Facebook post by the Honorable Chief Adviser on 19 January that, based on the progress of investigations nationwide, a total of 645 incidents were identified in 2025, of which 71 incidents were found to contain communal elements. The remaining 574 incidents were claimed to be non-communal. The post further stated that among the 71 communal incidents, there were 38 incidents of temple vandalism, 1 incident of theft at a temple, 8 incidents of arson at temples, 23 incidents involving threats



to vandalize idols, damage within the premises of places of worship, and Facebook posts, and 1 incident of murder. It was also mentioned in the post that among the 574 incidents claimed to have no communal elements, there were 51 incidents related to neighbour disputes, 23 land-related disputes, 106 thefts, 26 incidents arising from previous enmity, 58 incidents of rape, 172 incidents of unnatural deaths, and the remaining 138 incidents due to other causes. From the Chief Adviser's post listing 71 communal incidents, it appears that except for incidents occurring at temples and within the premises of places of worship, no other incidents are considered communal in nature. Even among the 173 deaths officially acknowledged by the government, only 1 has been recognised as a communal killing, while the remaining 172 have been categorized as unnatural deaths.

It is further noteworthy that among the widely discussed murders of last year such as the killing of Animesh Sarkar in Ashashuni of Satkhira and hanging his body from a tree; the throat-slitting murder of a van driver named Sukumar in Lalpur of Natore; the hacking to death of gold trader Dilip Das in front of his wife in Ashulia of Savar; the suffocation killing of Piyas Majumder in Kotalipara of Gopalganj; the beating to death of Bhubesh Chandra Roy in Biral of Dinajpur; the brutal hacking murder of Subrata Das in Subarnachar of Noakhali; the brutal killing of indigenous youth Shubho Soren in Nawabganj of Dinajpur; the merciless killing of Dipu Chandra Das by beating and burning on false allegations of religious blasphemy in Bhaluka of Mymensingh and the shooting death of Bajendra Biswas; the brutal murder of fish trader Utpal Sarkar in Saltha of Faridpur; the shooting death of gold trader Prantosh Sarkar in Narsingdi; the lynching death of Amrit Mondol in Pangsha of Rajbari; the throat-slitting murder of freedom fighter Jogesh Chandra Roy and his wife Subarna Roy in Taraganj of Rangpur; the setting of fire to five Hindu and Buddhist households by locking doors from outside in Raozan of Chattogram; and the arson attacks on five Hindu homes in Pirojpur Sadar—are these not incidents of communal violence? These killings have already been identified as communal murders by national and international media, and human rights organizations have issued statements on these incidents at various times.

We wish to state in unequivocal terms: Does Nobel Peace Prize laureate Professor Dr. Muhammad Yunus intend to redefine “communalism” in a new way, suggesting that except for violence occurring solely at temples or within the premises of places of worship, no other incidents taking place in society and the state constitute communal violence?

Among the 173 deaths mentioned above, only 1 murder has been identified by the government as a “communal killing.” Even 58 Hindu women were victims of rape during this period, and these incidents have also been identified by the government as non-communal. We strongly condemn and protest against such an absurd definition of communalism.

It should be noted that the current government has consistently denied the ongoing communal violence and, at times, has attempted to divert the issue of “communal violence” through irrational explanations in order to mislead both national and international communities. However, national and international human rights organizations and media outlets have, at various times, published reports on this issue and informed the public of the real situation.

By branding the international Hindu religious organization ISKCON as “terrorist,” the principal of Pundarik Dham in Hathazari, Chattogram, **Prabhu Chinmoy Krishna Das Brahmachari**, has been sent to prison on false charges in multiple cases including sedition and murder, and mock trials in several of these cases have already begun. Demands to ban ISKCON have also been raised by certain identified quarters.



By implicating them in multiple false and harassing cases, several leaders of the Unity Council—including its General Secretary and a prominent human rights movement leader of the minority communities, eminent lawyer **Advocate Rana Dasgupta** have been forced to stay away from normal life. From today's press conference, we demand the withdrawal of all false cases filed against minority leaders prior to the election and the unconditional release of those who are currently imprisoned on fabricated charges.

### **The Upcoming Thirteenth National Parliamentary Election**

**Dear Brothers and Sisters of the Press,**

Only 14 days remain until the Thirteenth National Parliamentary Election scheduled to be held on 12 February 2026. As in the previous year, ongoing communal violence still persists. Based on information collected up to 27 January 2026, that is, up to the day before yesterday, a total of 42 incidents have occurred so far. Among these are 11 incidents of murder, 1 incident of rape, 9 incidents of attacks and looting at temples and churches, and 21 incidents involving attacks and looting of homes and business establishments, land grabbing, and other incidents.

