

RELEASE DATE
JUNE 2025



Kofi Annan
Foundation

ELECTORAL VULNERABILITY INDEX 2025-2026

COUNTRY ANALYSIS

BANGLADESH

GENERAL ELECTIONS: JUNE 2026



BACKGROUND

In 2008, the Awami League- the oldest political party in Bangladesh, was elected to power, and proceeded to win subsequent elections in 2014, 2018 and 2024, each amidst allegations of vote-rigging, intimidation and other electoral offenses. Since 2008 the country was listed as a 'Hybrid Regime' by the Economist Intelligence Unit, and its ranking on the V-Dem indices since this point revealed a "steady downward spiral away from the fundamental elements of democracy."

By 2024, Bangladesh was scoring 40/100 on Freedom Houses's Freedom in the World Index, and the 2023 Varieties of Democracy Report listed the country as an electoral autocracy.

The increasingly authoritarian nature of the Awami government was marked by corruption, arrests and imprisonment of opposition leaders, disappearances and extra-judicial killings, the systematic weakening of institutions including the police, judiciary and bureaucracy, and greater government control over media and public discourse through legislation such as the Information and Communication Technology Act or the 2018 Digital Security Act.

In June 2024 student protests at the lack of public sector jobs provoked a violent reaction from the security services, causing widespread unrest that resulted in the resignation of the Prime Minister and her departure to India.

Following negotiations, a caretaker government was formed and Nobel Laureate Muhammed Yunus installed as Prime Minister. He subsequently formed an electoral reform Commission and announced new elections would be held by June 2026.

UPCOMING ELECTIONS

The interim government has stated that elections will not be held until critical reforms to the judiciary, legislature, civil service and electoral management bodies are completed, however there is no clear timeline for their implementation, nor clear agreement yet on what reforms will be undertaken.

In February 2025 the Electoral Reform Commission released its first set of proposed reforms which revealed an ambition to radically transform Bangladesh's political institutions and its electoral processes. They included increasing parliamentary seats to 400, holding local elections before national elections, and changing the tenure and role of the Prime Minister, amongst other changes. The report also proposed a series of measures to improve the independence, accountability and transparency of the Electoral Commission, in part through the establishment of a parliamentary oversight mechanism. The Electoral Commission's subsequent rejection of several of the key proposals has complicated the reform effort and makes it unclear what, if any reforms will be implemented ahead of June 2026.



POTENTIAL DRIVERS OF CONFLICT

According to the Electoral Vulnerability Index (EVI), these are the factors that contribute most to the increased potential for violence:

- Number of consecutive elections with moderate violence
- Various forms of violence around previous elections; boycotts
- Score on V-DEM 'Election Free and Fair' Index
- Total Population
- Restrictions on opposition parties during previous elections
- Lack of capacity of the Electoral Management Body
- Score on V-DEM 'Clean Elections' Index
- Lack of, or lack of equitable access to, public financing for political parties
- Restrictions on opposition parties during last election

RECOMMENDATIONS

IMPLEMENT COMPREHENSIVE ELECTORAL AND GOVERNANCE REFORMS

- Clarity on the scope and timeline of reforms is critical to ensuring any electoral process is credible and transparent. Given the time needed to implement reforms well ahead of an election, this clarity is urgent - clearly communicating this timeline and sticking to it is crucial for maintaining public trust and reducing uncertainty that could fuel unrest.

FOR CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS:

- Civil society organizations (CSOs) should be supported to conduct grassroots activities that encourage peaceful participation and nonviolence, particularly in areas with histories of political unrest.

FOR THE INTERNATIONAL ELECTORAL SUPPORT AND OBSERVATION COMMUNITY:

- Engage the international electoral support and observation community – as the next elections will be the first to be held under a new electoral and political dispensation, international support can help to bolster the credibility of the process and deter attempts at manipulation or violence, particularly in situations of transition.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- [Bangladesh Electoral Commission](#)
- [Bangladesh Electoral Reform Commission](#)
- [International IDEA Democracy Tracker for Bangladesh](#)
- [Update Political News](#)