

## **MEDIA RELEASE**



### **MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

The Hon Julie Bishop MP

8 January 2014

#### **AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT CALLS FOR NEW ELECTION IN BANGLADESH**

Minister for Foreign Affairs Julie Bishop has expressed deep concern at the ongoing violence and political discord which marred the election in Bangladesh held on 5 January.

It has been reported that both the Awami League government and the opposition coalition led by the Bangladesh National Party contributed to the unstable political conditions.

While the elections were constitutionally valid, less than half the parliamentary seats were contested and voter turnout was low.

The Australian Government condemns the attacks against minorities, and calls on all sides to end the political violence.

It is vital that the people of Bangladesh are able to express their democratic will and exercise real choice.

The government and the opposition must take up their shared responsibility to hold a new, fully contested and transparent election as soon as possible.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's Travel Advice for Bangladesh has been raised to 'reconsider your need to travel' given the prospect of further violence.