

Submission to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD)

Subject: Urgent Appeal Regarding Systemic Racial Discrimination Against Indigenous Peoples in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), Bangladesh

To:

The Secretariat,
Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD),
Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR),
United Nations Office at Geneva

Dear Members of the CERD Committee,

We, the undersigned groups, respectfully submit this urgent plea under the Early Warning and Urgent Action Procedure, pursuant to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD). We seek to highlight the persistent and intensifying pattern of racial discrimination perpetrated against Indigenous Peoples in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) of Bangladesh. The situation meets several of CERD's early warning indicators, including the following:

- (a) Persistent patterns of racial discrimination;
- (b) Escalating racial hatred and violence condoned by state officials;
- (c) De facto exclusion from political, economic, and cultural life;
- (d) Impunity for violence by state actors and state-supported militias;
- (e) Significant flows of displaced persons from Indigenous communities (including across international borders);
- (f) Forced removal from traditional lands and occupation and/or encroachment of/on their lands;
- (g) Environmentally hazardous activities with disproportionately high adverse impact.

Background

Located in the southeastern region of Bangladesh, the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), is home to eleven to thirteen diverse Indigenous groups collectively called the 'Jumma,' who have been inhabiting there since time immemorial. Displaced and dispossessed through colonial processes and their aftermath, since the inception of Bangladesh, these communities have faced continuous marginalization due to state policies, militarization, and systematic discriminatory practices. Successive Bangladeshi governments have ignored the Jumma people's demands for autonomy and constitutional recognition of their distinct identity, culture and self-rule systems, instead retorting to militarization and forced assimilation policies. In response, the Parbattya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samiti (PCJSS/JSS), the then sole political party of the Jumma, established an armed group in the mid-1970s to resist discriminatory state policies and to fight for their rights. The protracted conflict ended in 1997 with the signing of CHT Accord between PCJSS and the government of Bangladesh intending to address these deep-rooted historical injustices and

affirming to recognize the rights of the Indigenous Peoples, including the settlement of long-existing land disputes, protection of their traditional practices, and self-governance. However, more than 25 years after its signing, key provisions of the Accord remain unimplemented, the CHT remains heavily militarized, and human rights violations persist under de facto military rule. Despite the application of national and regional legal frameworks and international human rights obligations, successive governments have failed to respect, protect, and fulfill Indigenous peoples' rights, end impunity for violence, and implement the CHT Accord fully. The situation continues to worsen as the government keeps denying Indigenous identity, suppressing traditional practices, and failing to hold perpetrators accountable for widespread human rights violations, particularly from among state security forces and Bengali settlers. These actions and blunders omissions constitute breaches of Articles 1, 2, 5, and 6 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD). The following evidence that we present here outlines these grave violations, demanding urgent and decisive action by the ICERD Committee:

1. Denial of Indigenous Identity (Violation of Articles 1 and 5)

Several government directives, such as the circular from the Ministry of Information (Document No. 15.00.0000.028.18.183.14.596) and the communication issued by the Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs on 23 October 2017¹, overtly prohibit the use of the term "Adivasi" (Indigenous in English) in media, academic settings, and public discourse². Such prohibition constitutes a violation of Article 1 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), which forbids discrimination based on race, colour, descent, or ethnic origin. It also infringes upon Article 5 of the ICERD, which guarantees cultural, linguistic, and identity rights, while disregarding the self-identification rights of Indigenous peoples as recognized in various international human rights frameworks.

Such deliberate misclassification of Indigenous Peoples and state-imposed terminologies, such as "Tribes, minor races, sects and communities" and/or as "Ethnic minorities" and/or "Ethnic peoples" undermines the dignity and autonomy of the Indigenous Peoples of Bangladesh. Internationally recognized frameworks, such as the UNDRIP and ILO Conventions No. 169 and 107, emphasize the importance of respecting Indigenous Peoples' right for self-identification, yet these principles are routinely ignored by the government of Bangladesh.

The imposition of undignified identities restricts Indigenous Peoples' ability to advocate and claim their collective rights both in the domestic and international arenas, and further marginalize them from political recognition and legal protection. In addition, such a policy is a violation of General Recommendation No. 23 of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD),

¹ Please see Annexe 1

² Although Bangladesh has never constitutionally recognized its Indigenous Peoples, various laws and legislations have officially acknowledged their identity. However, this changed significantly after the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) conducted a study in 2011 on the implementation of the CHT Accord. The study highlighted ongoing human rights violations, land dispossession, and the lack of political recognition for Indigenous communities. In response, Iqbal Ahmed, the then First Secretary of the Bangladesh Mission in New York, asserted at the PFII session that "Bangladesh does not have any Indigenous population" and he "urged upon the UN forum for not wasting time on politically fictitious issues in Bangladesh." Following the UNPFII study, the government has been systematically rejecting Indigenous recognition

which calls upon the states to uphold Indigenous peoples' right to self-identification. The continuous denial of Indigenous identity not only undermines these peoples' right to self-determination but also blocks their access to support systems essential for their cultural and socio-development.

2. Targeting of Traditional Livelihoods (Violation of Article 5(e))

The economic and cultural survival of Indigenous peoples and communities in the CHT is heavily dependent on traditional swidden (shifting) cultivation (known in South Asia as 'jum'), yet government directives and projects very often impose significant restrictions on this practice. For instance, a directive from the Armed Forces Division of the Prime Minister's Office (communicated through Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs' Memo No: 29.00.0000.223.017.01.2017 (part 1)-213 Date: 20/09/2021)³ asked the concerned authorities to restrict Jum cultivation and to initiate strict surveillance over cultivation of turmeric/ginger by the Indigenous Peoples in the CHT⁴. Moreover, the memo directed the authorities to take measures to discontinue the commercial sale of turmeric and ginger, the vital crops from Jum cultivation. This is directly violative of Rules 41 and 42 of the CHT Regulation 1900, several provisions of ILO Convention No. 169, and ILO Recommendation No. 104. Rainfed cultivation of turmeric and ginger, is one of the few means of livelihood for most of the Jumma living in frontier and other remote areas, where there is scarcity of intensive irrigation-oriented agricultural landholdings. These measures deepen economic disparities and threaten the cultural and economic survival of Indigenous peoples. Such a directive directly violates Article 5(e) of ICERD, which ensures economic and cultural rights without discrimination.

Additionally, encroachments on Indigenous Peoples' lands by the military, high-ranking former government officials, ex-military officers, influential corporate and business groups, and government-sponsored Bengali settlers, along with the last-named groups' repeated acts of arson and land grabbing, have put the livelihood of the Indigenous Peoples under huge risk. As a result, Indigenous Peoples are increasingly forced to depend on extensive traditional agricultural practices and to relocate to more remote areas, where they face worsening food crises each year. Despite evidence and investigations, no significant action has been taken against the perpetrators of arbitrary and illegal acts, perpetuating impunity and continuing economic disempowerment of the Indigenous communities.⁵

³ Please see annex 3.

⁴ Although the government memo cited concerns about biological diversity and ecology as justification for the restrictions, Indigenous communities perceive these policies as deliberate attempts to threaten their economic stability and autonomy. Almost all the Indigenous peoples in this frontier area depend entirely on Jum cultivation for their livelihoods, limiting these practices directly threatens their economy and survival.

⁵ The details of these land grabbing incidents and displacements are well documented by IWGIA, the CHT Commission, and the Kapaeeng Foundation, and repeated calls have been made to the Government of Bangladesh to take action and make the CHT Land Dispute Resolution Commission functional in line with the CHT Accord. Currently, more than 22,000 land dispute complaints are awaiting for resolution at the Commission.

3. Militarization and Threats to Security (Violations of Articles 2 and 6)

The persistent militarization of the CHT under executive directive “**Operation Uttoron (Upliftment)**” and the replacement of previously dismantled army camps with new Army camps and Armed Police Battalion or para-military Border Guard Bangladesh units directly contradict the CHT Peace Accord’s express provisions on dismantling of all non-permanent military camps except for six specifically-named garrisons and for demilitarization of the region⁶. This continued militarization has forced Indigenous communities to live under constant surveillance and fear. Security forces have repeatedly been implicated in human rights violations, including extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, arbitrary detention, rape and sexual abuse, and custodial deaths of Indigenous activists⁷.

High-ranking army, police, and civil administration government officials often label Indigenous activism as “terrorism” and “mercenary activities,” perpetuating harmful and discriminatory stereotypes. For example, on 26 May, 2022, at a public event, the then Inspector General of Police (IGP), Dr. Benazir Ahmed, and the then Chittagong Area Commander (GOC) of the 24th Infantry Division of the Bangladesh Army, Major General Md. Saiful Abedin, referred to Jumma activists as terrorists and issued threats, in the presence of the then Minister of Home Affairs and senior indigenous leaders. In his speech, Major General Abedin stated, “*If you want to wage war... let’s choose a place! We will destroy you in 30 minutes.*”⁸ Such statements from high-level officials are undemocratic, unprofessional, and overtly threatening and foster hostility towards Jumma peoples on the part of state security forces and Bengali settlers, while reinforcing racist and discriminatory attitudes.

The military has established its monopoly control over the resources of CHT (particularly land and forest), by controlling and subordinating the civil administration, and even meddling in the traditional social justice system of the Jumma. For instance, the military operates commercial banks, more than a dozen restaurants, resorts, tourist recreation centres, schools, colleges, bakeries, shoe factories, and many other commercial businesses in CHT. At village level in CHT, traditionally, the headman and Karbari⁹ adjudicate disputes arising out of Indigenous family laws, and other civil and minor criminal matters, which are statutorily barred from the jurisdiction of the state’s civil judiciary. Without the knowledge or consent of the respective Circle Chiefs, the military frequently organizes so-called Headmen and Karbari conferences across various parts of the CHT¹⁰. These actions destabilize the Indigenous traditional governance system, instill fear within communities, and disrupt their ability to practice their social, spiritual and other customs freely. The ongoing militarization of the CHT, combined with narratives framing Indigenous communities as threats to the state as “terrorists” [sic!], undermines their fundamental right to live free from fear and violence. These actions also obstruct the full implementation of the CHT Peace Accord,

⁶ Part D, clause 17 of the Accord, explicitly states that all temporary camps of the Army, Ansar, and VDP shall be withdrawn gradually, except for the Border Security Force (BDR, now BGB, Border Guard Bangladesh) and the permanent cantonments.

