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PROFILE SUMMARY

India: Ceasefire allows for return in Kashmir, while displacements continue in the North-East

At least 600,000 people are internally displaced in India due to conflicts in the states of Jammu and Kashmir, Gujarat and the North-East. The ceasefire between India and Pakistan in November 2003 substantially improved the security situation along the Line of Control and the international border between Indian- and Pakistani-controlled Kashmir. Information about return movements indicates that many have returned to their villages, although an unverified number still remain in camps. However, attacks and threats by separatist militants continue to hamper the return of India's largest group of displaced, between 250,000 and 350,000 Kashmiri Hindu Pandits who have been leaving the Kashmir Valley for Jammu and New Delhi since 1989 due to separatist militancy. Violence rose in the run-up to national elections in April and May 2004, and the Pandits who remained in the Valley were once again targeted and many have reportedly fled Kashmir. Communal violence in Gujarat displaced around 100,000 people in February 2002 and the number of people still being displaced is unknown. Despite frequent episodes of violence and discrimination, the Muslim population in Gujarat receives no protection from the state government. In the North-East, more than 250,000 people may be displaced due to conflict. Assam is the worst affected among the north-eastern states and the situation is becoming increasingly volatile. Since October last year, several episodes of fighting between ethnic groups in Assam have forced thousands of civilians to flee their homes. The lack of a consistent government policy on conflict-induced displacement as well as the lack of information on numbers and subsistence needs of the displaced leave thousands of displaced unassisted and unaccounted for. Improved data collection would be a first and vital step in order to establish a more adequate response to the displaced in line with international standards.

Jammu and Kashmir: Kashmiri Pandits still in exile

India's largest situation of internal displacement stems from the conflict in the north-western state of Jammu and Kashmir between militants seeking either independence or accession to Pakistan, and Indian security forces and police. The status of Kashmir has been in dispute since the creation of an independent India and Pakistan in 1947, and the two countries have twice gone to war over the issue. Since 1989, the insurgency in Indian-administered Kashmir has claimed at least 38,000 lives including more than 10,000 civilians (GOI 2002-2003, Chapter III, p.13). Some 350,000 Kashmiri Pandits (the government says 250,000) remain internally displaced as a result of this armed conflict. Around 100,000 live in the city of New Delhi and some 240,000 people in Jammu (USCR 2003, ORF 2003).

Elections in November 2002 and a new Jammu and Kashmir coalition government raised expectations for an end to displacement of the Kashmiri Pandits. In this regard, the state government developed a plan to facilitate the return of about 125,000 Pandits to the Kashmir Valley (GOI 2002-2003, pp. 27-28). The plan includes cash assistance, interest-free loans and the building of 500 apartments in the Anantnag district where the displaced Pandits can stay until they have repaired their own houses (Hindu Press, 9 March 2003).

While the state government has encouraged the return of the displaced, protection of the remaining Pandit population has been far from adequate. The security situation has not been conducive to return, with continuing attacks and massacres by separatist groups discouraging people from returning to the Kashmir Valley (SAM, 16 August 2003). After an upsurge of violence and killings, 160 of the estimated 700 Pandit families who were left in the Kashmiri Valley fled due to fears of being targeted. The security situation declined further prior to national elections in April and May 2004 (AI, 2 December 2003; COE-DMHA 5 April 2004).

Most displaced returned along Line of Control

Since the end of the 1990s, clashes between Indian and Pakistani forces and attacks by separatist militant groups have also led to several waves of displacement from the border villages along the Line of Control (LoC) and international border. A persistent build-up of political tension between India and Pakistan during this time meant that the danger of war between the two sides remained extremely high until June 2002, when Western mediators facilitated an easing of tensions (ICG 2002). According to the Indian government, more than 100,000 persons remained displaced due to instability along the LoC as of spring 2003 (GOI, 2002-2003, Chapter III, p.29; SAM, 16 August 2003). The ceasefire that was concluded between India and Pakistan in November 2003 has led to substantial improvement of the security situation. The information regarding subsequent return movements is conflicting. While local media has reported that 75 per cent of the population has returned to their homes, another local source says that many still remain in camps awaiting demining of their fields and repair of their homes. A vast demining operation of the border areas (more than one million mines were laid following the build-up of troops after the December 2001 attack on the Indian Parliament) is a prerequisite for a successful return of the displaced (COE-DMHA, 5 March 2004; COE-DMHA, 26 March 2004; Reuters, 17 December 2003).