At present, amid a frightening situation prevailing in the minds of minority communities due to the aforementioned reasons, and while mob violence continues, the Thirteenth National Parliamentary Election is set to be held on 12 February. Across the country, religious and ethnic minorities and indigenous communities especially women and young men and women, are living in constant fear and anxiety. Minority businesspersons are unable to conduct their businesses normally from their own establishments. In various regions of the country, members of minority communities particularly students, young men and women, and people of all genders, are being compelled to undergo internal displacement, considering it to be safer.

Regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, or caste, there remain many challenges to holding an inclusive election with the spontaneous participation of all. This is because hateful rhetoric by communal groups and hatred and violence against those with differing opinions due to differences in religious beliefs are not only destroying communal harmony, but such provocative statements are also inflicting religious harm upon religious and ethnic minorities and marginalized communities. As a result, an extreme level of fear and anxiety is being created among minority men and women, adolescents, and children. Such hate-filled and provocative rhetoric and communal violence are, in effect, creating communal divisions, which is extremely alarming and condemnable. Due to the continuous occurrence of these communal violent incidents, religious and ethnic minorities and indigenous communities across the country are not only outraged, but are also deeply fearful and anxious about their future in their own homeland. In such a situation, neither the government, the administration, the Election Commission, nor political parties have been able to inspire any hope or confidence among them. In the upcoming election, minority communities are eager to exercise their civic rights through voting, yet their fears and anxieties regarding their lives, livelihoods, property, and dignity have by no means been alleviated, which may discourage them from voting. They cannot be blamed for this under any circumstances.

Responsibility for this must be borne by the government, the administration, the Election Commission, and political parties. From today's press conference, we call upon the Election Commission and all relevant authorities to take firm action to bring about an immediate change in this undesirable situation.



Most members of minority communities have consistently contested elections, participated in election campaigns, and voted in favor of non-communal political forces. At the present time, this has become an outright challenge.

In this national parliamentary election, “Yes” and “No” votes have been introduced in the name of a referendum, through which secularism has been excluded from being declared a fundamental principle of state governance. The government and the Election Commission are directly campaigning in favor of this, which we consider to be sorrowful, unfortunate, and clearly biased. We further believe that the Constitution of a non-communal, secular, and discrimination-free Bangladesh, based on the hopes and aspirations of seventy-five million people at the time and the dreams of thirty million martyrs achieved through the Liberation War is now facing a serious challenge. We believe this will stand as an obstacle to minority communities obtaining equal rights as citizens of Bangladesh. In this situation, ensuring that minority communities can safely go to polling centres and cast their votes freely is a major challenge.

No specific initiatives have so far been observed on the part of the government and the Election Commission to create a safe environment and ensure protection particularly for religious and ethnic minorities and indigenous communities during the pre-election, election period, and post-election phases.

Therefore, from today’s press conference, the Unity Council places the following clear demands before the Election Commission and the government:

1. We strongly demand that the Election Commission create a level playing field and foster a positive environment so that religious and ethnic minority voters can go to polling centres without obstruction, face no barriers in contesting elections, and enjoy equal opportunities to participate in election campaigns;
2. The use of religion and communalism in election campaigns must be prohibited. If any candidate or party uses religion or communalism in the election, provisions for punishment must be enforced;
3. An environment suitable for fearless and unobstructed voting by minority and indigenous communities in the upcoming Thirteenth National Parliamentary Election must be ensured. If necessary, their security should be guaranteed through the deployment of the armed forces;
4. In order to ensure the security of religious and ethnic minorities and maintain public safety and law and order during the pre- and post-election periods, minority-dominated areas should be identified as “high-risk” areas, with the deployment of police, Ansar, and the arrangement of regular patrols by the Army, RAB, and BGB. We further strongly demand the formation of a “Monitoring Cell” for regular oversight;
5. All measures taken by the Election Commission to ensure minority security should be comprehensively communicated to Deputy Commissioners, Superintendents of Police, all members of election-related law enforcement agencies, leaders of political parties and alliances, election candidates, and supporters of candidates. These measures should also be broadcast on radio and television for public awareness;
6. All religious places of worship such as mosques, temples, pagodas, and churches must be prohibited from being used for election campaigning;



7. Religious hate speech, statements, the spread of false rumors, or any such propaganda should be treated as punishable offenses under Sections 2(b)(ra) and 2(b)(rra) of the Special Powers Act as “prejudicial acts” or “harmful activities,” and appropriate punitive measures should be taken. At the same time, immediate steps should be taken to cancel the candidacy of those responsible.