⁷ The undersigned organizations have regularly issued statements regarding these human rights violations. More information about the suppression of activists is provided in the “Suppression of Civil Society and Political Activism” section of this submission.

⁸ The translated full speeches of Dr. Benazir Ahmed, and Major General Md. Saiful Abedin are attached with this submission. Please see Annexe 6.

⁹ Traditional village head

¹⁰ Please see Annexe 7

particularly its provisions on demilitarization and local governance. This also violates Article 30 (1 & 2) of UNDRIP 2007, which restricts military activities on Indigenous Peoples' lands unless agreed upon by the concerned Indigenous Peoples, as States are obliged to consult with Indigenous representatives before such actions are undertaken. Despite the fact that insurgency-like conditions no longer prevail in CHT, the military still continues its various "counter-insurgency" policies in CHT under *Operation Uttaran*. Many consider CHT as an 'open-air prison' with one military check-post in a radius of every 08-10 kilometres. For example, the distance from Rangamati district to Khagrachari district by road is only 68 kilometers. One must pass through 10 security check posts to travel this distance. Arbitrary arrests by the military, armed raids, torture, and harassment, are unabatedly occurring almost daily. Such brutality by the military is very racially motivated and targeted toward the Indigenous population only. Hence, in CHT, the local Indigenous Jumma people do not even call them Bangladesh Army; they call them the 'Bengali Army,' military personnel drawn from only one ethnic group – the Bengali community – to suppress the non-Bengali communities in CHT.

For Indigenous Peoples in CHT, crossing these military checkpoints has become a daily ordeal marked by harassment, racial profiling, and violence. Indigenous individuals are forcibly removed from vehicles, subjected to invasive body and bag searches, and compelled to present their national ID cards, procedures that non-Indigenous passengers do not face. Indigenous women also face discrimination at security check-posts for wearing attire that do not conform to conservative Islamic norms. Sometimes Indigenous travelers are arbitrarily detained, and physically assaulted. These oppressive practices not only violate their fundamental rights but also reinforce the state's systematic discrimination against Indigenous communities in the region.

Furthermore, state-sponsored vigilante groups have been implicated in the killings of numerous Jumma activists, with considerable evidence pointing to military involvement in supporting these groups¹¹. In 2023, one such group allegedly executed eleven Bawm civilians in Bandarban after the Bangladesh Army deployed them to tackle the KNF¹². Additionally, Bengali settler organizations, frequently backed by the military, persist in orchestrating violence against Indigenous communities. The recent arson and deadly communal attacks in Khagrachari, Rangamati and Dighinala in September and October 2024 were carried out in full view of military personnel¹³. During and after the arson attack on the CHT Regional Council office in Rangamati on 20/09/2024, the Fire Brigade was instructed by the military to refrain from putting out the fire until more than two or three hours after the fire had started [Oral Statement of CHTRC Member, K. S. Mong at post-incident meeting in Rangamati with three Advisers of the Government] Eyewitness testimonies and video evidence indicate that security forces allowed these attacks to escalate, undermining the trust of Indigenous communities in state institutions. The military's inaction, or active complicity, in such incidents underscores a deliberate policy of neglect and

¹¹ Ibid

¹² <https://iwgja.org/en/news/5191-the-international-chittagong-hill-tracts-commission-is-shocked-at-the-death-of-eight-indigenous-bawm-men-and-expresses-deep-concern-at-continued-human-rights-violations-in-the-cht.html> and <https://iwgja.org/en/news/5202-chittagong-hill-tracts-commission-demands-protection-civilians-bandarban.html>

¹³ <https://iwgja.org/en/bangladesh/5566>

discrimination. These actions violate Articles 2 and 6 of the ICERD, which obligate states to ensure equal protection under the law and eliminate racial discrimination.

4. Urgent Concern: Potential Ethnic Cleansing of the Bawm People in the CHT

At present, the most severely targeted are members of the Bawm Indigenous community in Bandarban. Since the Kuki Chin National Front (KNF) issue¹⁴ escalated, more than 25 Bawm individuals have been killed. The community, one of the smallest Indigenous peoples' groups in the CHT, numbering approximately 12,000, is facing an existential crisis. This systematic persecution has displaced half of their population. 3500-4000 Bawm individuals, one-fourth of the entire community, have been forced to seek refuge in Mizoram State of India, and Chin State of Myanmar, where they are living in extremely precarious and inhumane conditions, with several reports of deaths from illnesses related to travel in harsh conditions.¹⁵ The situation is further exacerbated by the military's severe restrictions on their movements, livelihood activities and transportation. Bawm individuals are prohibited from carrying more than five kilograms of rice, even for personal consumption, medicines are similarly restricted, and they are also prevented from selling their agricultural produce in local markets, effectively cutting them off from their means of survival. Such restrictions are often also applied to other indigenous groups that live in the areas where the KNF are reported to be active. Traveling has become nearly impossible for them, as they are routinely removed from public transport, falsely accused of affiliation with the Kuki-Chin National Front (KNF), and arbitrarily detained. Currently, more than 130 Bawm individuals remain incarcerated for more than a year now, including 30 women and three children, as young as 1 year and two years old. On 15 May 2025, a 29 years old Bawm man died in Chittagong City jail, allegedly due to absence of proper medical attention. Many are held without due process, facing allegations that lack transparency and legal justification. Despite repeated appeals from the international community and local advocates, they have not been released. A delegation of indigenous leaders from all over the country led by Bangladesh Indigenous Peoples' Network (BIPNet) chair, Chakma Chief, Devasish Roy, demanded the release of non-combatant Bawm women and children from jail when they met Chief Adviser Dr. Md. Yunus and Home Adviser, Asif Nazrul, but to no effect. Additionally, several non-combatant Bawm men are currently in jails on false charges on bank robbery. Severe restrictions on agriculture and trade have pushed the Bawm into a famine. If this ongoing systematic targeting of the Bawm community is not urgently addressed, the entire Bawm community will be forced to flee Bangladesh.

5. Restrictions on National and International Engagement (Violation of Article 5(c))

The government's restrictions on foreigners, foreign delegations, and national and international organizations visiting the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) impede transparency and accountability,

¹⁴ This article by IWGIA provides detailed insights about KNF and also how the military sponsored and supported the formation of the KNF and the resulting consequences <https://iwgia.org/en/news/5554-caught-crossfire-bawm-complex-ties-between-bangladesh-military-kuki-chin-national-front.html>

¹⁵ Based on information provided by CHT civil society and Bawm community leaders

and are racist and discriminatory towards the Indigenous Peoples of CHT. Under the directive of the Ministry of Home Affairs, on January 7, 2015, issued 11 discriminatory and racist directives specifically targeting Indigenous communities in the region.

According to one of these directives, strictly enforced to this day, foreign nationals intending to visit the CHT must obtain permission from the Home Ministry at least one month in advance. Furthermore, it stipulates that, *“If any individual/organization of national or international origin intends to hold a talk with the tribal peoples of CHT region, the presence of local administration and army/ Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) shall have to be ensured.”* Such racist and discriminatory directives not only violate provisions of CERD but also infringe upon the fundamental constitutional rights of the Indigenous Peoples of CHT, to be treated without discrimination. Article 28(1) of Bangladesh’s Constitution explicitly states, *“The state shall not discriminate against any citizens on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth”*. While foreigners do not require a travel pass to visit any other part of Bangladesh, nor is the presence of security personnel required when speaking with Bengali individuals, the case is different for the CHT. Enforcing an obligatory rule for obtaining permission to visit, prohibiting foreigners and national and international organizations from speaking with Indigenous Peoples without the presence of the administration and army/BGB, is utterly discriminatory, racist, and insulting to the Indigenous Peoples of CHT.

Additionally, on October 21, 2021, ahead of the Danish ambassador’s visit to the CHT, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued another directive further tightening restrictions on the movement of foreigners, foreign diplomats, and international organizations in the region. This notice imposed stringent approval requirements for visits, restricted meetings with Indigenous communities, and introduced surveillance on interactions, further institutionalizing discrimination and reinforcing state control over Indigenous affairs¹⁶. In addition, the directive claimed that the traditional leader of the Chakma Circle, Barrister Raja Devasish Roy (a two-time member of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues) and a strong advocate for the rights of Indigenous Peoples of Bangladesh was carrying out subversive separatist activities and advised the delegation to meet the Chakma Circle Chief at a restaurant, Sabarang, instead of meeting at his office. On another occasion, the then Australian High Commissioner and his spouse was not allowed to visit the Chakma Chief for a breakfast meeting at his residence in Rangamati. More recently, in 2024, the Ambassador of South Korea was prevented from attending a dinner hosted by the aforesaid Chakma Chief.

Similarly, a foreign delegation team consisted of the UN Resident Coordinator, the UNDP Resident Representative, UNFPA Country Representative, FAO Country Representative, UNICEF Country Representative, two UN RCO representatives were scheduled to visit CHT from 12-17 November 2022. Prior to their visit The Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued an official ‘permission’ with directions to “strictly follow” the program and that a “mid-level officer nominated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs” would attend all the official visits¹⁷. In addition to this the memo instructed the visiting delegation that they *“should avoid closed door and unscheduled meetings*

¹⁶ Please see annex 5.

¹⁷ Please see annexe 8

*with the local community or representative*¹⁸. The delegation was also “*advised not to provide financial or any other types of assistance (either secretly or publicly) to the local tribal community/representative (with no corresponding restrictions where it concerned non-tribal people) and not to make any comment on the situation in the CHT, which could make unrest there.*”¹⁹ Such directions from the government are extremely racially profiling and criminalize Indigenous peoples’ representatives, and shows how Indigenous Peoples in CHT are under constant surveillance. They are violative of Articles 27 and 28 of the Constitution of Bangladesh and several provisions of ICERD.

Moreover, Indigenous activists who attempt to engage with international human rights mechanisms face threats and intimidation. At every international and UN platforms addressing Indigenous issues, the government routinely deploys intelligence officials to harass and intimidate Indigenous activists participating in these events²⁰. In one alarming incident prior to the UNPFII session in 2023, an Indigenous activist was targeted in an attempted abduction by intelligence forces. Although they failed to detain her, they confiscated her luggage, which was later returned with surveillance devices covertly installed. Members of state military intelligence agencies continue to monitor the movements and activities of indigenous activists attending the sessions of the UNPFII, including by taking photographs and video shots of the activists, without permission, in public and closed door events of the UNPFII. This has led to serious impediments against more indigenous activists attending UNPFII sessions and other UN and international human rights-related meetings.

