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# SUCCESS STORY

## “Songhat Noy, Oikker Bangladesh Gori” (Stop Violence, Build a United Bangladesh)

### A unified front:

Participants marched to speak out against the widespread violence in Bangladesh. With the slogan “Songhat Noy, Oikker Bangladesh Gori” (Stop Violence, Build a United Bangladesh) emblazoned on their banner, scarves and shirts, the rallies hoped to spread the non-violence message. They also gave out flowers to passersby which had a small card attached with the same message.

### Working together:

The rallies brought together the efforts of individuals who otherwise wouldn't work together. Members of both the Awami League and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) worked to coordinate the rallies using their resources, such as an Awami League member working to coordinate police permission for the rally.

### Quote from BNP young political leader:

We demand a non-violent political atmosphere on this remarkable day. We want peace, but in order to achieve that, we have to work together to build a peaceful environment. Our commitment to all of you is that we will avoid violence and we will build a peaceful Bangladesh.

### Quote from Awami League young political leader:

We shall overcome, we shall overcome. We will stop violence by engaging in peaceful activities. We will also eliminate all kinds of violence from politics.



Photo: IFES Bangladesh

On 30 September 2014, diverse Bangladeshis came together for rallies to raise public awareness against political and electoral violence in celebration of the International Day of Non-Violence on 2 October. The theme of the rally was “Songhat Noy, Oikker Bangladesh Gori” (Stop Violence, Build a United Bangladesh).

Democracy International Fellows Alumni Association’s members, a multi-party group of youth political leaders, activists from political parties, civil society members and students took part in this rally. A Political Violence working group of 27 Fellows, mentored by IFES, have been working with each other, IFES and DI over the past year to find ways to mitigate electoral and political violence within and between political parties. The rallies were organized by the Political Violence Working Group.

The rally in Dhaka, which was attended by around one hundred people, highlighted peaceful political activities with banners, flowers and placards as well as red T-shirts with messages against political and electoral violence. Fellows from the two largest political parties, Awami League and BNP, gave brief remarks highlighting the desire to have a peaceful political process in Bangladesh. Students from Dhaka University, which has become an increasingly politicized institution, also attended the rally.

Marchers finished at the Press Club where they painted their hands red and “stamped” a white banner and signed it with their name and party/university affiliation. They also signed a petition to be presented to the Prime Minister and the leader of the BNP, the main opposition party.

In addition to Dhaka, similar rallies were held in six more districts: Chittagong, Khulna, Barisal, Rajshahi, Rangpur and Sylhet, with almost 900 people across the country. There were over 400 participants in Barisal alone. Marchers from these cities pledged to give their petitions to their District political leaders.