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Dr. Muhiuddin Khan Alamgir
Minister of Home Affairs
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Bangladesh Secretariat
Dhaka

February 22, 2013

Dear Mr. Minister,

I want to thank you for the time you afforded me the other day to discuss the ethnic cleansing of Hindus in Bangladesh. In all candor, however, and as you probably discerned, I found the discussion itself troubling to say the least. Your response was, in essence, that your government has no intention of doing anything other than it is doing now and that the status quo is what we all should expect from Bangladesh's Awami League government. Yet, as I noted during our meeting, your various and sundry responses did not even attempt to address what is happening to Hindus in your country except to say that you are, in effect, 'working on it.' That you have been in office for over four years and your efforts remain marginally helpful at best, should make any discerning individual wonder why you find that acceptable.

Allow me to review briefly the situation you find acceptable. With my own meager resources, I have been able to confirm the following with at least two independent eye witnesses, and many of them were also covered in local media; as of last year, the government has not prosecuted these matters or punished the perpetrators (save in a few cases a few moments of comfortable detention, followed by what amounted to permanent bail).

- During the Awami League's first year in office, there was about one major anti-Hindu incident a week; incidents including murder, rape (including gang rape), child abduction, religious desecration, forced conversion, land grabbing, and physical attacks.

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- The second year showed no letup in such attacks, and there was one 27-day period that saw over seven major attacks, or almost one every three days. Yet, your administration never thought that significant enough for more action than what you were doing already.
- Organizations including Bangladesh Minority Watch and Hindu American Foundation both have extensive evidence that the third year, 2011, was no better.
- As we moved into the Awami League's fourth year in office, I confirmed at least 15 major, specifically anti-Hindu attacks; and as we moved out, there were about 1.25 such attacks per week in the fourth quarter. In between, there was one nine-day period in May that saw a murder in broad daylight, the abduction of a child walking to a Hindu festival, and two gang rapes. Four horrific actions in nine days and the government took it as a normal nine days in Bangladesh.

As if to confirm the problem for Hindus in your country, you told me that I should provide you with specific cases and you would investigate them. Wonderful, but as I noted during our meeting, it is rather odd that you, the Home Minister sitting in Dhaka would be dependent on some man from Chicago for evidence of human rights abuses in Bangladesh. If that is the case, it suggests even more serious problems. Moreover, if the system of law and order is functioning correctly, these crimes would be handled on the local level by local officials and would not require action by the Home Minister of the country.

Further confirmation of the problem came when I raised the issue of ethnic cleansing of Hindus in Bangladesh, and you replied by telling me you "have

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seen the enclaves of the Red Indians in the United States.” Another answer you gave to these terrible things was that “union membership has declined in the United States.” As I noted when we met, how that can have any relation to the atrocities occurring in your country bespeaks of a true disinclination to recognize their severity. Similarly, your repeated insistence that “33 people were killed in Connecticut” indicates your determination to do nothing that will effectively protect Hindu citizens of Bangladesh.

I will also refer you to the esteemed Bangladeshi Supreme Court lawyer and human rights activist, Advocate Rabindra Ghosh, who was with us in your office. He has extensive evidence of anti-Hindu atrocities, investigated and vetted; and has been fighting this battle for years, including every day that the Awami League has been in office. Just recently, however, I have confirmed even more atrocities, including:

- Eti Biwas (23 years old) from Khulna district was abducted on 21 December 2012 after her family resisted the seizure of their land by local officials and miscreants (a very common action against the Hindus of your country). The distraught family met with me after the government has taken no action, despite their pleas, to help recover the young woman who remains missing.

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- In far north Dinajpur, an impoverished village of Hindus was attacked by over 100 marauding Muslims who went from hovel to hovel, destroying homes, personal effects, crops, and livestock. While the poor villages have rebuilt the best they can, the invaders continue to threaten to “finish the job” if the villagers do not leave. The only thing preventing that right now is four local Muslim policemen who come to the village while the local police and administration itself refuses to act.
- In the same area, a young mother told us how the local village official came to her home and raped her while her husband was working in the field. She lives in a hovel; he in a mansion. This is a common practice by this and other officials, and there has never been a prosecution of any of these rapes.

While I have some more evidence in these cases, Advocate Rabindra Ghosh has evidence of the two Dinajpur cases and many others.

You might also be interested to know that many MPs in your party (including the MP for the third part of Dinajpur) are actively involved in the seizure of Hindu land. It is well known to so many Bangladeshis that I am surprised that you seem unaware of it. Again, Advocate Rabindra Ghosh has additional evidence.

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You should also know that numerous Bangladesh human rights activists investigating these matters (including Mr. Ghosh), have been arrested and beaten by your own police and other members of your government.

I am also attaching some information from my book, *A Quite Case of Ethnic Cleansing: the Murder of Bangladesh's Hindus*, which will come out with a second edition later this year. In June of last year, I provided that same information to Bangladeshi Ambassador to the United States Akramul Qader. Like you, he believes that current government actions are sufficient and that it needs take no further action.

You insisted that you need take no action save on individual cases; but you belied that when I asked what would happen if you found it difficult to sell your garments competitively on the international market. You said that fixing the problem would be expensive and this would take money from you. So, as you admit there is a problem that is amenable to solutions. Good, that is a start. Let us work together and give effective protection to the minority citizens of your county. The choice and consequences of that choice are yours.

Please know that, as I said when we met, I have a great deal of affection for the people of Bangladesh (unlike many in your government, that includes ALL the people); and I would like to see these atrocities end amicably—but end they must and they will. I shall not rest until they do.

Dr. Richard L. Benkin
United States Citizen

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Cc: Senator Richard Durbin, Majority Whip
Senator Mark Kirk
Senator Tom Coburn
Congressman Eric Cantor, Majority Leader
Congressman Peter Roskam, Chief Deputy Majority Whip
Congressman Ed Royce
Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard
Hindu American Foundation
United States Commission on International Religious Freedom