Indigenous civil society, particularly local NGOs and indigenous peoples’ civic networks in the CHT face severe restrictions in conducting their meetings on human rights, development, culture and environment on account of the forced presence of state security intelligence personnel in such meetings. Hosts and sponsors of such meetings are often forced to divulge the meeting agenda and the list of participants to the forenamed personnel. Such oppressive acts are leading to severe disincentives against the free conduct of peaceful and lawful meetings involving indigenous peoples,

Further, social media platforms have become battlegrounds for misinformation campaigns against Indigenous activists, often with tacit or overt support from state actors. For example, in the aftermath of the deadly communal attacks in Rangamati, Dighinala, and Khagrachari in September and October 2024, videos and posts documenting settler violence were removed, and activists’ accounts were hacked, silencing critical voices and further isolating the CHT from global scrutiny²¹. These measures isolate Indigenous communities from global advocacy networks, denying their right to freely engage with international stakeholders.

By curtailing international oversight and restricting Indigenous peoples’ access to global platforms, the government obstructs transparency and accountability, violating their rights under

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ <https://hillvoice.net/en/2023/04/is-dgfiis-surveillance-on-Indigenous-activists-in-pfii-consistent-with-un-human-rights-principles/>

²¹ Based on interviews with activists who reported that their accounts or pages were hacked following the upload of photos and videos documenting the attacks.

Article 5(c) of ICERD, which guarantees the right to freedom of expression and participation in public affairs.

6. Non-Implementation of the CHT Peace Accord, Discriminatory Support to Bengali Settlers and Patent Acts of Discrimination against Indigenous Peoples (Violations of Articles 2 and 5)

Key provisions of the 1997 CHT Peace Accord remain unimplemented, particularly those concerning land rights, self-governance, and demilitarization. The continued lack of progress in implementing these provisions exacerbates socio-economic inequalities and erodes the trust essential for reconciliation and peace-building.

The government frequently issues racially biased directives to local administrations and security forces, instructing them to support Bengali settlers in occupying traditional Indigenous lands and to ensure the continued activities of settler organizations in the CHT, thereby preventing settlers from returning to their original districts in the plains. A memo²² addressed to the Hill District Council and civil administration head of the Khagrachari district in 2018 by the Ministry of CHT Affairs, and at behest of the Intelligence Directorate of the Armed Forces Division, under the Prime Minister's Office (English translation at Annexe 4), nakedly stated that [necessary] measures should be taken to ensure that Bengali organizations can carry out their activities and can exercise their legal rights", without any corresponding advice or steps required for "non-Bengali organizations", i.e., organizations of Indigenous Peoples. The same memo refers to 'Sona Mia Tila', a part of the northern Dighinala sub-district, where Bengali settlers were taken in the 1980s, and it urges the concerned district authorities to "to provide full administrative and legal support to the Bengalis to reconstitute their dispossessed lands. . .". Again, the memo makes not one mention of the need to reconstitute the dispossessed lands of the Indigenous Peoples, for which the CHT Land Dispute Resolution Commission was established in 1999, but the commission has failed to even give a single ruling on more than twenty thousand land-related disputes, pending before the commission.

On account of this memo, military and other security forces stationed in Babuchara, close to 'Sona Mia Tila' forbid the transportation of all building material to any place near Sona Mia Tila until this day, although there is no legal provision dealing with "reasonable restrictions imposed by law in the public interest" to so restrict transportation, a clear violation of Article 36 of the Constitution of Bangladesh.

The aforesaid memo also refers to measures "to bring forth confidence among the Bengalis and to prevent their likely movement from the Chittagong Hill Tracts to the plains" as well as stating that ". . . instructions should be provided to NGOs, the local administration and the security forces to take effective measures for [Bengali settlers'] educational and economic development", without

²² Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs Memo No: 29.00.0000.223.013.2017-351. Date: 01/11/2018 (Annexe 4)

any corresponding instructions to also provide justice to those other than Bengali people, i.e., the indigenous peoples.

A close scrutiny of the memo indicates that the Bengalis' movement from the CHT is to be "prevented", so that the CHT remains like a colonized area, in the manner of Palestine, with direct patronage of the security forces, district authorities and NGOs!

Between 1979 and 1983, over 400,000 Bengali settlers were brought to the CHT in three waves and settled on Jumma lands²³. To this day, the government provides these settler families with a monthly ration of 85 kilograms of food grains, allowances, and allocations through various welfare programs, enabling their continued occupation of Jumma lands. In stark contrast, 81,777 government-recognized internally displaced Jumma families in the CHT receive no support at all from the government.

While the government directs security personnel to support settlers in occupying Indigenous Peoples' land, when indigenous peoples create settlements in their ancestral territories following age-old customs, practices and usages, they are termed "terrorists" (see, Government Memo No. 05.42.0395,000,06.002.20-996, Annexe 2)²⁴. In the aforesaid memo, the Sub-District Executive Officer of Thanchi, Bandarban Hill District, declared the settlements of Indigenous Peoples illegal on their own ancestral land, citing unfounded claims that these settlements support terrorist activities. This reflects a broader pattern in the CHT, where Indigenous communities and their villages are racially profiled, placed under constant surveillance, and subjected to discriminatory policies aimed at restricting their rights to land and livelihood.

The situation of food (in)security, poverty, access to health facilities, credit, water and sanitation and other socio-economic indicators of the Indigenous Peoples in the CHT region and other parts of Bangladesh are far behind the national average, and they remain the most marginalized groups in terms of socio-economic indicators, and political power in the country.²⁵ Malnutrition, stunting, and wasting among indigenous infants and young children are among the highest in the country, while lack of access to healthcare, drinking water, primary education, mains electricity, telephonic connectivity and internet access is visibly among the lowest in the country.

In many areas, Indigenous Peoples are denied the right to build or renovate homes on their ancestral lands²⁶. Moreover, intelligence agencies closely monitor the activities of NGOs operating in the CHT, along with UN organizations. Further, the government often issues directives and oral instructions on indigenous-headed NGOs to employ at least 50 percent

²³ CHT Commission, 1991, p. 52.

²⁴ Please see annexe 2.

²⁵ UN WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME (WFP): FORMATIVE RESEARCH ON THE CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS "Livelihoods, Food Security and Nutrition in the Chittagong Hill Tracts and the Situation of Women, Adolescent Girls and Children: Policy Analysis and Possible Ways Forward", Dhaka, 22 April 2019

²⁶ In Sadhonatila area of Dighinala under Khagrachari district, the military prohibits the Jumma people from bringing construction materials to build or renovate their houses.

Bengalis in all organizations and to also ensure 50 percent Bengalis as beneficiaries of the development projects. This requirement is impossible to fulfill in remote areas where there is hardly any Bengali (non-Indigenous) settlement. This restricts NGOs from reaching these vulnerable communities and also indirectly encourages the expansion of Bengali settlements in the concerned areas.

Such policies and narratives not only marginalize Indigenous communities but also violate the government's obligations under Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the provisions of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), both of which mandate proactive measures to eradicate racial discrimination and promote equality.

7. Land Dispossession and Non-Implementation of the CHT Accord (Violations of Articles 2 and 5)

The failure to implement key provisions of the 1997 CHT Peace Accord has left Indigenous communities vulnerable to land dispossession and violence. The Land Dispute Resolution Commission, established to resolve long-standing land conflicts, has remained ineffective, resolving no cases in over two decades. Bureaucratic inefficiencies and active opposition from settler organizations have rendered the Commission non-functional. This failure directly violates Articles 2 and 5 of ICERD by denying Indigenous Peoples their rights to land and equal protection under the law, as also several provisions of ILO Convention No. 107, including Articles 11, 12 and 13.

The leasing of Indigenous lands to corporate entities, military, and influential people without the consent of local communities is another significant issue. The state's acquisition of Indigenous lands for various 'development' projects violates Article 32 of UNDRIP 2007, which mandates that Indigenous peoples' free, prior, and informed consent be obtained before approving any project affecting their lands, territories, or resources.²⁷ This is also violative of Article 11 and 13 of ILO Convention No 107.

Additionally, settler organizations' use of violence and intimidation continue to disrupt the functioning of the CHT Land Dispute Settlement Commission and any attempt made towards the implementation of the CHT Accord. Road blockades, strikes and violent protests have been orchestrated to prevent the resolution of land disputes, often with active support from the security forces. For instance, on 7 September 2022, a long-awaited meeting of the CHT Land Dispute Resolution Commission had to be cancelled after settler organizations' called for a 32 hours road blockade to foil the work of the Commission²⁸. However, this is not the first time PCNP tried to hinder the work of the Land Commission. Previously on 23 December 2019, the PCNP called for a road blockade against the CHT Land Commission meeting. Again, on 3 February 2020, PCNP tried to besiege the meeting of the Commission. Surprisingly, the civil and military forces never

²⁷ In 2015, more than 5200 acres of indigenous land were grabbed and in 2016 the Jumma peoples lost more than 15000 acres due to expropriation (Cultural Survival., American Indian Law Clinic., (2017), 'Observation on the State of indigenous human rights in Bangladesh. Prepared for the 30th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review).

²⁸ <https://www.tbsnews.net/bangladesh/hartal-called-rangamati-meeting-land-commission-postponed-491234>

took any action against these settler organizations or provided security to ensure the scheduled meeting of the Land Commission, a state organization, would go ahead. Even after more than two decades of its formation, the Commission has not yet been able to resolve a single dispute. Out of various reasons for its failure to achieve its minimum goal, the constant obstruction from Bengali settlers and their organizations remains a huge challenge. It is alleged that these ultra-communal and fundamentalist Bengali settlers' organizations are patronized and supported by a fraction of the security and intelligence forces to foil the implementation of the CHT Accord.

The discriminatory grant of lands to Bengali settlers in 1979-1985, and commercial land leases granted to non-resident Bengali individuals and corporate bodies from the 1990s to the 2000s, is violative of the customs, practices and usages of the CHT, which are expressly and implicitly recognised by the CHT Regulation and the CHT Land Disputes Resolution Commission Act, 2001. According to Section 3 of the CHT Regulation, all laws made applicable to the region must be "consistent with the CHT Regulation and the Rules frame thereunder".

The statutory provision, under which land grants and land leases were made to settlers and outsiders was arbitrarily amended by two Martial Law regimes, and wherefore, such amendments are ultra vires to the Constitution of Bangladesh, and therefore, null and void, as declared in two landmark judgments of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh.

