

# Guterres expects Bangladesh polls set global precedent

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**Online Desk :** UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres expressed optimism that Bangladesh's upcoming elections could become a global benchmark for democracy, while stressing that the scope of the country's reforms remains an internal matter. He shared these views during a roundtable with political leaders in Dhaka on Saturday, March 15, part of his four-day visit to Bangladesh. BNP Standing Committee member Salahuddin Ahmed briefed reporters after the meeting, noting Guterres' hope for a "strong democratic government" emerging from the polls.

"He believes these elections will set a precedent worldwide," Salahuddin said, adding that the UN chief emphasized Bangladesh's autonomy in deciding its reform path. BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, speaking to journalists alongside Salahuddin later that day, said the party urged Guterres for a swift national election following essential poll-related reforms. The request came during the UN chief's meeting with the National Consensus Commission, political leaders, and stakeholders at the InterContinental Dhaka.

"We want the interim government to prioritise and complete these reforms quickly," Fakhrul told reporters. Salahuddin underscored the UN's stance: "How and when reforms and elections happen is for Bangladeshis to decide." Guterres' visit, blending diplomacy and on-the-ground engagement, signals international support for Bangladesh's democratic transition—while leaving the roadmap to its people. Guterres arrived in Dhaka on Thursday, March 13, at the invitation of Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus. On Friday, he met Yunus at his office before they travelled together to Cox's Bazar, visiting Rohingya refugee camps and attending an iftar with around 1,00,000 Rohingyas.

Earlier that day, Guterres discussed Bangladesh's reform process with the foreign affairs adviser, praising the nation's cooperation with the UN, its hospitality toward Rohingya refugees, and its peacekeeping contributions. Khalilur Rahman, Yunus' high representative for Rohingya issues, also met with Guterres, focusing on the crisis in Myanmar's Rakhine State and preparations for an upcoming conference on Rohingya and other minorities in Myanmar, per a UN statement.