The North-East: displacement in Assam on the rise

The seven states in the geographically isolated and economically underdeveloped North-East are home to 200 of the 430 tribal groups in India. An influx of migrants from neighbouring areas has led to ethnic conflicts over land and fighting for political autonomy or secession. Several political and/or armed insurgent groups have been formed, many of which resort to "ethnic cleansing" in order to defend their interests against a real or perceived ethnic enemy. At least 50,000 people have been killed in such conflicts in the North-East since India's independence in 1947 (COE-DMHA, 2 April 2004). Violence has broken out in the states of Assam, Manipur, Nagaland, Tripura and Arunachal Pradesh, involving at least eight different ethnic groups (Bodos, Nagas, Kukis, Paites, Mizos, Reangs, Bengalis and Chakmas). The largest forced displacement movements have occurred in the states of Assam, Manipur and Tripura (USCR January 2000, p.2-3, 5-7, Bhaumik, p.22-24).

There is no official estimate of the number of internally displaced persons in the North-East. Most information is found in local newspapers, while objective research in terms of assessing the magnitude of conflict-induced displacement in the region is yet to be executed by either governmental or non-governmental agencies (IPCS, Routray, 17 January 2004).

In Assam, resentment among the Assamese against "foreigners", mostly immigrants from Bangladesh, has led to widespread violence and displacement of Bengalis, Hindus and Muslims. The largest displacement situation in the state stems from the (still ongoing) fighting between Bodos and Santhals which erupted in the early 1990s and displaced an estimated 250,000 persons. The most recent estimates of the number of people remaining in relief camps range between 110,000 and 135,000 (The Hindu, 16 March 2004; ACT-LWFI, 20 February 2004). The camps are located in Assam's Kokrajhar, Gosaigaon, and adjoining districts (USDOS 2003).

The Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hills districts have been the main scenes of ethnic violence over the past few years and the situation has become increasingly volatile. In March 2003, fighting erupted between the Dimas and Hmar tribes over land holding and governance in the North Cachar Hills. Up to 5,000 people were displaced as a result of this conflict. Women, children and the elderly took shelter in relief camps in the states of Manipur and Mizoram (The Telegraph, 20 June 2003). Today, normalcy has returned with a peace accord having been signed by both tribes. Although no information has been found regarding the return of the displaced, it is likely that most of them have gone back to their homes.

In the Karbi-Aglong district, thousands of civilians have been displaced following a series of incidents of ethnic violence due to two separate but overlapping conflicts, one between two militant groups, the United Peoples' Democratic Solidarity (UPDS, a Karbi militant outfit) and the Kuki Revolutionary Army (KRA),

and the other between the UPDS and the Khasi-Pnar people. Attacks by Karbi insurgents in October and November 2003 led to the displacement of 5,000 Kukis to Manipur and Nagaland. An unknown number of Karbis were also displaced (COE-DMHA, 5 December 2003; IPCS, Routray, 17 January 2004). In March 2004, following retaliatory attacks, more than 2,000 Karbis fled their homes in the Karbi-Anglong district of Assam to government-run relief camps (COE-DMHA, 29 March 2004).

Khasi-Pnar tribals were similarly severely affected by attacks from Karbi militant groups. In November 2003, 5,000 fled to Meghalaya as a result of threats and extortion by the UPDS and militants from another group, the Karbi National Volunteers (IPCS, Routray, 18 December 2003). The displaced were sheltered in relief camps run by Meghalayan authorities until they returned two months later (NENA, 6 December 2003). However, the Khasi-Pnars accuse Karbi groups of continuously violating their human rights by raping, killing, kidnapping, torching houses and grabbing their land (The Telegraph, 1 January 2004).

The worst attack on non-Assamese people occurred in November 2003, when a major wave of violence was launched against Hindi-speaking people, many of them coming from Bihar to find seasonal work in Assam. The conflict was triggered by a row over jobs and reported intimidation of Assamese people in Bihar and violence quickly spread from the capital city of Guwahati to areas in Upper Assam. Mobs and militants killed at least 56 people and torched hundreds of houses. There is no estimate of the number of people who became internally displaced within the state, but at least 18,000 fled to about 40 camps in and outside Assam (The Hindu, 2 December 2003; Frontline, 6 December 2003; Reuters, 21 November 2003).