The first recent amendment to the law, namely, Rule 34 of the CHT Regulation, 1900, was made in September, 1971, by the Pakistani military-backed Government of East Pakistan headed by Governor A. M. Malek, and like all other laws passed by the illegal government supported by the Pakistani occupation forces, it is illegal, and requires to be taken off from the statute books. Ironically, this law has not only been retained from September 1971 until this day, it was amended by another Martial Law government, in 1979, a regime led by General Ziaur Rahman, which purported to amend this law further, and by amending Rule 34 of the Regulation legalized the grant of lands to non-indigenous and non-resident settlers, without the consent of the traditional indigenous authorities and other local government bodies. The laws passed by the aforesaid Martial Law regime were declared null and void by the Supreme Court of Bangladesh in the case of *Bangladesh Italian Marble Works Ltd and Another. v. Government of Bangladesh II ADC (2005) & Others* [commonly known as the Italian Marble case]. Yet, this law remains valid in the CHT, whereas all other such laws of the illegal Martial Law period have been removed from the statute books. If the aforesaid two amendments to Rule 34 in September 1971 and August 1979 are considered illegal, then the land grants to the military-sponsored Bengali settlers of 1979-1985 and the commercial land leases granted to non-resident and non-indigenous individuals and corporate bodies will also be rendered void and illegal. But no such non-discriminatory measures have been taken in Bangladesh, by political, bureaucratic, human rights or judicial bodies. This is a stark reminder of how successive military, caretaker and elected regimes in Bangladesh have, and continue to act in a patently discriminatory manner when it involves the indigenous peoples of the CHT, who are also ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities.

Similarly to the aforesaid amendment, another law on the issuance of land titles to Bengali settlers, namely the CHT Land Titles Ordinance 1984 (Ordinance No. 2 of 1985), which purported

to provide a legal cover to land titles arbitrarily granted to Bengali settlers in the CHT, fell within the period of Martial Law of another military dictator, namely, General Hussain Mohammed Ershad, which was declared ultra vires and unconstitutional in the case of *Siddique Ahmed v. Bangladesh*, 33 BCD (HCD) 84 (2011), whereas it still continues as a valid law in the statute books!

8. Targeted Harassment and Gender-Based Violence (Violations of Articles 2 and 5)

Gender-based violence against Indigenous women and girls in the CHT is a pervasive issue that the government has repeatedly ignored. Reports from civil society organizations indicate a rising trend in sexual violence perpetrated by settlers and security personnel. However, when security forces are involved with such crime, law enforcement and security forces obstruct the victim's family from obtaining justice, and in many cases, those who demand justice are punished. One example is the incident of two teenage Marma sisters, one of whom was allegedly raped by security forces and the other, a minor, sexually assaulted, on January 22nd, 2018. When rights-based organizations demanded justice, the two sisters were taken away by the military from the Rangamati General Hospital through a commando raid involving police and military in civilian clothes backed by deployment of fully armed and uniformed military and police personnel. At the time when Chakma Chief, Raja Devasish Roy was returning from Dhaka, after a Divisional Bench of the High Court denied the petition of the sisters to be released in the custody of the Chakma Chief, in whose territory they live, Chakma Queen YanYan, who was providing humanitarian support to the sisters at the hospital and seeking justice, was physically assaulted and threatened with death by the military, narrowly escaping by jumping into the nearby lake²⁹. Impunity has been the most crucial factor contributing to increasing incidents of violence against Indigenous women. Additionally, the lack of Indigenous representation within law enforcement agencies exacerbates barriers to justice. Article 5(b) of ICERD guarantees the right to security and protection from violence, but this right remains unattainable for many Indigenous women in the CHT.

Indigenous women, most of them subsistence farmers, who need access to land to sustain their livelihoods, are the primary food producers in their communities and are traditionally responsible for collecting natural resources such as water, food, and fuel. Their cultural practices and beliefs are deeply tied to the land, forest, and nature. However, their traditional roles, which contribute to their sense of self-worth, are being seriously undermined by the ongoing hostile conditions created by the military's takeover of their land and way of life. Violence against Indigenous women is therefore also a major cause of hunger and malnutrition. Women in Indigenous communities suffer the most from food insecurity, as they are primarily responsible for managing their family's food supply. Their limited ability to select food for drying, preserve seeds, and safely move through public spaces, combined with the powerlessness they feel in their reduced capacity to protect their children's health and well-being, is truly devastating.

²⁹ <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/laws-rights/138522> and <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/2/28/rights-groups-accuse-bangladesh-army-of-covering-up-sex-assault>

9. Suppression of Civil Society and Political Activism (Violations of Articles 5 and 6)

The government's treatment of Indigenous activists and civil society organizations in the CHT reflects a broader strategy of suppression. Activists advocating for the implementation of the CHT Accord and Indigenous rights are frequently labeled as “antinational” or “terrorists.” Arbitrary arrests, surveillance, and harassment are commonly reported, creating a climate of fear that stifles legitimate political and social activism. No national or international organization is permitted to conduct fact-finding missions on human rights violation allegations in the CHT.

In 2014, members of the International CHT Commission, a civil society body composed of prominent Bangladeshi and international human rights experts, were physically attacked by military-backed settlers during a fact-finding mission in the CHT³⁰. Since then, for over a decade now, neither the CHT Commission nor any national or international organization has been permitted to visit the region to investigate alleged human rights violations by the military against Indigenous peoples.

Enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, and torture of Jumma activists by law enforcement agencies have also become a regular phenomenon in the CHT. For instance, on 15 March 2022, Nabayan Chakma Milon (alias Sourav, 47), an Indigenous political activist, was allegedly tortured and killed in military custody in Dighinala of Khagrachari district. On 26 August 2019, Nabin Jyoti Chakma (32), Bujendra Chakma (50), and Ruchil Chakma Rasel (26) – three activists of (United Peoples' Democratic Front) UPDF, were allegedly picked up by the military from the Kripapur area of the Dighinala sub-district, later the army claimed that they were killed in an encounter. Gyano Shankar Chakma (45), Parbatya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samiti (PCJSS) activist, was killed in a crossfire with Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) in the Bandarban district on 3 April 2019. However, PCJSS claimed that he and his activist friend Mayadhan Chakma (42) were picked up by security forces from Chittagong earlier on 14 March 2019. The whereabouts of Mayadhan Chakma still remain unknown. Romel Chakma (19), a Higher Secondary School (HSC) candidate and general secretary of Pahari Chatra Parishad's Rangamati unit, allegedly died due to torture under the security forces' custody on 9 April 2017. Timir Baran Chakma, a member of the PCJSS (MN Larma faction), died, allegedly due to torture in custody of the Bangladesh military, in August 2014. Besides that, the government and its security forces are criminalizing the Indigenous rights activists and have filed fabricated court cases against more than a thousand activists, who now remain fugitives to avoid arrest.

The enforcement of Operation Uttoron has curtailed civil liberties by granting military authorities sweeping powers to detain individuals and restrict movement. This policy not only undermines the autonomy of Indigenous communities but also violates their right to freedom of assembly and association under Article 5(d) of ICERD. The persistent use of fabricated charges to imprison

³⁰ <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/CHT-commission-convoy-attacked-in-Rangamati> and <https://www.pcjss.org/pcjss-condemns-attack-on-visiting-cht-commission-in-rangamati-and-demands-to-arrest-those-who-are-responsible-for-this-atrocity/>

Indigenous leaders and activists, extrajudicial killings under custody highlights the systemic nature of this repression.

10. Environmental Degradation and Climate Injustice (Violation of Article 5(e))

The environmental degradation caused by corporate and military activities in the CHT has disproportionately affected Indigenous communities, violating their economic, social, and cultural rights under Article 5(e) of ICERD. Deforestation, pollution of water sources, and loss of biodiversity due to rubber plantations, establishment of military camps, and other commercial enterprises have undermined the sustainability of traditional livelihoods. Rului in Sajek, what used to be the traditional hunting and gathering space for the local Indigenous Lushais, has been converted to a military garrison and military-run tourist spot by evicting the local Indigenous people and by clear-felling the forests³¹. Sajek Union, a small administrative unit of CHT, is regarded as the lungs of CHT, which contains the most biodiverse flora and fauna in CHT. However, the ongoing 'Border Road Construction project', by the Engineering Corps of the Bangladesh Army (ECB) has put the rich biodiversity of the area under serious threat. The military is undertaking the project without following proper protocols of consultation with the Indigenous Peoples or their Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC). The estimated cost of this 1,036 kilometers road building project is Tk 3,860.82 crore, fully funded by the Government³². Construction of the road has put the environment, livelihood, forest, livestock, sacred sites, biodiversity, and flora and fauna of the area under severe threat. The border road passes through frontier locations where the utmost vulnerable communities of CHT live. Sajek, and Horina, these are the areas where the highest number of IDPs of CHT are concentrated who got displaced during the armed conflict and are still not rehabilitated. Many Jumma families that got displaced during the construction of Kaptai dam in the 1960s, also live around these parts. The road also passes through important watersheds, reserve forests, Village Common Forests (VCF, which are traditionally maintained by the Indigenous communities), and many religious and cultural sites that are very important to the Indigenous peoples. It is feared that the road completion will create an influx of non-Indigenous people in the area, which will deeply impact the demography and socio-economic life of these most vulnerable peoples in CHT. Besides, this area is the habitat of the most endangered wildlife species. The nature, environment, and ecology of this area will be severely impacted, too, upon the completion of this mega project. Further, in Lama, Bandarban, the Lama Rubber Industry, an influential corporate group has long been attempting to evict local Mro communities residing in Langkom Karbari Para, Joychandra Tripura Karbari Para, and Rangen Karbari Para of Sarai Union. The group has allegedly grabbed more than 300 acres of ancestral land and continues its efforts to seize additional territory, threatening the displacement of Indigenous Mro people from their traditional homelands. On 6 September 2022, workers from the Lama Rubber Company allegedly poisoned the water of a stream, the sole source of drinking water for the residents of Rengyen Karbari Para, endangering both human lives and the local ecosystem. Aquatic life in the

³¹ Ahmed, Hana Shams. *Tourism and State Violence in the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh*. Master's thesis, University of Western Ontario, 2017. <https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/etd/4840>

³² <https://www.observerbd.com/news.php?id=358317>

stream was killed, and, tragically, this environmental destruction likely saved human lives: the presence of dead aquatic animals served as a warning to villagers not to consume the contaminated water³³.

