

Durbin, Young, Senators Urge Bangladesh Pm To End The Government's Harassment Of Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Professor Yunus

January 22 2024 5:25 PM



WASHINGTON – U.S. Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL) and U.S. Senator Todd Young (R-IN) along with U.S. Senators Tim Kaine (D-VA), Dan Sullivan (R-AK), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), Ed Markey (D-MA), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Peter Welch (D-VT), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), Ron Wyden (D-OR), and Cory Booker (D-NJ) sent the following letter to Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina urging the Bangladeshi government to end the persistent harassment of Nobel Peace Prize laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus—and to end its pattern of

abusing the justice system to target critics of the government more broadly. For more than a decade, Professor Yunus has faced more than 150 unsubstantiated cases brought against him in Bangladesh.

The Senators wrote, “The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk and human rights organizations such as Amnesty International have noted irregularities in proceedings against him, including the most recent six month prison sentencing for allegedly violating the country’s labor laws that is being appealed. These reputable organizations argue the speed and repeated use of criminal proceedings are indicative of politically motivated judicial abuses. Moreover, the repeated and sustained harassment of Yunus mirrors what many Bangladeshi civil society members also face in an increasingly restrictive environment.”

Durbin led the effort in the United States Congress to award Mr. Yunus the Congressional Gold Medal in 2013, recognizing his pioneering contributions to the fight against global poverty.

The letter continued, “The United States values its longstanding relationship with Bangladesh, which includes close bilateral and multilateral coordination on numerous common interests. Ending the harassment of Professor Yunus, and others exercising their freedom of speech to criticize the government, will help continue this important relationship.”

Durbin has continuously spoken out against other nation’s governments that restrict democracy and free speech. Recently, he [took](#) to the Senate floor to urge the release of political prisoners from Russia, Belarus, Algeria, Cambodia, and Guatemala.

A copy of the letter can be found [here](#).