AMENSTY FREEDOM
amnestyfreedom.org

PUBLIC STATEMENT

LATEST DEVELOPMENT
August 17, 2022

Bangladesh must make restitution for vested property accessible

Families dispossessed under Bangladesh's vested property regime need a practical way to recover their land or obtain compensation.

What we know

The regime grew out of Pakistan's enemy-property rules and continued in Bangladesh after independence. Reporting and scholarship document its disproportionate impact on Hindu families. The Vested Property Return Act of 2001 established a route to restitution. On August 17, 2022, the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court released its full verdict, which the Daily Star reported as declaring illegal any action making property vested after March 23, 1974. An effective remedy still depends on people being able to locate records, prove their claims, and enforce favorable orders. [1–5]

Our position

Families should not lose their land because of their identity, and a right to restitution means little if it cannot be used. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, to both of which Bangladesh is a party, require equal protection and effective remedies. [6–7]

Our calls

Amnesty Freedom calls on the authorities to:

1. Publish searchable land lists and tribunal backlogs.
2. Provide applicants with copies of relevant records and legal assistance.
3. Set deadlines for implementing final orders.
4. Where return is impossible, provide a transparent compensation process with an independent appeal.

Supporting information

1. Bangladesh Judiciary, land laws and the Vested Property Return Act
2. The Vested Property Return Act, 2001 — Full Text and PDF | BD Advocacy
3. U.S. Department of State Annual Report on International Religious Freedom for 2005 - Bangladesh
4. Making property vested after 1974 illegal
5. The Hindu as Other: State, Law, and Land Relations in Contemporary Bangladesh
6. United Nations, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
7. United Nations, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Media contact: Ignatius Gomes, Director, Amnesty Freedom — ignatiusGomes@amnestyfreedom.org

Note to editors: *This statement is based on the public sources listed above. The date shown is that of the most recent development recorded in those sources; later developments may not be reflected.*

2026 Amnesty Freedom — Est. 2026 — EIN 41-4314632