Recommendations to the CERD Committee

Given the gravity and intensifying nature of violations outlined in this submission, we respectfully call upon the Committee to consider the following actions:

1. Adopt a decision under Early Warning and Urgent Action Procedure to reflect the critical and worrying situation in the CHT, with particular concern for the Bawm Indigenous people who are currently facing potential ethnic cleansing threat.
2. Request the OHCHR office in Bangladesh (now attached to the UNDP Office in Bangladesh) to monitor and collect on-the-ground information in line with the Committee's procedures.
3. Recommend that the Human Rights Council and the UN Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide address the matter, and consider raising it before the UN Security Council.
4. Consider to send delegation of the CERD Committee to Bangladesh to assess the situation on the ground and assist the implementation of ICERD standards.
5. Request the Government of Bangladesh to allow the Special Rapporteur on indigenous peoples and other related mandate-holders to visit the CHT, Bangladesh and monitor the situation of indigenous peoples' rights in the region.

In addition, we respectfully request the Committee to call upon the Government of Bangladesh to:

- Conduct a comprehensive review of its compliance with ICERD obligations concerning the rights of Indigenous Peoples in the CHT.
- Officially recognize Indigenous identity, repealing directives that prohibit the use of the term "Indigenous" and ensuring full respect for self-identification in line with international standards.
- Cease discriminatory restrictions on traditional practices, including Jum cultivation, and establish clear rules for the effective and meaningful participation of Indigenous communities, including Indigenous women in sustainable and culturally appropriate livelihoods, including the right to 'say no' to policies, laws and projects that threaten their human rights in the framework of their right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC).
- Implement the key provisions as outlined in the CHT Peace Accord particularly regarding demilitarization, the recognition of land rights and the resolution of land-related disputes, rehabilitation of internally displaced persons and India-returnee indigenous refugees, the transfer of adequate authority to Hill District Councils, including on law and order and local police, the devolution of adequate authority to the CHT Regional Council, including on

³³ Based on a field visit conducted by the CHT Commission's Secretariat. The Commission has also repeatedly released statements concerning the issue.

general administration, the facilitation of democratic elections, and ensure accountability for ongoing human rights violations by security forces and state-supported actors.

- Lift restrictions on access to the CHT for foreign diplomats, researchers, and humanitarian actors to ensure transparency, oversight, and international engagement.
- Establish an independent monitoring mechanism for the implementation of the CHT Peace Accord and make the Land Dispute Resolution Commission functional with full and meaningful participation of Indigenous representatives, and regularly adopt the needed corrective measures to ensure that any state conduct in the CHT is in line with Bangladesh's human rights obligations.
- Recognize and protect Indigenous peoples' traditional lands, ending forced displacement, land dispossession, and resource exploitation without free, prior, and informed consent.
- Address gender-based violence, including those perpetrated by state actors, by establishing Indigenous-led legal and psychosocial support mechanisms.
- Ensure Indigenous Peoples' access to justice, including the ability to claim their rights when these are not properly implemented, and ensure the establishment of adequate remedy mechanisms. These mechanisms must be gender-responsive and specifically designed to address the specific barriers that Indigenous women and girls face in accessing justice.
- Constitute a high-powered Commission of Inquiry to enquire into the unlawful deaths, arson, assault and other violent acts perpetrated against indigenous peoples in Khagrachari, Dighinala and Rangamati, on 18, 19 and 20 September 2024, allegedly by militant Bengali settlers backed by armed government security personnel.
- Advise the Government of Bangladesh to repeal all discriminatory legislative provisions and executive orders and directives, which are contrary to the equal rights clauses of the Constitution of Bangladesh, the provisions of ICERD, ICCPR, ICESCR, CEDAW, CRC, ICC (Rome Statute), ILO Convention No. 107 and the UNDRIP.

The systemic racial discrimination and impunity highlighted herein underscore the urgent need for CERD's intervention to uphold Bangladesh's obligations under the Convention. We stand ready to provide additional documentation and facilitate testimonies from affected communities to assist the Committee in its deliberations.

Submission endorsed by (in alphabetical order):

1. Asia Indigenous Peoples' Pact
2. FIAN International
3. International Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission
4. International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs
5. Minority Rights Group
6. And endorsement from local organizations who wish to remain anonymous for safety reasons

Annexes:

Annexe 1
(Unofficial English Translation from the Original Bengali)

Memo dated 23/10/2017
from the Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs to the Chakma Circle Chief
(Unofficial English Translation from the Original Bengali)

Government of the People`s Republic of Bangladesh
Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs
Coordination Branch - 2
Bangladesh Secretariat

No: 29.00.0000.224.27.18.2016-746

Date: 23/10/2017 A.D.

Subject: The use of the term 'Adivasi' ('Indigenous') instead of 'Upajati' ('Tribes') by the Mong Raja

Reference: Office of the Divisional Commissioner, Chittagong, Memo No-05
.42.0000.031.34.004.17-674; Date: 05/06/2017

It is hereby intimated to all concerned regarding the subject mentioned in the memos under reference that the word "tribe", as mentioned in Clause 1 of Part B of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Agreement will remain as it was in the law of the council.

In addition, it is mentioned in Article 23A of the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh that: "The State shall take steps to protect and develop the unique local culture and tradition of the tribes, minor races, ethnic sects and communities". There is no scope to refer to the concerned tribal communities of the hill region as 'indigenous' or through other terms than the terms mentioned in the Constitution, i.e., as "tribes, minor races, ethnic sects and communities".

In the circumstances, as instructed to the undersigned, all concerned are hereby requested to use the terms mentioned in the Constitution.

ASM Shahan Reza)
Deputy Secretary (Coordination-2)
Phone: 957496
E-Mail: shahan.reza@yahoo.com

Distributed for kind information and action:

- 1) Divisional Commissioner, Chittagong
- 2) Chairman, Rangamati/Khagrachari/Bandarban Hill District Council
- 3) Deputy Commissioner, Rangamati / Khagrachari / Bandarban Hill District
- 4) Circle Chief, Chakma, Mong and Bohmong Circles, Rangamati / Khagrachari / Bandarban Hill District.
- 5) Private Secretary to the Minister of State, Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs, Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka (for the kind information of the Minister of State)
- 6) Private Secretary to the Secretary, Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka (for the kind information of the Secretary)
- 7) Office copy

Annexe 1 (Original in Bengali)

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রাম বিষয়ক মন্ত্রণালয়
সমন্বয়-২ অধিশাখা
বাংলাদেশ সচিবালয়

নং-২৯.০০.০০০০.২২৪.২৭.১৮.২০১৬- ৭৪৬

তারিখঃ ২৩/১০/২০১৭ খ্রিঃ।

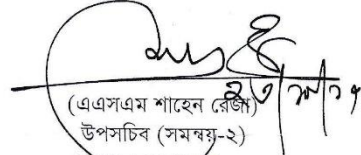
বিষয়ঃ মন্ত্ররাজ্য কর্তৃক 'উপজাতি' শব্দের পরিবর্তে 'আদিবাসী' শব্দের ব্যবহার।

সূত্রঃ বিভাগীয় কমিশনার অফিস, চট্টগ্রামের স্মারক নং ০৫.৪২.০০০০.০৩১.৩৪.০০৪.১৭-৬৭৪, তারিখঃ ০৫/০৬/২০১৭

উপর্যুক্ত বিষয়ে ও সূত্রোক্ত স্মারকের আলোকে সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলের সদয় অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রাম চুক্তি তথা পার্বত্য শান্তি চুক্তির "খ" খন্ডের ১ নং ধারায় পরিষদের আইনে "উপজাতি" শব্দটি বলবৎ থাকবে মর্মে উল্লেখ করা হয়েছে।

এছাড়া, গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশের সংবিধানের ২৩ ক অনুচ্ছেদে উল্লেখ আছে "রাষ্ট্র বিভিন্ন উপজাতি, ক্ষুদ্র জাতিসত্তা, নৃ-গোষ্ঠী ও সম্প্রদায়ের অনন্য বৈশিষ্ট্যপূর্ণ আঞ্চলিক সংস্কৃতি এবং ঐতিহ্য সংরক্ষণ, উন্নয়ন ও বিকাশের ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করিবেন"। পার্বত্য অঞ্চলে বসবাসকারী বিভিন্ন উপজাতীয় সম্প্রদায়কে সংবিধানে উল্লেখিত 'উপজাতি', 'ক্ষুদ্র জাতিসত্তা', 'নৃগোষ্ঠী' ও 'সম্প্রদায়' এর বাইরে নাগরিক সনদ প্রদানে বা দাপ্তরিক কাজে "আদিবাসী" নামে অভিহিত করার অবকাশ নাই।

ঐমতর্বিহীন, সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলকে সংবিধানে উল্লেখিত শব্দাবলী ব্যবহারের জন্য নির্দেশক্রমে অনুরোধ করা হল।


(এএসএম শাহেন রেজা)
উপসচিব (সমন্বয়-২)
ফোনঃ ৯৫৭৪৪১৭

ই-মেইল :- shahen.reza@yahoo.com

সদয় অবগতি ও কার্যার্থে বিতরণঃ

- ১। বিভাগীয় কমিশনার, চট্টগ্রাম।
- ২। চেয়ারম্যান, রাঙ্গামাটি/খাগড়াছড়ি/বান্দরবান পার্বত্য জেলা পরিষদ।
- ৩। জেলা প্রশাসক, রাঙ্গামাটি/খাগড়াছড়ি/বান্দরবান পার্বত্য জেলা।
- ৪। সার্কেল চীফ, চাকমা, মং ও বোমাং সার্কেল, রাঙ্গামাটি/খাগড়াছড়ি/বান্দরবান পার্বত্য জেলা।
- ৫। প্রতিমন্ত্রীর একান্ত সচিব, পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রাম বিষয়ক মন্ত্রণালয়, বাংলাদেশ সচিবালয়, ঢাকা (প্রতিমন্ত্রী মহোদয়ের সদয় অবগতির জন্য)।
- ৬। সচিবের একান্ত সচিব, পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রাম বিষয়ক মন্ত্রণালয়, বাংলাদেশ সচিবালয়, ঢাকা (সচিব মহোদয়ের সদয় অবগতির জন্য)।
- ৭। অফিস কপি।

E/Demand from other ministry/Letter

Annexe 2

(Unofficial English Translation from the Original Bengali)

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Sub-District Executive Officer (UNO)
Thanchi Sub-District, Bandarban Hill District

Memo No. 05.42.0395,000,06.002.20-996

Date: 21/10/2020 AD

Subject: Illegal Establishment of New Chakma and Tanchangya Villages in Thanchi Sub-District

Reference: Memo No. 44.02.4630.138.01.1775.20 / 185 of 36 BGB Battalion, Bolipara Zone,
dated

12/10/2020

Referring to the aforestated subject and letters, this is for your intimation that new Chakma and Tanchangya villages are being unlawfully established in the remote hill areas of Thanchi sub-district, and various terrorist activities are being carried out by a group of terrorists visiting often and staying in these illegally established new villages as gathered from reports of intelligence agencies (copy enclosed). In this circumstances, it is requested to inform the undersigned after taking necessary steps to prevent the presence of these terrorists and their activities in the previously built Chakma and Tanchangya villages, including the prevention of further new unlawfully established villages.

