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Asia Pacific

# History of violence in Bangladesh, a country born out of war

By Reuters

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Protesters shield themselves with a metal sheet during a clash with Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) and the police outside the state-owned Bangladesh Television as violence erupts across the country after anti-quota protests by students, in Dhaka, Bangladesh, July 19, 2024. REUTERS/Mohammad Ponir Hossain [Purchase Licensing Rights](#)

NEW DELHI, July 19 (Reuters) - Deadly protests by thousands of students in Bangladesh against quotas in government jobs has brought focus to a history of violence in a country born out of a war between India and Pakistan in 1971 in which nearly 3 million people were killed.

Its founding father and first prime minister Sheikh Mujibur Rehman was assassinated in 1975 in a military coup which brought in a long period of military rule.

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Though democracy was restored slowly by 1990, the country of nearly 170 million people has been rocked by sporadic periods of sectarian or political violence in recent years.

## 2009

Unhappy with their wages and living conditions, revolting border guards killed more than 70 people in the capital Dhaka, most of whom were army officers.

The "mutiny", as it was called, which had spread to nearly a dozen towns, ended after six days as the angry guards surrendered following a series of discussions.

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### 2013

The year saw about 100 people being killed in political violence under the Awami League party's rule, which is led by [Sheikh Hasina](#), daughter of first prime minister Rehman.

But elections announced in November, and the hanging of a Islamic leader Abdul Quader Mollah, leader of the opposition Jamaat-e-Islami party for crimes during the 1971 war, resulted in nearly 100 more deaths.

### 2016

Twenty hostages, most of whom were foreigners, were killed in an attack claimed by the Islamic State militant group.



The militants attacked an upmarket restaurant in Dhaka's diplomatic area, resulting in a 12-hour standoff, until it was stormed by the security forces.

The dead included nationals of Italy, Japan, the United States and India. It came after months of attacks on people advocating a liberal lifestyle in the country.

### 2021

Extremists in Muslim-majority Bangladesh target minority Hindus. In October at least six people were killed and their houses destroyed in one of the worst instances of communal violence in the country in over a decade.

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Earlier Hindu temples were attacked as violence spread with thousands of hardline Islamist group members protesting a visit by neighbouring India's Hindu nationalist Prime Minister Narendra Modi, to mark the 50th anniversary of Bangladesh's nationhood.

### 2024

Hasina [returned to power](#) in an election boycotted by the main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) which accused the Awami League of trying to legitimise sham elections.

Attacks on poll booths and train arson killed [four](#) people during this time.

In July, more than two dozen people are killed as security forces clamp down on thousands of students protesting against quotas in government jobs.

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