

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 160

Expressing concern about the threat posed to democracy and human rights
by theocratic groups operating in South Asia.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 28, 2019

Mr. BANKS submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the
Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Expressing concern about the threat posed to democracy
and human rights by theocratic groups operating in
South Asia.

Whereas Bangladesh achieved independence in 1971 and es-
tablished a secular democratic state, which is home to
over 163 million Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Christians,
and atheists;

Whereas this freedom was won at the cost of approximately
3,000,000 deaths, more than 10,000,000 displaced, and
200,000 women raped, many at the hands of Islamist
militants led by Jamaat-e-Islami;

Whereas Bangladesh plays a critical role in the safe and vol-
untary repatriation of over 800,000 Rohingya Muslims
who have taken refuge in Bangladesh from religious and
political persecution in Myanmar;

Whereas religious minorities, including Hindus, Buddhists, Christians, and Ahamadi Muslims, have been attacked by Jamaat-e-Islami, and their subsidiary Islami Chhatra Shibir, as a result of which hundreds of homes have been damaged, shops damaged or looted, and temples vandalized;

Whereas Jamaat-e-Islami applauded the assassination of Punjab Governor Salmaan Taseer for defending the rights of Asia Bibi, a Christian woman accused of blasphemy in Pakistan;

Whereas Jamaat-e-Islami led funeral prayers for the terrorist who assassinated Salmaan Taseer, during which they prayed for the strength and power to enforce Shariah throughout the world;

Whereas Jamaat-e-Islami has refused to accept the acquittal of Asia Bibi on blasphemy charges and worked to prevent her from leaving Pakistan where she faces mortal danger;

Whereas Jamaat-e-Islami members have been linked with al-Qaida and the Taliban;

Whereas Jamaat-e-Islami and affiliated theocratic extremist groups pose an immediate and ongoing threat to stability and secular democracy in South Asia, leaving religious minorities at grave risk of continuing violence;

Whereas the European Parliament adopted a resolution urging the Bangladesh Nationalist Party to unequivocally distance itself from Jamaat-e-Islami;

Whereas respected Bangladeshi jurist and political opposition leader Kamal Hossain has publicly called for the Bangladesh Nationalist Party to sever its ties with Jamaat-e-Islami;

Whereas various organizations in the United States that receive Federal funds, such as the Islamic Circle of North America, share leadership and are openly affiliated with Jamaat-e-Islami;

Whereas Helping Hand for Relief and Development, a registered charitable organization in the United States, openly partnered in 2017 with Pakistan’s Falah-e-Insaniat Foundation, which the United States Government designated as a terrorist organization in 2016;

Whereas repeated attacks on religious minorities, expanding religious extremism, and growing destabilization caused by radical groups, including Jamaat-e-Islami and its affiliates, undermine United States economic and strategic interests in Bangladesh; and

Whereas there is a growing trend of Islamic extremism in South Asia tied to pro-Islamic State of Iraq and Syria activity, with several arrests of Islamists linked with the terrorist group made in recent years: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) expresses its sense that the United States
3 should more actively engage with the Government of
4 Bangladesh regarding shared interests in safe-
5 guarding human rights, religious freedom, and sec-
6 ular democracy in Bangladesh, while preventing the
7 growth of religious extremism and militancy;

8 (2) calls on the Governments of Bangladesh
9 and Pakistan to deny, disrupt, and dismantle the
10 ability of Jamaat-e-Islami and its affiliates to con-

1 tinue posing an immediate and ongoing threat to re-
2 ligious freedom and regional stability;

3 (3) urges the Bangladesh Nationalist Party and
4 all political parties to unequivocally distance them-
5 selves from Jamaat-e-Islami and other extremist or-
6 ganizations;

7 (4) calls on the United States Agency for Inter-
8 national Development, the Department of State, the
9 Department of Homeland Security, and other rel-
10 evant agencies, to halt all partnerships and funding
11 arrangements with groups affiliated with Jamaat-e-
12 Islami and its domestic affiliates, including the Is-
13 lamic Circle of North America, ICNA Relief, Help-
14 ing Hand for Relief and Development, and the Mus-
15 lim Ummah of North America; and

16 (5) calls on law enforcement to investigate the
17 activities of Helping Hand for Relief and Develop-
18 ment in Pakistan and Kashmir, including reported
19 collaboration with components of the Pakistani ter-
20 rorist network, Lashkar-e-Taiba.

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