

**Conclusions of the meeting
on the political situation in B
angladesh**

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LORELY BURT
Member of Parliament for Solihull

Thank you so much for coming along to my meeting to discuss the political crisis in Bangladesh last week. We are honoured that ten parliamentarians were also able to join us.

After a very interesting and balanced introduction by Dr Hasanat Husain MBE, we had a wide-ranging and at times passionate discussion, and reached the following conclusions:

- In order to protect peace and democracy in Bangladesh, free and fair elections must be able to take place, with the supervision of international observers if necessary.
- Journalists in Bangladesh must be free to report on political events without fear or favour and media freedoms must be respected.
- We should share the conclusions of the discussion with the chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Bangladesh, Anne Mainie MP, in order to continue the discussion.

I have also written to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to express concern over the situation in Bangladesh. I look forward to sharing the response with you.

I also want to note that since my meeting last week, disturbing reports have emerged that the ruling government of Sheikh Hasina has cut off the electricity supply to her opponent Begum Zia's office at Gulshan. These reports say that Begum Zia has been forcibly blockaded since 4th January 2015, that her internet and mobile connections are severed, and that the government is threatening to cut off the gas and water supply.

It is difficult for us in the UK to fully understand fully what is going on in Bangladesh without visiting the country. However, I believe that the situation in Bangladesh is dire and that the international community has the ability to do more. We all want to see democracy in Bangladesh secured for future generations.

Yours sincerely,

Lorely Burt MP

Member of Parliament for Solihull

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