

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002286/24
to the Commission
Emmanouil Fragkos (ECR)
(28 October 2024)**

Subject: Islamist terrorism and persecution of religious minorities in Bangladesh

The overthrow of the government of Bangladesh, recently democratically elected on 7 January 2024, through demonstrations and ultimately by military intervention, moves the country further away from the democratic standards that are a necessary precondition for multi-level EU support to Bangladesh.

Bangladesh's recently ousted prime minister, Sheikh Hasina, has condemned the role of Islamist terrorist elements in the government's overthrow.

Meanwhile, it is important to take account of:

- the murders of dozens of civil servants and police officers;
- the targeted terrorist attacks on members of religious minorities, such as Hindus, Christians and Buddhists, and on their places of worship, with the clear aim of driving them out of Bangladesh;
- the blatant support by the Qatari media network Al Jazeera (which is sympathetic to the Muslim Brotherhood) given to the forces that overthrew the government;
- the public declaration by İbrahim Karagül, adviser to the Turkish President, about the deployment of Turkish ground-to-air missiles along the border between India and Bangladesh and of Turkish unmanned drones in southern Bangladesh.

In view of this:

1. In addition to the awaited proposal on the suspension of GSP+ preferential trading status for Bangladesh until the elected government is reinstated, what other steps will the Commission take to ensure that democracy is restored as quickly as possible in Bangladesh?
2. Does it plan to intervene in order to reduce the militarisation of the country?

Submitted: 29.10.2024

**Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Kallas on behalf of the European Commission
(17 December 2024)**

The EU pursues a policy of engagement with Bangladesh's interim government to maximise the opportunities for dialogue and influence at a crucial time.

In this context, the EU has maintained its political dialogue meetings with Bangladesh by holding the 11th EU-Bangladesh Joint Commission in Dhaka ⁽¹⁾.

Furthermore, the first explanatory meeting in the negotiations on the draft Partnership and Cooperation Agreement took place on 5-6 November 2024.

The EU is ready to support and accompany a transition process in Bangladesh, which should be peaceful and inclusive, respectful of democratic principles, human rights and the rule of law, and which would lead to democratic elections and ensure accountability. The EU will keep monitoring the situation in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh is an Everything But Arms (EBA) beneficiary, monitored under the enhanced engagement process, aiming to facilitate and incentivise beneficiary countries to make progress on critical areas with regard to the 15 core human rights and labour rights international conventions listed in the Generalised Scheme of Preferences Regulation ⁽²⁾.

Bangladesh has to respect the principles of the 15 core conventions on human rights and labour rights to keep the EBA.

⁽¹⁾ On 4 November 2024, the 11th EU-Bangladesh Joint Commission took place in Dhaka. It was preceded by the Subgroup on Human Rights and Good Governance on 31 October 2024. The Subgroup on Economy and Trade took place 22 October 2024: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/bangladesh-european-union-and-bangladesh-hold-11th-joint-commission-meeting_en; https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/bangladesh-european-union-and-bangladesh-discuss-cooperation-uphold-human-rights_en

⁽²⁾ Regulation (EU) No 978/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 applying a scheme of generalised tariff preferences and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 732/2008; <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32012R0978>
