June 20, 2024

Anti-Discrimination Student Movement in Bangladesh:
Statement of Solidarity from the Democratic Socialists of America, Chattanooga Chapter

The Chattanooga Chapter of the Democratic Socialists of America supports the struggling citizens of Bangladesh who are presently demonstrating for reform of the damaging employment quota system and striving to free their nation from oppression. What started as a student demonstration has developed into a larger movement that unites people from all social backgrounds in a cry for justice, equality, and democratic rights. The name of this burgeoning movement is the 'Anti-Discrimination Student Movement'. We denounce the violent measures implemented by the Bangladeshi government intended to suppress this movement. The government actions have only exacerbated the situation and violated citizens' fundamental rights.

According to reports, the government has isolated the nation by cutting off banks, ATMs, mobile networks, the internet, money transfers, cell top-ups, and transportation services. Bangladesh is somewhat isolated from the outside world as a result, and there is still a shortage of full details regarding the situation. The government also announced a curfew and a prohibition against gathering, heightening the climate of fear and uncertainty. The inability of citizens to speak up or organize for their fundamental rights and demands has left them living in perpetual terror.

Over one hundred students and working-class individuals, aged fifteen to thirty-five, have tragically and alarmingly lost their lives because of attacks by police and the goons of the ruling party. This ruthless crackdown is an egregious breach of human rights and needs to be strongly denounced.

We are deeply concerned about the safety and well-being of the protesters, the Bangladeshi individuals impacted by these severe measures, and the families of Chattanoogans who are originally from Bangladesh. The government of Bangladesh has blatantly violated the people's fundamental right to demonstrate for progress. As socialists, we recognize that the working class is especially vulnerable under repressive governments but also holds the most power to incite change. We stand in solidarity with the students, workers, and generally the people of Bangladesh fighting against growing nationalism and cronyism.

We ask the global community to acknowledge the seriousness of the situation in Bangladesh and to put pressure on the government to lift the curfew, restore communication, and respect the right of its people to peaceful protest. We implore the Bangladeshi government to hold substantive discussions with the demonstrators to address their concerns and guarantee a just, open, and merit-based hiring process for public positions as requested by the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement.

The people of Bangladesh are fighting for democratic rights, equality, and justice. We support them in their struggle against prejudice and oppression.

In solidarity,
Democratic Socialists of America, Chattanooga Chapter