



June 12, 2026

Joint Statement of AIPP, Land is Life, HWF, NIWA and IWGIA on the 30th Anniversary of the Enforced Disappearance of Indigenous Woman Leader Kalpana Chakma in CHT

Three Decades of Impunity Must End; Call for Independent Investigation and UN Vetting Reform.

Thirty years after the enforced disappearance of Indigenous woman leader Kalpana Chakma, justice remains denied. Kalpana Chakma, an Indigenous woman leader from the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), was abducted on 12 June 1996, allegedly by members of the security forces operating in the region. Three decades later, the crime remains ongoing as her fate and whereabouts remain unknown.

The Kalpana Chakma case stands as one of the most emblematic examples of the culture of impunity entrenched in Bangladesh, particularly in the CHT. At the time of her disappearance, Kalpana Chakma, then 23 years old and Organizing Secretary of the Hill Women's Federation, was forcibly taken from her home for her active role as Indigenous human rights defender. Her brothers, who were also seized during the abduction, managed to escape, and later, identified at least three alleged perpetrators. Yet, nearly three decades later, no one has been held accountable. Investigations were closed without charges, key suspects were reportedly never questioned, and one of the principal accused, Lieutenant Ferdous, was instead promoted to the rank of Major and subsequently deployed to United Nations peacekeeping operations, shielding him from accountability. While seeking justice, Kalpana's family faced harassment and threats.

This case remains unresolved and stands as a stark example of persistent impunity and the systemic protection afforded to alleged perpetrators, particularly when they are members of the military. Bangladesh has not only a legal obligation to conduct a prompt, independent, and effective investigation and hold those responsible accountable, but also a moral and ethical duty to ensure truth, justice, and reparations to Kalpana Chakma's family and to the Indigenous Peoples of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT).

On the 30th anniversary of Kalpana Chakma's enforced disappearance, we call on the Government of Bangladesh to conduct an independent, impartial, and effective investigation and ensure that those responsible are held accountable. We also urge the Government to guarantee the safety and rights of Indigenous women and girls throughout the Chittagong Hill Tracts. We further call on the United Nations to strengthen its human rights screening and vetting mechanisms for peacekeepers, ensuring that personnel implicated in serious human rights violations are barred from service. Until truth and justice are secured, we will continue to ask: **Where is Kalpana Chakma?**

Endorsed By:

**Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP), Land is Life,
Hill Women's Federation (HWF), Network of Indigenous Women Asia (NIWA) and
International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA).**