



EFF STATEMENT ON THE RESIGNATION OF BANGLADESH PRIME MINISTER AMID YOUTH PROTESTS

Tuesday, 6 August 2024.

The Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) notes the resignation of Bangladesh's Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina following weeks of intense youth-led protests. These demonstrations, initially sparked by grievances over an unfair quota system for government jobs, escalated into a broader call for accountability and Hasina's removal.

The protests, driven by the 'Students Against Discrimination' group, emerged from a deep-seated frustration with high youth unemployment and systemic inequalities. Bangladesh faces a critical challenge, with nearly 32 million young people out of work or education in a population of 170 million.

The contentious quota system reserved a significant portion of government jobs for specific groups, including 10% for women, 10% for people from disadvantaged districts, and 5% for ethnic minorities, which was understandable. However, an entire one-third of the jobs were unjustly allocated to the descendants of freedom fighters, perpetuating a system of nepotism and inequality.

Despite initial peaceful protests, the government's heavy-handed response resulted in police and state violence that led to over 300 deaths, arrests, and the stifling of basic freedoms, including the suspension of internet connections and the closure of educational institutions. When the Supreme Court scrapped most of the quotas on 21 July, the youth protesters shifted their demands towards seeking justice and accountability from Hasina, culminating in her resignation.

This scenario is not isolated. Around the world, young people face violent repression when they dare to speak out against injustices. In South Africa, the "Fees Must Fall" movement saw students met with police brutality. In Kenya, Gen Z protesters face severe crackdowns, and in Nigeria, the #EndSARS movement highlighted the deadly consequences of state violence against young activists. Such heavy-handed responses to youth protests are intolerable and a violation of fundamental human rights.

The resignation of Bangladesh's Prime Minister is a clear message from the people, particularly the youth, that their voices and demands for justice cannot be silenced. The EFF stands in solidarity with the youth of Bangladesh and calls for the interim leadership to facilitate free and fair elections promptly, ensuring stability and respect for democratic processes.

We urge global leaders to heed the voices of young people and address their legitimate concerns through dialogue and reform, rather than repression. The EFF will continue to advocate for the rights and freedoms of young people everywhere, pushing for policies that ensure their empowerment and participation in shaping their futures.

ISSUED BY THE ECONOMIC FREEDOM FIGHTERS

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