



1st November 2024

Mr. António Guterres
Secretary-General
United Nations, New York, NY 10017

Excellency Mr. António Guterres,

Re: Concerns regarding Ms Saima Wazed Putul's appointment as Regional Director for WHO.

I hope this message finds you well. On behalf of Voice for Global Bangladeshis, we are writing to express our concerns regarding Ms Saima Wazed Putul's appointment as the South-East Asian Regional Director for the World Health Organization (WHO), 2024. While we recognise her contributions to public health, several factors may suggest she is not the most suitable candidate for this critical role, especially from a Bangladeshi perspective.

Firstly, Ms Wazed's experience in high-level leadership positions within significant organisations such as the WHO is relatively limited. The role of the Regional Director necessitates a comprehensive understanding of the complexities inherent in public health, including the navigation of regional policies, diverse health systems, and multi-stakeholder collaboration. The candidate must possess the extensive experience to fulfil these responsibilities effectively.

Secondly, there are potential concerns regarding the influence of political affiliations on her appointment. Given her involvement in Bangladeshi national politics, there exists a risk that such connections could compromise the impartiality expected of a Regional Director within the WHO. This aspect is crucial, as successful collaboration among countries in addressing transnational health challenges is essential. A press release from Voice of America's website, dated October 23, 2023, succinctly discusses the influence of nepotism in Ms Saima Wazed's appointment to her position. It highlighted that the other candidates who competed for the role, possessed a robust background in public health and extensive leadership experience in addressing global health challenges.

Moreover, despite Ms. Wazed's advocacy efforts, Bangladesh's public health outcomes have not consistently aligned with the desired benchmarks for both local and international standards. Effective leadership in public health requires a documented history of successfully implementing health programs that yield measurable results, particularly during public health crises such as pandemics. An emphasis on evidence-based interventions remains critical in a position with such heightened responsibilities. The South-East Asian region has diverse cultural, linguistic, and healthcare systems. An effective Regional Director must possess a nuanced understanding of these differences and the ability to unite various stakeholders to achieve common health objectives. Concerns have been raised regarding the efficacy of her approach in addressing these complexities as well as solid understanding of sustainable development goals.



In the aftermath of the Second Revolution led by the students of Bangladesh in July and August 2024, raised serious concern regarding Ms Saima Wazed, the daughter of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. She has been formally accused of financial crimes and various other offences. As a result, her bank accounts have been frozen, and the Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU) is conducting a thorough investigation into these allegations.

Lastly, the challenges posed by emerging health threats warrant innovative thinking and fresh perspectives. Appointing a candidate with more extensive international background in public health and global engagement may provide the necessary vigour to tackle these challenges, ensuring that WHO's strategies are locally informed and globally adaptable.

In conclusion, we feel that it is essential to express our concerns to you as a Global Bangladeshi Forum. Her family's perceived hostile behaviour towards the general populace, particularly regarding the implementation of Aina Ghor (Dark Imprisonment) and reported incidents of disappearances and murders, is highly concerning.

Consequently, we argue that her appointment for that position of South-East Asian Regional Director at the World Health Organization may be better served by an individual without local political bias and with more extensive experience, proven record of impactful leadership, and ability to navigate the complexities of regional health governance effectively.

Thanking you.

Yours very Sincerely,

Dr. Hasanat M. Husain MBE

President,

Voice for Global Bangladeshis VfGB

Covenor: Voice for Justice

www.voiceforjustice.org.

Address :

32 Woodland Way, Woodford, Essex IG8 0QQ.

Email : dr.hasanathusain@yahoo.co.uk