

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 22, 2024

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina
Prime Minister's Office
Old Sangsad Bhaban
Tejgaon, Dhaka-1215
Bangladesh

Dear Prime Minister Hasina,

We write urging you to end to the persistent harassment of Nobel Peace Prize laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus—and the pattern of abusing laws and 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 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.

Yunus' pioneering work on microfinance offered greater economic promise for many Bangladeshis and millions of impoverished people around the world. The United States Congress awarded him the Congressional Gold Medal in 2013, recognizing his pioneering contributions to the fight against global poverty. Such efforts should not be undermined over ongoing political vendettas, especially in a democratic nation of laws.

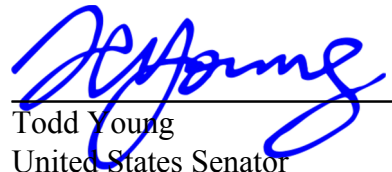
The United States values its longstanding relationship with Bangladesh, which includes close bilateral and multilateral coordination on numerous common interests. Ending the harassment of Professor Yunus, and others exercising their freedom of speech to criticize the government, will help continue this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

Thank you for your prompt consideration of this matter.

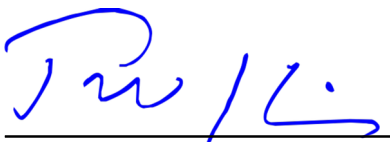
Sincerely,



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



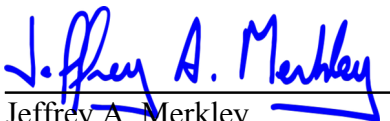
Todd Young
United States Senator



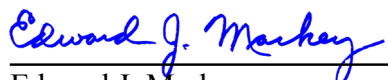
Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Dan Sullivan
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



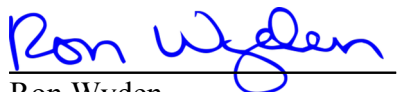
Peter Welch
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator