

Non-Communal Democratic Gender Equal **Bangladesh**

Dear Friends,

You will be glad to know that The Hunger Project- Bangladesh has actively participated in a protest against the fundamental fanatic forces attempting to curb women rights and to impede women empowerment in Bangladesh. The protest was held before the National Press Club on May 11, 2013, with around 25000 participants, representing different social, cultural and non-government organizations, besides proactive individuals. The protest was one of the historic gatherings of women to protest the 13-point demand of Hefajat-e-Islam, a rising fanatic group, to curb the constitutional rights of women in Bangladesh.

Ms. Nasima Akhter Joly, Deputy Director-Programs of The Hunger Project led the organization to the protest. In her speech, she expressed strong revulsion against such heinous attempt of the fundamentalists to take the country back to the Dark ages. She said, "With a commitment to create a non-communal, democratic and gender- equal Bangladesh, I'm strongly opposing the insurgent activities and demands of Hefajat-e-Islam and requesting everyone to raise a solid protest against them. They've done enough; not anymore! In the disguise of a non-political entity, Hefajat is illogically and illegally preaching against women and is attempting to restrain our democratic and human rights. We, the women of Bangladesh, refuse these fanatic rogues. I strongly state that, for last 42 years since our liberation, women of Bangladesh are working as the vital force for our socio-economic development and prosperity. In such a moment, in the name of 13 demands, these fanatics are trying to hinder women empowerment. But I request you, let's stand shoulder to shoulder; let's protest these fanatic militants; let's develop our Bangladesh as a secular sanctuary for the humanity."

Famous Bangladeshi women activists, like Adv. Sultana Kamal, ex-advisor of the former caretaker Government and Executive Director of ASAK; Khushi Kabir, Executive Director of Nijera Kori; Social activist Ayesha Khanome, President, Bangladesh Mohila Parishad; Barrister Tureen Afroz, prosecutor of International Crimes Tribunal; Momtaz Begum, Act. Chair, Jatiya Mohila Sngstha; Shirin Akhter, Executive Director, Karmazibi Nari; Rokeya Kabir; VC of Dhaka university Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique etc. were also present in the protest.

Finally, A 10-point declaration by the women leaders was placed, including urges to the government to take legal action against the militants, implementing all of the national & international charters for women development and gender equity, ensuring secularity and equality, ensuring compensation and rehabilitation support to the victims of accidents in RMG sector and ensuring security to indigenous and religious minorities.



The Hunger Project - Bangladesh

