

**Question for written answer E-000012/2024**

**to the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy**

Rule 138

**Brando Benifei (S&D), Pina Picierno (S&D), Camilla Laureti (S&D), Alessandra Moretti (S&D), Mercedes Bresso (S&D), Achille Variati (S&D), Franco Roberti (S&D), Elisabetta Gualmini (S&D), Beatrice Covassi (S&D)**

**Subject:** Arbitrary conviction of Nobel Prize-winner Muhammad Yunus in Bangladesh

On 1 January, a labour court in Bangladesh sentenced 83-year-old Nobel Peace Prize winner and businessman Muhammad Yunus and three other defendants to six months in prison. They remain free on bail pending an appeal but have been convicted of failing to set up a welfare fund for the workers of Grameen Telecom, a company founded by Mr Yunus.

This arbitrary conviction, as a result of a campaign of judicial persecution against Mr Yunus, comes mere days before the general elections in Bangladesh and is only the latest example of crackdown against dissent and human rights by the government of Sheikh Hasina, in power since 2009 and opposed to Mr Yunus.

Amnesty International has also criticised the Bengali authorities for the unusual haste with which the trial was concluded and the abusive practice of bringing criminal proceedings to judge administrative matters.

Can the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy therefore say:

1. What he can do to secure the release of Muhammad Yunus and the other three defendants?
2. What he can do to ensure human rights and the rule of law are unequivocally upheld in Bangladesh?

Submitted: 5.1.2024