Displacement in other parts of North-East India

The Naga people in India's North-East have been fighting for a homeland for over 50 years. In April 2001, a decision by the central government to extend a five-year-old ceasefire to all Naga areas in the North-East was met with violent protests in Manipur, Assam, and Arunachal Pradesh. The ceasefire was seen as a step towards the establishment of a greater Naga state which could infringe on the territory of the neighbouring states. Some 50,000 Nagas, fearing revenge attacks, fled the Imphal valley in Manipur to Naga-dominated districts in Manipur and Nagaland (NPMHR, 5 January 2002, AHRC, 1 October 2003). According to the Naga International Support Centre, most of the internally displaced have returned to their homes and a final peace agreement is under negotiation with Indian authorities.

In North Tripura, some estimate that more than 100,000 people are internally displaced due to ethnic fighting and terrorist attacks by tribal insurgent groups targeting non-tribal settlers (Deccan Herald 20 March 2004, Rediff.Com, 21 May 2003). During the first months of 2003, attacks by the outlawed National Liberation Front of Tripura and All Tripura Tiger Force, sparked off an exodus of non-tribal Bengalis from the interiors of the state (Rediff.Com, 12 May 2003). An estimated 31,000 Reangs from Mizoram also remain displaced after fleeing ethnic fighting with the Mizos in 1997. Despite recommendations and orders of the National Human Rights Commission and the central government, the state government of Mizoram refuses to take back the displaced Reangs because they maintain that only half of the displaced are citizens of Mizoram.

In Arunachal Pradesh, at least 3,000 Chakmas have been displaced in previous years and the tension between nationalist movements and the Chakmas threatens to displace many more. Residents have protested at the presence of the Chakmas, who began arriving from the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh in 1964. Many residents still view the Chakmas as refugees, despite a ruling of India's supreme court in 2000 directing the government to grant the Chakmas citizenship (USCR 2003). The Chakmas are regularly threatened with expulsion, in particular by an influential Arunachal student organisation, which maintains that the Chakmas should be resettled elsewhere (IPCS, 19 September 2003). Controversy mounted over the inclusion of 1,500 Chakma residents in the electoral rolls in April 2004.

Background on internal displacement in Gujarat

In February 2002, violence erupted in the state of Gujarat. The violence began after a Muslim mob in the town of Godhra attacked and set fire to a train carrying Hindu activists. The reprisal attacks on the Muslim population killed more than 2,000 people and as many as 100,000 Indian Muslims were forcibly displaced from their homes. The state government organised relief camps, where the internally displaced reportedly lacked the most basic necessities such as food, medical supplies and sanitation (HRW, April 2002). Despite strong international concern, the Indian government refused to solicit or accept international assistance (USCR 2003). By October 2002, virtually all the camps had been closed, forcing many to return to their neighbourhoods where their security was continually threatened. In rural areas, incidents of killing and looting continued until April 2003. Many were forced to flee to relief camps again, where they remained basically unassisted (ACT-LWS-I, April 2003). In July 2003, a report by Human Rights Watch concluded that both the Indian government and the state government of Gujarat had failed to provide sufficient protection, assistance and compensation to the displaced. It is not known how many people have been unable to reclaim their homes and remained displaced as of June 2003 (USCR 2003). The Muslim population in Gujarat continues to face discrimination and episodes of violence targeting Muslims were frequent during 2003, especially in the district of Ahmedabad (IIJ, December 2003, Times of India, 4 November 2003). The Gujarat state government is still being accused of being complicit in the on-going violence against the Muslim community in Gujarat (IIJ, December 2003, p.51).

Humanitarian conditions

A large number of the displaced from the Kashmir Valley have been received by relatives or stay in relief camps in Jammu or Delhi. Hindu schools for the displaced children have been constructed and medical care provided, although the displaced population says it is not enough to cover their needs (USCR 2000). The formerly displaced residents from villages along the LoC lived in tents or in public buildings provided by the government. There were complaints that relief camps had not been provided with basic amenities such as water and sanitary facilities and that compensation for property lost as a result of displacement was insufficient (Bhair/Dayala, May 2003; SAM, 16 August 2003).

Information concerning the living conditions of the internally displaced elsewhere in the country is extremely scarce. In Gujarat, there are reports of immense trauma among children and women who witnessed atrocities or were victims of the 2002 riots against them (IIJ, December 2003, pp.64, 67; HRW, July 2003). Also, the displaced Muslim population faces acute poverty as their livelihoods were largely destroyed during the riots. Continued discrimination has left most of them unemployed, with female-headed households being particularly vulnerable (IIJ, December 2003).