Enclosure: 01 (one) copy

Md. Ariful Haque Mridul
Sub-District Executive Officer
Thanchi, Bandarban Hill District

To

The Mouza Headman

359 Sekdu Mouza, Bandarban

Bandarban Hill District

Annexe 3

(Unofficial English Translation from the Original Bengali)

Instructions from the Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs
To limit Turmeric and Ginger Cultivation (Jum)/Shifting Cultivation)
To stop its Commercial Marketing etc. &
Ensuring Intensive Supervision of Shifting Cultivation and Reserved Forests

No- 29.00.0000.223.017.01.2017 (Part-1) – 213

Date: 20/09/2021 A.D.

Sub: Destruction of Biodiversity and Natural Balance in the Hill Region through Fire from Commercial Cultivation of Jum or Shifting Cultivation (Turmeric and Ginger)

Source: Armed Forces Division of the Prime Minister's Office Memo No. 06.00.0000.02.016.001.21/1594

Having regard to the subject matter and reference mentioned above, it is learned that the widespread incidence of Jum cultivation (Shifting Cultivation) on a commercial basis in the hill region is causing extreme and far-reaching adverse effects on the biodiversity and natural landscape of the hilly region, which appears to be one of the major obstacles to maintaining ecological balance. Hence, the following advice/recommendations have been made by the Armed Forces Division of the Prime Minister's Office -

- a. Regular intensive supervision by the concerned area representatives of the Forest Department can be ensured to prevent illegal cutting/burning of the large trees in hills of the hill region during Jum cultivation (Shifting Cultivation).
- b. Increasing strict surveillance over cultivation of turmeric/ginger in the hill region and formulating a specific policy in this regard. Immediate steps can be taken to stop commercial marketing of related products to discourage the cultivation of turmeric and ginger on a commercial basis and expert opinion on alternative farming can be sought.
- c. Necessary steps may be taken to protect the Reserved Forests and in this regard more effective role of the Department of Forests and Environment is required.
- d. For the purpose of increasing public awareness about environmental disasters, meetings, seminars etc. can be organized with local people's representative and local people in coordination with the civil administration in the responsible areas.

In this regard, based on advice of the Armed Forces Division, Prime Minister's Office, it is requested that further action on the above opinion/recommendation be taken with intimation to this Ministry.

Taslima Khatun
Senior Assistant Secretary
Phone: 9545698

For Information (Not in accordance with seniority):

1. Chairman, Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board.
2. Chief Executive Officer, Task Force on Rehabilitation of India-Returnee Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons, Khagrachari.
3. Deputy Commissioner, Rangamati/Khagrachari/Bandarban Hill District.
4. Divisional Forest Officer, Rangamati/Khagrachari/Bandarban Forest Division.
5. Chief Executive Officer, Chittagong Hill Tracts Regional Council.
6. Chief Executive Officer, Hill District Council, Rangamati/Khagrachari/Bandarban Hill District.

No- 29.00.0000.223.017.01.2017(Part-1)-213

05/06/1428 BS

Dated: _____

20/09/2021

Copy sent for kind information:

01. Major, On Behalf of Principal Staff Officer, Armed Forces Division, Prime Minister's Office, Operations and Planning Department, Dhaka Cantonment.
02. Deputy Secretary, (Council 1 & 2/Coordination/Development), Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs, Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka.
03. Private Secretary to the Secretary, Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs, Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka.
04. Office Copy.

Taslima Khatun
Senior Assistant Secretary

Annexe 3 (Original Document in Bengali)

মহাপ্রজ্ঞাপন/ শাখাতে শেখা ক্রম
সুঃ নিঃ কঃ
সঃ কঃ (উঃ)/সঃ কঃ (উঃ) আঃ ভঃ
সঃ নিঃ কঃ

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রাম বিষয়ক মন্ত্রণালয়
সমঝয়-১ শাখা
বাংলাদেশ সচিবালয়, ঢাকা।

০৫/০৬/১৪২৮ বাংলা
তারিখঃ -----
২০/০৯/২০২১খ্রিঃ

নং-২৯.০০.০০০০.২২৩.০১৭.০১.২০১৭(অংশ-১)-২১৩

বিষয়ঃ বাণিজ্যিক ভিত্তিতে জুম (হলুদ/আদা) চাষের নিমিত্ত অগ্নি সংযোগের মাধ্যমে পার্বত্যঞ্চলের জীব বৈচিত্র্য ও প্রাকৃতিক ভারসাম্য বিনষ্টকরণ প্রসঙ্গে।

সূত্র : সশস্ত্র বাহিনী বিভাগ প্রধানমন্ত্রীর কার্যালয়ের স্মারক নং-০৬.০০.০০০০.০২.০১৬.০০১.২১/১৫৯৪; তারিখ: ২৯ আগস্ট ২০২১ খ্রি:

উপর্যুক্ত বিষয় ও সূত্রোক্ত স্মারকের পরিপ্রেক্ষিতে জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, পার্বত্যঞ্চলে বাণিজ্যিক ভিত্তিতে ব্যাপকভাবে জুম চাষ প্রবর্তিত হওয়ায় পার্বত্য এলাকার জীব বৈচিত্র্য এবং প্রকৃতির উপর চরম ও সুদূর প্রসারী বিরূপ প্রতিক্রিয়া সৃষ্টি হচ্ছে এবং পরিবেশের ভারসাম্য রক্ষার ক্ষেত্রে অন্যতম প্রতিবন্ধক বলে প্রতীয়মান হওয়ায় সশস্ত্র বাহিনী বিভাগ, প্রধানমন্ত্রীর কার্যালয় কর্তৃক নিম্নরূপ মতামত/সুপারিশ দিয়েছেনঃ

(ক) জুম চাষের সময় অবৈধভাবে পার্বত্যঞ্চলের পাহাড়ের বড় বড় গাছপালা কেটে/আগুন লাগিয়ে পাহাড় ধ্বংস করা না হয় সে জন্য বন বিভাগের সংশ্লিষ্ট এলাকার প্রতিনিধি কর্তৃক নিয়মিত নিবিড় তদারকি নিশ্চিত করা যেতে পারে।

(খ) পাহাড়ি এলাকায় হলুদ/আদা চাষ সীমিত আকারে করার ব্যাপারে কঠোর নজরদারি বৃদ্ধি করা এবং এ বিষয়ে একটি সুনির্দিষ্ট নীতিমালা প্রণয়ন করা যেতে পারে। বাণিজ্যিক ভিত্তিতে হলুদ, আদা চাষ নিরুৎসাহিত করতে সংশ্লিষ্ট পণ্যের বাণিজ্যিক বিপণন বন্ধে আশু পদক্ষেপ গ্রহণ এবং বিকল্প চাষীদের বিষয়ে বিশেষজ্ঞদের মতামত গ্রহণ করা যেতে পারে।

(গ) Reserve Forest রক্ষার প্রয়োজনীয় পদক্ষেপ গ্রহণ এবং এক্ষেত্রে বন ও পরিবেশ অধিদপ্তরের অধিকতর কার্যকরী ভূমিকা প্রয়োজন।

(ঘ) পরিবেশ বিপর্যয়ের বিষয়ে গণ-সচেতনতা বৃদ্ধির লক্ষ্যে দায়িত্বপূর্ণ এলাকার বেসামরিক প্রশাসনের সাথে সমঝয়পূর্বক এলাকার জনপ্রতিনিধি ও স্থানীয় জনগণের মাধ্যমে সভা-সেমিনার ইত্যাদি আয়োজন করা যেতে পারে।

০২। এমতাবস্থায়, সশস্ত্র বাহিনী বিভাগ, প্রধানমন্ত্রীর কার্যালয়ের উপরোক্ত মতামত/সুপারিশ এর বিষয়ে পরবর্তী প্রয়োজনীয় ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণপূর্বক এ মন্ত্রণালয়কে অবহিত করার জন্য নির্দেশক্রমে অনুরোধ করা হলো।

সংযুক্তি: বর্ণনা স্মোভাবেক ০৪(চার) পাতা।

২০/০৯/২১
(তাহলিমা খাতুন)
সিনিয়র সহকারী সচিব
ফোনঃ ৯৫৪৫৬৯৮

কার্যার্থে (জেষ্ঠাতার ভিত্তিতে নয়):

১। চেয়ারম্যান, পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রাম উন্নয়ন বোর্ড, রাঙ্গামাটি।
২। প্রধান নির্বাহী কর্মকর্তা, ভারত প্রত্যাগত উপজাতীয় শরণার্থী প্রত্যাবাসন ও পুনর্বাসন এবং অভ্যন্তরীণ উদ্বাস্তু নির্দিষ্টকরণ ও পুনর্বাসন সম্পর্কিত টার্কফোর্স, খাগড়াছড়ি।
৩। জেলা প্রশাসক, রাংগামাটি/খাগড়াছড়ি/বান্দরবান পার্বত্য জেলা।
৪। বিভাগীয় বন কর্মকর্তা, রাংগামাটি/খাগড়াছড়ি/বান্দরবান বন বিভাগ।
৫। মুখ্য নির্বাহী কর্মকর্তা, পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রাম আঞ্চলিক পরিষদ, রাংগামাটি।
৬। মুখ্য নির্বাহী কর্মকর্তা, পার্বত্য জেলা পরিষদ, রাংগামাটি/খাগড়াছড়ি/বান্দরবান পার্বত্য জেলা।

