

# Univ teachers' network slams July charter, Yunus speech

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The University Teachers' Network (UTN) yesterday said the much-publicised July National Charter signed on October 17 failed to give any hope to the people and frustrated many of the July uprising stakeholders.

Also, the speech delivered by Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus at the signing ceremony is objectionable and hollow.

In a statement, the platform of university teachers said the charter, which was drafted only based on the political parties' opinions, has failed to make a call for unity, which signals potential new political crises in near future.

"It appeared that the government and consensus commission were busy implementing certain political agenda," said a statement issued by the press team of UTN last night.

The signing ceremony at the parliament's South Plaza drew limited public interest due to ongoing questions about the process and scope of the charter's drafting from the beginning, it added.

The platform added that the government has become detached from the public and excluded the peoples' true aspirations, including those on education and health, from the charter. It offered no ray of hope for women, gender identity minorities, and indigenous people.

The charter failed to fulfill the aspirations of many others, especially the students, who are the major stakeholders of the mass uprising. The failure of unity was apparent on the day of the signing itself, when a group of "July warriors" became agitated and were subsequently subjected to attack by police.

The disunity surrounding the event was also reflected in the approximately 30-minute speech delivered by Prof Yunus, consensus commission president. The speech contained rhetorical and unnecessary elements of supremacy and arrogance.

The platform said Prof Yunus stated twice that the charter marked a transition from barbarity to civilisation.

The UTN said this discussion adheres entirely to "colonial academic discourse and Western supremacy formula".

It draws a parallel between Yunus' language and the historical actions of British and Western colonial imperialists who imposed concepts like "modernity", "enlightenment", "civilisation", and "white supremacy" upon colonised nations by labelling them as "uncivilised" and "barbaric".

The platform asserted that independence in 1971 ensured sovereignty and taught the nation to challenge all feelings of supremacist arrogance.

Acknowledging political failures over the last 55 years, the UTN contested the idea that the nation was previously "barbaric" and that the July charter is a "great project of civilising".

The platform expressed surprise that Prof Yunus, a globally respected academician and sociologist, would speak such a language.

It has a plan to soon present a formal review of the July charter.