Most internally displaced from the North-East reportedly live in deplorable conditions in temporary camps. Assistance, mostly provided by the state governments and NGOs, is insufficient and sporadic. Throughout the north-eastern states, conditions for the displaced remained poor, with starvation and disease killing hundreds of people. Many of the displaced live in public buildings and makeshift shelters, with little health care and no access to formal education (SAHRDC, March 2001). Recent anecdotal information suggests that there is an urgent need for assistance to the internally displaced populations. In Assam, acute food shortages and lack of health care have been reported in camps housing Santhal internally displaced (The Hindu, 16 March 2004; Times of India, 8 January 2004). Conditions in camps provided for the Hmar and Dimas displaced in March 2003 were also said to be inhuman, with several children and infants dying due to lack of health care (Liberation, 30 June 2003). In Tripura, residents in a relief camp for displaced in Chhawmanu are unassisted and have to look for wild plants to survive. The state government says it has no money to provide relief to the displaced population. News reports state that children have died due to the consumption of poisonous berries and contaminated water (The Telegraph, 17 January 2004). The Reang displaced in Tripura also say they do not have adequate food rations and that they suffer from lack of drinking water facilities, sanitation measures and health-care facilities (The Assam Tribune, 6 December 2003).

National and international response

The Indian government has been accused of failing to adhere to standards laid out in the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and to international human rights standards in its response to displacement in Kashmir and Gujarat (HRW July 2003, p. 38; ORF September 2003).

Overall, the government's response to internally displaced from Kashmir has been much more generous than the response to displaced elsewhere in the country (ACHR, October 2003). According to an official report in 2000, the Indian government spends \$532,000 per month on financial and food aid for the displaced in Kashmir (ORF, September 2003). Recently, the government also announced a wide-reaching development programme for Jammu and Kashmir where \$2.2 million is earmarked for relief to displaced Kashmiri Hindus (SAM, 16 August 2003). No such assistance is being provided to internally displaced in the North-East. The government does however grant relief on an ad-hoc basis. After the violence against Hindi-speaking people in Assam, the government announced a relief package including construction of houses for nearly 20,000 people living in 30 relief camps in Assam, supply of relief materials, including food grains and other essential commodities (NENA, 7 December 2003). In Gujarat, reports blame local authorities as well as the state government for failing to address the needs of the displaced altogether, despite promises made by the government with regard to rehabilitation (IJ, December 2003; HRW, July 2003). In a positive development, efforts were made to make displaced voters participate in the April and May national elections. The Electoral Commission ordered that displaced Kashmiri and Reang citizens could vote in their home states by submitting postal ballots. Newspapers also reported that polling booths were put up in relief camps for displaced people in Assam (The Hindu, 16 March 2004; Deccan Herald, 24 March 2004; India EC 2004).

In March 2004, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) announced a loan of \$243 million to Indian-controlled Kashmir. Part of the loan is expected to address the problems facing internally displaced people fleeing conflict in Kashmir (COE-DMHA, 19 March 2004).

India frequently denies international humanitarian actors access to internally displaced populations, arguing that local governments take full care of the affected people. Most of the North-East, for example, is off-limits to foreigners (GOI, 21 July 2000; USCR, January 2000, p.4). However, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) and the Lutheran World Federation have obtained access to relief camps for internally displaced in Assam. MSF has also assisted internally displaced in Jammu and Kashmir. In general, India lacks a national IDP policy and the government systematically refers to internally displaced persons as "migrants". A clear mandate for national and state institutions to assist and protect internally displaced people as well as improved data collection would constitute vital steps towards establishing an improved response to the displaced in line with international standards.

Development-induced displacement

Available reports indicate that more than 21 million people are internally displaced due to development projects in India. While the country-profiles of the Global IDP Project focus on conflict-induced displacement, we have included a brief background and links to further information on development-induced displacement in the background section of the profile (see "links to development induced displacement").