নং-২৯.০০.০০০০.২২৩.০১৭.০১.২০১৭(অংশ-১)-২১৩

০৫/০৬/১৪২৮ বাংলা
তারিখঃ -----
২০/০৯/২০২১খ্রিঃ

সদয় অরগতির জন্য অনুলিপি প্রেরণ করা হলোঃ

০১। মেজর, প্রিন্সিপাল স্টাফ অফিসারের পক্ষে, সশস্ত্র বাহিনী বিভাগ, প্রধানমন্ত্রীর কার্যালয়, অপারেশন ও পরিকল্পনা পরিদপ্তর, ঢাকা সেনানিবাস।
০২। উপসচিব (পরিষদ-১ ও ২/সমঝয়/উন্নয়ন), পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রাম বিষয়ক মন্ত্রণালয়, বাংলাদেশ সচিবালয়, ঢাকা।
০৩। সচিবের একান্ত সচিব, পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রাম বিষয়ক মন্ত্রণালয়, বাংলাদেশ সচিবালয়, ঢাকা।
০৪। অফিস কপি।

(তাহলিমা খাতুন)
সিনিয়র সহকারী সচিব

Local Disk (D:) /Letter other

Annexe 4

(Unofficial English Translation from the Original Bengali)

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs

Coordination Branch

Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka

No-29.00.0000.223.013.2017-351

Dated: 01.11.2018 AD

Subject: The Current Attitude & Possible Long Term Influence on the Security Forces and Civil Administration about the General Bengali Community and Bengali Regional Parties

Reference: Office of the Prime Minister, Memo No. 06.00.0000.039.38.001.18 dated 06/09/2018

In regard to the subject matter of the memo referenced above, it is hereby intimated that the following recommendations provided by the Intelligence Directorate of the Armed Forces Division, Office of the Prime Minister, be acted upon, concerning the present attitude of and possible long-term influence upon, the security forces and civil administration about the general Bengali community and Bengali regional parties:

- a. Necessary instructions should be provided so that the security forces and administration do not hold negative attitudes towards the Bengalis and act with a sympathetic attitude from a humanitarian viewpoint;
- b. Necessary measures should be taken to ensure that Bengali organizations can carry out their activities and can exercise their legal rights;
- c. Necessary measures should be taken to provide full administrative and legal support to the Bengalis to reconstitute their dispossessed lands, including at Sona Mia Tila;
- d. Workable plans should be adopted to bring forth confidence among the Bengalis and to prevent their likely movement from the Chittagong Hill Tracts to the plains. At the same time, instructions should be provided to NGOs, the local administration and the security forces to take effective measures for their educational and economic development.

2. In the circumstances, on the basis of the aforesaid recommendations, as instructed, it is hereby requested to take all necessary measures.

Sd/- 01.11.18

(Riva Chakma)

Senior Assistant Secretary

Phone: 9545698

1. Chairman, Hill District Council, Khagrachari
2. Deputy Commissioner, Khagrachari Hill District

Copy forwarded for kind information:

1. Private Secretary to the Secretary, Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs, Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka

Annexe 5

(Unofficial English Translation from the Original Bengali)

Very Urgent/Fax Message

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Protocol Wing

State Guest House, Meghna

Dhaka

No. 19.00.0000.730.31.008.21-244
October 2021

Date: 21

Subject: Chittagong and Rangamati visit of H.E. Ms. Winnie Estrup Petersen, the Ambassador of Denmark to Dhaka, with a 4-member Team on 24-25 October, 2021

Reference: Embassy of Denmark in Dhaka 2021-3522, No.082/2021, Dated 23 September, 2021

Having regard to the matter and reference letter mentioned above, it is hereby informed that, H.E. Ms. Winnie Estrup Petersen, the Ambassador of Denmark to Dhaka, with a 4-member team will visit Chittagong and Rangamati on 24-25 October, 2021 (detailed itinerary attached). According to the proposed itinerary, the team will fly (with Novo Air) from Dhaka to Chittagong, and will fly back (with Novo Air) from Chittagong to Dhaka, after the proposed visit. Liaison may be maintained with the Programme Adviser of the Danish Embassy, Ms. Bitalie Taskeen Islam (Cell: 0171 3198 494) for further information regarding the visit.

2. The concerned District Administration is hereby requested to advise the visitors about the following matters:

- a) The foreign nationals cannot make visits outside of the itinerary and the concerned foreign nationals will inform the District Administration and Superintendent of Police about their itinerary, address and phone/mobile number during the visit.
- b) She will register with the Police Check Post before entering the hill district. She will refrain from taking part in any meeting or assembly with the public and making any statement on the situation of the hill districts.
- c) She will constantly coordinate with the local administration and law enforcing agencies to maintain security during her visits to the interior. Given the current Covid-19 situation, she will carry a medical certificate issued by the relevant authorities.
- d) Officials and employees of foreign diplomatic missions/embassies and international agencies, during their visit in the hill districts, will only participate in meetings with different individuals or organizational representatives of different positions in the presence of members from the local administration.
- e) Given the current context of the Chittagong Hill Tracts, meetings with the leaders from different communities is quite a sensitive issue. Therefore, avoidance of movements/meetings with local public representatives outside of the proposed programme is advised.
- f) To maintain security, a Magistrate from Rangamai District Administration along with the Police Security will constantly accompany the aforesaid officials during their travel to the scheduled places in the Rangamati Hill District.
- g) In recent times, it has been learned that, armed members of PCJSS (Shantu) from Rabetong (Indian Frontier) at Harina Union in Barkal Upazila have trespassed into various places in Rangamati Sadar and have taken positions in different spots to engage in subversive activities. Moreover, JSS (N.M. Larma) and PCJSS (Shantu) maintain

presence at Shubalong Bazar in Barkal Upazila. In the circumstances, there is rivalry between these two local parties. Thereby, to ensure better security for the foreign nationals, adequate Police security measures are recommended in relation to the approved sites specifically mentioned in the itinerary.

h) The itinerary refers to a courtesy meeting and breakfast of the aforementioned visitors with the Chakma Circle Chief Barrister Devasish Roy at his office. At the present time, Barrister Devasish Roy is carrying on secret initiatives to establish an Independent Jummaland and to obtain the recognition of small ethnic groups as indigenous, both nationally and internationally. Therefore, the subject matter being sensitive to the government and the country, it is recommended that the aforesaid representatives should hold the courtesy meeting and breakfast with the Chakma Circle Chief at Sabarang Restaurant, instead of at his office and thereby the policy formulated by the government will be adhered to.

3. The authorities referred to herein are hereby informed and requested to take appropriate action.

(Rehana Parvin)

Assistant Secretary (Mission Service)

Phn: 41031570

Fax: 41031585

Enclosed: Itinerary (03 Pages)

19.00.0000.730.31.006.21-244

Date: 21 October 2021

Copy forwarded for kind information and necessary action (Not in accordance with Seniority):

1. Cabinet Secretary, Cabinet Division, Bangladesh Secretariate, Dhaka
2. Senior Secretary, Public Security Division, Ministry of Home Affairs, Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka
3. Inspector General of Police, Bangladesh Police Headquarters, Dhaka
4. Director General, DGFI, Dhaka Cantonment, Dhaka
5. Director General, National Security Intelligence, Segunbagicha, Dhaka
6. Director General, Intelligence Directorate, Armed Force Division, Dhaka
7. Deputy Commissioner, Dhaka
8. Superintendent of Police, Dhaka, Chittagong and Rangamati
9. Chairman, Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh, Kurmitola, Dhaka
10. Additional Inspector General of Police, Special Branch, Malibagh, Dhaka (Attention SS, SCO)
11. Police Commissioner, Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP), Dhaka
12. Deputy Police Commissioner, Diplomatic Security Division, DMP Gulshan, Dhaka
13. Deputy Police Commissioner (Protection), DMP, Dhaka

Annexe 6

(Unofficial English Translation from the Original Bengali)

Speech of 24th Infantry Division GOC Major General Md Saiful Abedin

Venue: Police Line, Shukhi Nilgonj, Rangamati

Date: 26.05.22

Everything has a first time so I will address it for the first time as the GOC of the 24 Infantry Division. Before I speak, I would like to highlight my acquaintance with the Chittagong Hill Tracts. Many of you may have seen me a long time ago. I am nearing the end of my career. Now you are seeing me as an ending GOC of the 24 Infantry Division. Those who saw me before saw in Khagrachari when Hansadhar Chakma would take my drafted letter to Rupayan Babu on the other side for dialogue. Dialogue always starts from the lower level and the result is Alhamdulillah! It was the second December of 1997 when Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina completed it. At the beginning of my speech, I would like to draw your attention to the reason we have become independent, what is the key motto to our independence, what is the key instruction, what is the key conscience?

If we are a single country, citizens of an independent country, then we have to remember the famous speech of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on March 7. He said "this time, the struggle is for freedom" so we wanted freedom; who wanted freedom? Only those who do not live in the Chittagong Hill Tracts wanted Freedom? Those who live in the Chittagong Hill Tracts Chakma, Marma, Tripura, Bam, Khiyang, Lusai, Khumi, did not want freedom? What is freedom? We divide liberation into two parts. Freedom from demand. I need food, I need housing, I need education, I need a job, these are my needs for survival. We have largely escaped these demands because of the goodwill of the government. As Dr. Benazir Ahmed has stated the course of development is being implemented by Hon'ble Prime Minister Shekh Hasina. But another sort of liberation which is a part of our liberation - the liberation from fear – have we liberated from that fear?

The Hill Tracts Peace Accord has been established to establish peace. So, peace will take away our fear. Have we made the hill people or the Bengali people living in the hills free from that fear today? We couldn't. Why couldn't we? Because our peace agreement was not properly observed, not implemented. Who was responsible for implementing the Peace Treaty? Is it only the

government's responsibility to implement the Peace Treaty? Is any treaty unilateral? All treaties are bilateral. One party makes an agreement with the other party. Do we know what the Treaty is? How many clauses of the Treaty have we read? A treaty containing 72 sections and 99 sub-sections had been signed. All the clauses of the Treaty were applicable to the government whereas only two were applicable to Jana Samhati Samiti. Clause 13 and Clause 14 of Part 'D' (Gha). It has been stated here that, Chittagong Hill Tracts Jana Samhati Samiti will surrender all their arms of that time, and so will their arm cadres. Only two clauses. Has any one of these two clauses been implemented for the government? You people tell me. Has any of these clauses been implemented? No, it hasn't.