We wish to place complete hope and trust in the Election Commission and the government. It is also true that in the past, despite placing our trust, we have been repeatedly disappointed. We now wish to place our hope and confidence in the current government and the Election Commission that we will no longer be thrown into the quicksand of such disappointment in the future.

**Dear Journalist Friends,**

Considering the prevailing situation, we place the following demands before all political parties, urging them to include these points in their respective election manifestos and campaigns:

- a. Immediate steps must be taken to ensure the overall security of religious and ethnic minorities and indigenous communities by recognizing them as “more vulnerable populations,” and a zero-tolerance policy against perpetrators of communal violence must be declared;
- b. A public commitment must be made, based on consensus among participating political parties and contesting candidates, that minority voters will not be harassed, oppressed, or tortured by attaching various “tags” during the pre- and post-election periods;
- c. A commitment must be made to build a non-communal, secular, discrimination-free, and humane state to protect the overall interests and rights of religious and ethnic minorities and indigenous communities, and to achieve an inclusive society, a participatory state system, and a democratic transition;
- d. To protect the interests and existence of religious minorities, the long-standing demands of minority communities outlined below must be included in the election manifesto for immediate implementation eight (8) demands in total:
  1. Enactment of a Minority Protection Act;
  2. Establishment of a National Minority Commission and a Ministry for Minority Affairs;
  3. Removal of all bureaucratic obstacles to the proper implementation of the Vested Property Return Act and the immediate restitution of ownership and possession of land to victims in accordance with tribunal verdicts;
  4. As a result of continuous persecution, oppression, and discrimination over the past seven decades, religious minority communities have shifted from “progressive communities” to “backward communities.” In light of Article 28(4) of the existing Constitution, to constitutionally ensure adequate representation of religious and ethnic minorities in the National Parliament of Bangladesh, sixty (60) parliamentary seats should be designated and reserved for minorities to be elected directly by minority voters;
  5. Enactment of a law to protect Devottor (deity-dedicated) property;
  6. Enactment of an Anti-Discrimination Act, along with ensuring proportional participation and representation of minority communities at all levels, including all elected bodies and state institutions, as well as the police and armed forces;



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7. Proper implementation of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Accord and effective enforcement of the three Hill District Council Acts and the Chittagong Hill Tracts Regional Council Act, and the establishment of a separate Land Commission for indigenous peoples of the plains;
8. To further encourage the religious observance of all minority religious communities, in addition to existing government holidays, declaration of government holidays as follows: three (3) days for the Hindu community from Ashtami to Dashami during Sharadiya Durga Puja, one (1) day for the Buddhist community on Prabarana Purnima, and one (1) day for the Christian community on Easter Sunday. In addition, religious trusts should be abolished and transformed into foundations.

### Dear Brothers and Sisters of the Press,

You have listened patiently to the statement presented at today's press conference for a considerable length of time. We hope that through your sharp and responsible reporting, you will sincerely endeavor to present these issues for the awareness of the government, the Election Commission, all political parties, and all democracy-minded citizens, in the interest of democracy and national unity.

With sincere thanks and gratitude to you all once again, we hereby conclude the statement read today.

Thank you all.

(Monindra Kumar Nath)  
Acting General Secretary

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On behalf of Oikya Parishad, the written statement at the press conference was presented by the organization's Acting General Secretary, Manindra Kumar Nath. Present on the stage were the organization's two Presidents, Professor Dr. Nimchandra Bhowmik and Nirmal Rosario; members of the Presidium—Advocate Subrata Chowdhury, Kajol Debnath, Ranjan Karmakar, and J. L. Bhowmik. The event was moderated by one of the Organizational Secretaries, Advocate Dipankar Ghosh.

In addition, among those present at the press conference were one of the Joint General Secretaries, Rabindranath Bose; Organizational Secretary Padmabati Devi; Atul Chandra Mondal, Hridoy Gupta, Supriya Bhattacharya, Parimal Bhowmik, Prantosh Acharya Shibu, Shimul Saha, Sujan Roy, Sajib Sarkar, and other leaders.

(Monindra Kumar Nath)  
Acting General Secretary