

Human Rights Abuse against Indigenous People in Bangladesh

An Urgent Appeal for Protection



On February 19-20, 2010, members of the Bangladesh army and illegal Bengali settlers attacked fourteen villages of the indigenous Jumma people in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHTs) in Bangladesh. In these pre-planned attacks, at least 200 houses, seven shops, a UNDP-sponsored village center, Buddhist temples, and a church were burned to the ground.



After the settlers began torching the buildings, the army opened fire, killing at least six Jumma villagers and injuring at least twenty-five. Many others are missing.



To add insult to injury, six injured Jumma villagers who were admitted to Baghaichari hospital were arrested. The army claims that the attacks were actually a clash between ethnic groups, that the soldiers fired only blanks, and that the fires were set by the villagers themselves. All of these claims are patently false. Six villagers were killed, the villagers would not destroy their own homes, and no settlers were injured.



Because of the attacks, about 1,500 Jummas, whose houses were burned, are still taking refuge in the jungle. Since their food supplies were also destroyed, they are close to starvation, but no relief has been provided.

In order to prevent the truth from coming out, curfew has been imposed in the district. The Bangladesh army personnel have prevented journalists and human rights activists from visiting the affected areas. On February 20, two journalists from Bengali newspapers tried to enter the villages, but they were attacked by the illegal settlers, and one reporter's motorcycle was burned.



These latest attacks are part of a drive by Bengalis, backed by the Bangladesh Army, to take over land owned by the indigenous Jumma people, which has been going on since 2005. The villagers have repeatedly lodged complaints, but nothing has been done to stop the illegal settlers.



For a full report of the attacks, and the background of the struggle, please see the Asian Human Rights Commission report "Bangladesh IPs Massacred for Land Grab" at

<<http://www.achrweb.org/reports/bangla/CHT012010.pdf>>

Please send brief, politely-worded letters urging justice and protection for the persecuted Jumma villagers of the Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh. Please ask that their lives and homes be protected and that their rights ensured. Send your letters to:

Mrs. Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister
Government of the People's Republic of
Bangladesh
Office of the Prime Minister
Tejgaon, Dhaka, Bangladesh
email: pm@pmo.gov.bd
ps1topm@pmo.gov.bd
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Ms. Renata Lok Dessallien
UN Resident Coordinator in Bangladesh
email: zafor.iqbal@undp.org

Ms. Navanethem Pillay
United Nations High Commissioner for
Human Rights
Human Rights Council and Treaties Division
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OHCHR-UNOG
1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland
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High Commission of Bangladesh in
Sri Lanka
286 Bauddhaloka Mawatha
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Embassy of Bangladesh in the
United States
3510 International Drive, NW D.C. 20008
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High Commission of Bangladesh in the
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For more information, please contact **Buddhist Relief Mission** <buddhist@brelief.org>