Note: This is a summary of the Global IDP Project's country profile of the situation of internal displacement in Sri Lanka. The full country profile is available online at <http://www.db.idpproject.org/Sites/idpSurvey.nsf/wCountries/India>

CAUSES AND BACKGROUND

General

Four categories of internal displacement in India

- I Political causes, including secessionist movements
- II Identity-based autonomy movements
- III Localized violence
- IV Environmental and development-induced displacement

I Political causes, including secessionist movements

i) Since independence, north-east India has witnessed two major armed conflicts – the Naga movement primarily led by the National Socialist Council of Nagaland, and the Assam movement led by the All Assam Students Union and now largely taken over by the extremist United Liberation Front of Assam. The violence and retaliatory responses from the government and other forces opposed to the secessionists continue to generate a steady flow of displaced people.

ii) In Kashmir's 'war' between state forces and militants, the killing of Kashmiri Pandits by fundamentalist secessionist groups, the widespread anarchy created by political instability and the continuous violation of fundamental human rights by both the state and militant groups, have led to large scale displacement, mainly of Kashmiri Pandits (estimated at 250,000), to Jammu and cities like Delhi. Despite the election and restoration of a popular government in 1996, those displaced have not been able to return due to the continuing reality of sporadic massacres in Kashmir. Although conditions are miserable, the displaced find that camps offer better employment opportunities, education and security.

II Identity-based autonomy movements

Identity-based autonomy movements, such as in Bodoland, Punjab, Gorkhaland and Ladakh, have also led to violence and displacement. This has happened in Punjab and more recently in the Bodo Autonomous Council area of western Assam. 'Cleansing' of non-Bodo communities by the Bodos, through plunder, arson, massacre and persecution, has forced a large number of non-Bodos to flee. They now live in camps.

III Localized violence

Internal displacement has also arisen from caste disputes (as in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh), religious fundamentalism (as in urban riots in Bombay, Coimbatore, Bhagalpur and Aligarh) and aggressive denial of residency and employment rights to non-indigenous groups by supporters of the 'son-of-the soil policy' (as in Meghalaya by the Khasi students and in Arunachal Pradesh against the Chakmas).

IV Environmental and development-induced displacement

In order to achieve rapid economic growth, India has invested in industrial projects, dams, roads, mines, power plants and new cities which have been made possible only through massive acquisition of land and subsequent displacement of people. According to the figures provided by the Indian Social Institute, the 21.3 million development-induced IDPs include those displaced by dams (16.4 million), mines (2.55 million), industrial development (1.25 million) and wild life sanctuaries and national parks (0.6 million).

(Lama, August 2000, p.24-25)

Internal displacement in Kashmir

Since 1989, conflict between the central government and separatist militants made Kashmiri Pandits flee the valley (1989-2002)

- Jammu and Kashmir is the only majority Muslim state in the Indian union
- Territorial dispute over Kashmir between India and Pakistan has led to two wars since independence in 1947
- State elections in 1987 created strong protests among the Muslim population due to allegations of fraud
- Since 1989, opposition has led to armed insurgency, increasing militarisation of the state and widespread abuses of human rights which has led to displacement of the Kashmiri Pandit population
- Between 1990-1996 the central government imposed direct rule on the state
- Estimates of the number of persons displaced vary between 250,000 – 400,000, the majority fled to the cities of Jammu and Delhi
- Hindu Pandits are still being targeted by separatist forces

"Jammu and Kashmir is the only majority Muslim state in the Indian union, and that distinction has made the Indian government all the more determined to hold on to the territory as integral to the country's multi-cultural identity. Yet politics in Kashmir have remained highly turbulent, and there was significant opposition to Indian rule among Kashmiri Muslims even before independence. Since 1989, this opposition has led to an armed insurgency, the increasing militarisation of the state, widespread abuses of human rights and an estimated 30,000-100,000 deaths." (ICG 21 Nov. 2002, p. 2)

"Kashmir has been at the heart of a territorial dispute between India and Pakistan since the two nations gained their independence in 1947. Both claim Kashmir. In 1948 the then-ruler of the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir, Maharaja Hari Singh, who was holding out for independence, acceded to India on condition that the state retain autonomy in all matters except defense, currency and foreign affairs. The accession was provoked by the invasion of Pakistani raiders and an uprising of villagers in the western part of the state. Fighting between India and Pakistan ended with U.N. intervention; since 1948 the cease-fire line has been monitored by the U.N. Military Observer Group on India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP). The far northern and western areas of the state are under Pakistan's control; the Kashmir valley, Jammu, and Ladakh are under India's control. U.N. resolutions calling for a plebiscite to determine the final status of the territory have been rejected by India, which claims that because Kashmiris have voted in national elections in India, there is no need for a plebiscite. Pakistan maintains that a plebiscite should be held. Several of the militant groups in Kashmir have also called for a plebiscite but argue that an independent Kashmir should be an option. On July 2, 1972, India and Pakistan signed the Simla Accord, under which both countries agreed to respect the cease-fire line, known as the Line of Control, and to resolve differences over Kashmir "by peaceful means" through negotiation. The Simla Accord left the "final settlement" of the Kashmir

question to be resolved at an unspecified future date. Since then, the Simla Accord has been the touchstone of all bilateral discussions of the Kashmir issue, even though the accord itself left the issue unresolved.