The government has fully implemented 69 clauses, out of the remaining 30, 15 have been partially implemented and 15 are awaiting implementation. Then who does not have goodwill? Is it government? Or is it you who don't have any goodwill? I leave it to you to consider this matter. Today, you have split from one group into different groups. You have divided the Chittagong Hill Tracts as a place of establishing your dominance. Silently or audibly, you are extorting money so that you can bring extra weapons. You can increase the range of dominance. You can fight among yourselves and make people disgusted.

I will call on the people. Do not be afraid. The army of today's Bangladesh is not the army of 1974. Today's army is not the army of 1990. As Dr. Benazir Ahmed said, give us information, and ask for security from us. It has been seen many times that you are being abducted, but you do not even want to inform us. You just compromise your money to get back. If you, do it yourself, then as a person you cannot put the blame on us, that security forces cannot ensure security. You also have rights as a citizen. Say it. Do it. There are 51% 'Upojati' (tribal) and 49% non-tribal population currently residing in the CHT. Today, any process to establish peace cannot be made by excluding non-tribal citizens, and if anyone says that the non-tribal people have to be taken away elsewhere in Bangladesh, it will also be a daydream. Therefore, I urge all your leaders who speak such, think such, to come down from there. It will never be possible. It is also never an acceptable offer.

Today you are highly educated. The national average literacy rate of Bangladesh is 73.91% whereas the average literacy rate of Bengalis in the CHT is 23%. The average literacy rate of other ethnic groups (excluding Chakma) is 44.72%. The literacy rate of the Chakma is 73%. Why are you being so educated? You are being positioned in various high ranks. How are you holding these positions? Your presence are there in different places at home and abroad. You have vocal appearances in different organizations at home and abroad. Why? Because you are completely abusing the quota system given with kindness by the government. Quota in every sphere. If there

are quotas, that must be for everyone. In regards to the non-tribal, tribal people who inhabit the CHT, I would like to make an appeal to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina through the Hon'ble Minister of Home Affairs to open the hill quota for tribal, non-tribal all, and then observe who can advance in the competition.

If you want to fight, come along, let's fight. If you want to fight us with one thousand, two thousand, three thousand people and a few weapons, you can't last even half an hour. You fight for 30 minutes with us - Army, Police, Ansar, BGB together. Let's fix the place. You will be hiding in the hills. You will go from house to house and eat food by force. Flee from one hill to another at night. Then shoot us from a distance. This is not a war. These are mercenary activities. Terrorist activities. Today you are benefiting from the inaccessibility of these areas. You are taking advantage of these areas. If it were like other districts of Bangladesh, we would not be required today. Any force could have punished you. I will not prolong my speech. I want all of us to come forward to implement the Peace Treaty that the Prime Minister has executed. As she said, "we have signed the CHT Accord and will fully implement that."

I hope, those who are armed will implement only two of your articles before the government implements the remaining unimplemented articles. You surrender your arms and surrender yourselves to us. Otherwise, at any cost, we all unitedly are ready to do whatever we need to be sacrificed, against you. We sacrificed; we gave blood here. We will give more blood. But will never allow yourselves to succeed in fulfilling your ill motives. You all stay fine. Allah Hafez, Joy Bangla, May Bangladesh live forever.

Date: 26 May 2022

Statement of IGP Benazir Ahmed:

The main goal of the 1997 peace agreement was to change the fate of the people of the region. The aim of the Treaty is to replace the acts of killing, unrest, bloodshed, violence, and turbulence with the action of bringing and merging the people of the region into mainstream development. And I think it is fortunate for the people of this region that the Prime Minister of Bangladesh at the

moment is the one who took the initiative to establish peace in this region in 1997 as the embodiment of this peace agreement.

There is a conspiracy ongoing to stop the development in the region by making the area unstable. The time has come to defeat this evil force with the joint efforts of all the peace-loving innocent people of the area, the people's representatives as well as the leaders in every profession.

We want this hill region to be developed like other districts of Bangladesh and everyone will be a partner in that development journey. How were the roads in the region before the Peace Treaty and what is the condition now, how many schools there were then, how many schools there are now, how many hospitals there were then, and how many there are now? If we can stop the killings, kidnappings, and extortion here now, the fate of the people of this region will change very soon. This region is called Switzerland of the East. Although there are many problems prevail here. The way the resorts are being developed here; the way tourism is being developed in other countries. When tourism is developed, the local people become the first clients and after local people develop tourism, there come international tourists. When the Prime Minister was in power in 2009, the income of this country was 570 dollars, which is now close to 2900 dollars.

People have a lot of money now. Tourism is slowly developing in the region. There are employment opportunities in tourism here. This hill region can also make a huge contribution to the GDP of Bangladesh. We want to work together to impliment the economic opportunities that exist in this hill region. So that the fate of the people here changes. To change this fate, I think every person living in this region should say 'no' to terrorism, murder, and kidnapping. We must stand up against extortion. We are with you. The Government of Bangladesh is with you. 18 crore people of this country are with you. You have the full support of the Prime Minister. In the future, you will all be united. Together we have the armed forces working here, the administration working

here, the various departments of the government working here, and we are all implementing the orders given by the government for the development of the hills. We want to take this prosperous initiative forward.

There is only a handful of these terrorists, not even 2,000 in number, according to the intelligence report. And you have 1.6 million people living in this area. There are 180 million people living in Bangladesh.

If the government is outside the 180 million and is not the people of this region, and can prevent extortion and kidnapping in the rest of the country, then why not in the CHT. This is why I tell the terrorists **“Never Underestimate the Power of the Government and the Power of the Peoples”**. Those who dare to despise the power of the people and the power of the state are idiots. All these evils are very insignificant to the people and the state.

I will find these two thousand people with your cooperation. I will go from house to house and find them. If they go underneath the ground, I will pull them up from there, and with your support, we will fight to change the destiny of the people of this region, Inshallah! We will win with the active support of the people of this region.

Against terrorism, against crime, against extortion, against anti-development conspiracies, against all these evil forces our only job is to be victorious. The only way to be a winner is to be a winner.

Those of us who are sitting here, those of you who are sitting in front, if we all put our hands together, we will make all impossible possible, inshallah! We will not allow any impossible to stay impossible; we think that the time has come that we must take the advantage. The development initiatives the government has for the people in the region; extortion is demanded during road construction; extortion is demanded during Banana selling.

Yesterday I was listening to the story, one of our respected local leaders and ministers was telling that a hill man who was working for the police died in an operation. Even the money he got from the government after his death was extorted. How ruthless these people are! I will say one more thing, those who are in all these jobs, come back. Return to normal life and join the larger population in the fight for the development of this hill area, in the fight for a change of destiny for the people. You must give up all those misdeeds and if you don't give up, people will take steps to get rid of you. So, the decision is yours, you decide whether you will give up sinful deeds and misdeeds on your own initiative. If you don't give up, people will make you to give up, and we are with them.

We no longer have time to waste. To merge the people of this region in the development activities of the people of the rest of the country, if they walk, the people of this region have to run, and we will do our duty to get united with that advancing journey. All of you gathered here today, I would like to express my sincere thanks to all of you, and in upcoming days, those who are sitting here; all security forces, all individuals and members of Administration, all government agencies, and every citizen of this region we all unitedly together will doom this evil force consummately and permanently, Inshallah!

We will equally be involved in the development journey of the rest of the country. We wish that in the days to come, our development and prosperity that we can take pride in will take place in these hills. There will be economic progress, and everyone will be a part of it. The economic fate of the people of this area will change. In addition to that, we want amazing changes in development, schools, and treatments, and we hope that you will all join us in that change, and we hope that you will cooperate with us in achieving our goal of establishing peace in the region.

We express our commitment and expectation from the invited guests here today that we will fulfill our responsibilities by staying united. We are very grateful to the distinguished guests on the stage who have come here. Immeasurably grateful. All stay well.

Thanks for listening to me. 'Joy Bangla'.

Annexe 7



Photo: Military instructing the traditional Headmen/Karbari at a Headmen- Karbari conference organized by the military in March 2022 in Rajasthali. **Credit:** Local Indigenous Peoples' Network.

Annexe 8 (Original Document)

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
GOVERNMENT OF THE
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH
DHAKA



পাররাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রণালয়
গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
ঢাকা

No. 19.00.0000.730.31.067.22-445

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh presents its compliments to the Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Bangladesh and with reference to the latter's Note Verbale (No.141/2022; dated 31 October 2022) regarding the visit of a delegation comprising the representatives of UN-Agencies (UNRC, UNDP, UNFPA, FAO & UNICEF), Ambassadors/High Commissioner (Norway, USA, UK & EU Delegation) and other members of UNRCO to khagrachari and Rangamati from 12-17 November 2022 has the honour to inform that the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh is pleased to accord permission for the 11 members delegation (**List Attached**) to the proposed visit under the following conditions:

- i) The members of the delegation should get themselves registered at the police checkpoint before entering CHT.
- ii) All travel should be made in coordination with the local administration and law enforcement agencies. The local administration and law enforcement agencies should be duly informed of the visit program, contact number, and address of the visiting delegation. The local administration has been requested to brief the visiting delegation about the guidelines that should be followed during the visit.
- iii) The delegation should strictly follow the program that has been shared with the Ministry to ensure appropriate security.
- iv) **A mid-level officer nominated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will attend all the official meetings during this visit.**
- v) **The visiting delegation should avoid closed door and unscheduled meetings with the local community or representative.**
- vi) **Hon'ble Member of Parliament (MP) of the Ruling Party and the DC of Rangamati District may attend the meeting with the Chairman of CHT Regional Council, Rangamati. DC of Rangamati District may also attend the meeting with the Chief of Chakma Circle.**
- vii) The visiting delegation is advised to visit all the places mentioned in their travel schedule accompanied by local police escort. **An officer/magistrate of the district administration will accompany the delegation all the time.**
- viii) **The delegation is also advised not to provide financial or any other types of assistance (either secretly or publicly) to the local tribal community/representative and not to make any comment on the situation in CHT, which could make unrest there.**
- ix) The delegation must follow the health guidelines issued by the government due to the prevailing COVID situation. The delegation must bear the COVID vaccination certificate.
- x) The permission may be withdrawn on short notice if any further information on the ground suggests that such a withdrawal is necessary.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Bangladesh the assurances of its highest consideration.

Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator
Dhaka

