

**CPS Eminent Persons Lecture Series**  
***“Non-Violent Resistance in Bangladesh in July 2024: Challenging  
Authoritarianism Through Peaceful Means”***  
**23 July 2025, Syndicate Hall**  
**North South University**

On July 23, 2025, the Center for Peace Studies (CPS) at North South University (NSU), in collaboration with the Department of Political Science and Sociology (PSS), organized a public lecture titled “Non-Violent Resistance in Bangladesh in July 2024: Challenging Authoritarianism Through Peaceful Means” as part of its ongoing CPS Eminent Persons Lecture Series. The event brought together scholars, students, and civic actors to reflect on the power and challenges of peaceful mobilization in the context of Bangladesh’s political trajectory.



Dr. M Jashim Uddin, Director of CPS, moderated the session. He emphasized that the nature of protest in July 2024 was deeply misunderstood by many who assumed it to be confrontational. Instead, he pointed to traditions of nonviolence rooted in spiritual and philosophical values such as forgiveness and unity. Referencing Ghaffar Khan, Nelson Mandela and Mahatma Gandhi in the conflict resolution studies, Dr. Jashim argued that Bangladesh must build systems that foster nonviolent civic behavior as part of national development. Moreover, he also announced that CPS is currently working on launching certificate courses focused on conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

In his introductory remarks, Dr. Rizwan Khair, Chairperson of the Department of Political Science and Sociology, reflected on the legacy of nonviolence as embodied by Gandhi and Mandela. He identified the July Uprising as a landmark in Bangladesh's democratic journey, arguing that peaceful civic movements must be backed by a strong moral force capable of countering state violence and sustaining long-term peace.

Prof. Dr. Muhammad Asadullah, Associate Professor at the University of Regina, Canada, and Adviser to the International Institute of Law and Diplomacy (IILD), co-organized the event and introduced three conceptual tools in his speech- subtle activism, nonviolent communication, and "Artivism:" a combination of art and activism. Drawing on the example of Abdul Ghaffar Khan, he called for wholehearted academic engagement in civic education and peace studies. He elaborated on the framework of Marshall Rosenberg's nonviolent communication, which emphasizes needs-based, empathetic dialogue. Finally, he highlighted how expressive forms like graffiti, spoken word, and music (e.g., rappers like Hannan.) can amplify marginalized voices and energize peaceful resistance.

The keynote address was delivered by Dr. Amr Abdalla, Professor Emeritus at the University for Peace, Costa Rica, who offered a deeply reflective and comparative lecture. Dr. Abdalla discussed five key areas: the meaning of nonviolence, its theoretical framework, the context of the July 2024 movement in Bangladesh, comparative insights from Egypt's 2011 uprising, and possible futures. He argued that nonviolence is more effective than violence, citing the moral high ground gained when protesters absorb state aggression without retaliation. Drawing comparisons between Egypt and Bangladesh, he noted that both movements were youth-led, government-denied, and ultimately confronted state repression. He warned, however, that the struggle is far from over. "The dreams are big," he said, "but so is the resistance we must continue to uphold." He closed by stressing that the answer lies in uniting people across divisions and embracing diverse narratives.

Professor Abdul Hannan Chowdhury, Vice Chancellor of NSU, chaired the session and described the July 2024 Uprising as a historic turning point driven by the youth. He highlighted that while independence was won through struggle, the post-liberation period has been marked by a clash of narratives and institutional egos. "We've built infrastructure," he said, "but we haven't built civic mindsets." He emphasized the need for humility, open dialogue, and a mindset rooted in civility, calling nonviolence the best method for action and protest in a developing society.

The vote of thanks was delivered by Professor Md. Rizwanul Islam, Dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences. He expressed appreciation for the timely collaboration between CPS and PSS and commended all speakers for their thought-provoking contributions to the discourse on peace and democratic resilience.

The lecture served as a much-needed platform for critical reflection on Bangladesh's political present and future. By drawing insights from both global peace movements and local civic struggles, the event reaffirmed that nonviolence is not just a tactic, but a transformative way forward. The speakers collectively underscored that the responsibility for upholding democratic values lies with institutions, scholars, and citizens: especially the youth.