[...]

it was not until 1986 that discontent within the state found wider popular support. In that year the state's ruling National Conference (NC) party, widely accused of corruption, struck a deal with India's Congress Party administration that many in Kashmir saw as a betrayal of Kashmir's autonomy. A new party, the Muslim United Front (MUF), attracted the support of a broad range of Kashmiris, including pro-independence activists, disenchanted Kashmiri youth and the pro-Pakistan Jama'at-i Islami, an Islamic political organization, and appeared poised to do well in state elections in 1987. Blatant rigging assured a National Conference victory, which was followed by the arrests of hundreds of MUF leaders and supporters. In the aftermath, young MUF supporters swelled the ranks of a growing number of militant groups who increasingly crossed over to Pakistan for arms and training. The major militant organizations were divided between those advocating an independent Kashmir and those supporting accession to Pakistan. In the late 1980s, the groups began assassinating NC leaders and engaging in other acts of violence. Some groups also targeted Hindu families, and a slow exodus of Hindus from the valley began.

After the elections, militants of the JKLF and other groups stepped up their attacks on the government, detonating bombs at government buildings, buses, and the houses of present and former state officials, and enforcing a state-wide boycott of the November 1989 national parliamentary elections. One month later, JKLF militants abducted the daughter of Home Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, then freed her when the government gave in to demands for the release of five detained militants. That event, together with a surge in popular protest against the state and central governments, led the central government to launch a massive crackdown on the militants.

On January 19, 1990, the central government imposed direct rule on the state. From the outset, the Indian government's campaign against the militants was marked by widespread human rights violations, including the shooting of unarmed demonstrators, civilian massacres, and summary executions of detainees. Militant groups stepped up their attacks, murdering and threatening Hindu residents, carrying out kidnappings and assassinations of government officials, civil servants, and suspected informers, and engaging in sabotage and bombings. With the encouragement and assistance of the government, some 100,000 Hindu Kashmiris, known as "Pandits," fled the valley." (HRW 1999, *Behind the Conflict*)

"The Kashmiri Pandits are minority Hindus in the Kashmir valley. In December 1989 they started leaving their homes in response to separatist and fundamentalist threats and attacks on their homes, businesses and temples. Imposition of direct central government rule between 1990 and 1996 did not bring an end to terrorist violence. By 1996, approximately 250,000 Kashmiri Pandits had been displaced to Jammu, Delhi and elsewhere, where they still remain." (Saha, August 2000, p.26)

Violence displaced 160 Kashmiri Pandit families during 2003 (December 2003)

- During 2003, security worsened for the Kashmiri Pandit community living in the Kashmiri Valley, with several massacres taking place during the year
- During 2003, 160 of the estimated 700 Pandit families fled due to fears of being targeted

"Repeated violence against Kashmiri Hindus throughout the year [2002] is part of a pattern since 1990 that has forced hundreds of thousands of Hindus to flee the region." (Freedom House, 2003)

"The state government failed to protect the Pandit community at a time when it was making efforts to persuade the Pandits to return to their homes. In March 2003, 24 Kashmiri Pandits including 11 women and two children were killed by unidentified gunmen in Nadimarg.[...] Prior to these killings leaders of the Pandit community had met with local authorities and requested additional security as they felt that the level of security was inadequate, but their request had been rejected.

Fifty-four people from nine families were living in Nadimarg and had not migrated despite several massacres that had been carried out in the area in the past. Since these killings a further 160 of the estimated 700 Pandit families who continued to live in Kashmir fled due to fears of being targeted. Seven constables of the Jammu and Kashmir police were dismissed from service following an inquiry into the role of the policemen deployed on guard duty at Nadimarg on the day. Investigations have not revealed the individuals responsible for the killings." (AI, 2 December 2003)

"A fresh batch of displaced people from the militancy-torn Kashmir valley has arrived at Kalewadi, near Pimpri, where a few hundred others have set up camp over the last couple of years.

Hailing from Badgam, Baramulla, Kupwara and Hadwara in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), nearly 400 live in tents or similar make-shift dwellings on an open expanse of land at Kalewadi. Many of these "refugees", as they are sometimes referred to as, are from well-established families.

But they have had to flee their homes after being caught in the crossfire between the armed forces and militants for years on end. The latest arrivals, just like the other batches before, await rehabilitation by the central government in Jammu or other, more peaceful parts of Jammu and Kashmir.

"This process takes at least three months," said Swaraj Din Shah, who has arrived recently from Baramulla, with a family of 12. Groups of displaced Kashmiris who travel in large groups to Mumbai (Bandra West), Hyderabad, New Delhi and Surat, first came to Pune a couple of years ago and settled down at Kalewadi. The new group has arrived on the basis of information passed on by the refugees that came last year.

[...]

Out of the 400 refugees, only 20 who were students, speak some Hindi and English. The women, children and the older men mainly speak Kashmiri. The students teach English, Urdu, maths and science, to children in the camp in order to prevent a complete break in their education. Pain, humiliation and a sense of desperation is evident in the emotions expressed by the displaced Kashmiris.

[...]

However, the most immediate and persistent problem for the migrants is food. Their daily foodgrain requirement is as much as 300 kg of rice. They have been receiving help both in cash and kind from a number of organisations, including hospitals that donated medicines." (Times of India, 13 December 2003)

Displacement in Jammu & Kashmir due to military tensions and armed clashes between India and Pakistan (1999-2003)

- The displacement of border villagers has been a common phenomenon since 1947 due to shelling and military build up along the Line of Control (LoC) and in the border areas
- The displaced belong to different communities, Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs
- In 1999, fighting in the Kargil area displaced some 60,000-100,000 people
- Since then, Pakistani shelling has prevented many from returning
- After December 2001, over 100,000 people were forced to flee from the LoC and international border after Indian-Pakistani tension ran high following a terrorist attack on the Indian parliament
- In April/May 2002, there were again serious war fears, displacing people once more
- Sporadic incidents continue to displace people

"In the mid-nineties, thousands of families belonging to all communities — Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs — living in Rajouri and Poonch districts migrated to other areas. Similar migration took place from Doda

district. Their movement increased after Operation Parakram. As security in the remote hamlets decreased people sought shelter here. Estimates place the number at close to 30,000." (The Hindu, 15 April 2003)

"In May 1999, conflict broke out [again] between India and Pakistan over Kashmir. The conflict centered around the Kargil area, high in the Himalayan Mountains, halfway between the major Indian towns of Srinagar and Leh and just south of the Line of Control between Pakistan-held Kashmir and Indian-held Kashmir.

The conflict began when India launched air strikes along the Line of Control (the unofficial border between Indian-held Kashmir and Pakistani-held Kashmir), claiming that infiltrators from Pakistan had crossed the Line and occupied Indian territory. It ended in July, when, following international mediation, the infiltrators withdrew.

In India, the conflict displaced an estimated 60,000 to 100,000 people, mostly Kashmiri Muslims. The largest towns in the area, Kargil and Dras, were left completely deserted. Most of the displaced fled heavy Pakistani shelling of their villages." (USCR 2000, p.166)

"The spring and summer 1999 incursion of Pakistan-backed armed forces into territory on the Indian side of the line of control around Kargil in the state of Jammu and Kashmir and the Indian military campaign to repel the intrusion forced as many 50,000 residents of Jammu and Kashmir from their homes, a number of whom took refuge on the Pakistani side of the line of control. Many had their homes destroyed. Since that conflict, artillery shelling of the region by Pakistan has kept many of the internally displaced persons from returning and driven others from their homes. On October 12, Jammu and Kashmir home minister Mustaq Ahmad Lone told the State Assembly that 43,510 persons remained displaced [...]" (U.S. DOS February 2001, Section 2)

"In the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States, the security situation in Kashmir worsened because of new clashes between Indian and Pakistani armed forces, as well as renewed attacks by Muslim separatists. At the end of December 2001, some 60,000 to 100,000 Kashmiris fled their homes." (USCR 2003-India)

"The 13 December [2001] attack on the Indian parliament, alleged to be the work of the Islamic group, LET backed by the Pakistani military and security services triggered off the largest military build-up since the 1971 war between the two nuclear rivals India and Pakistan. This happened firstly on the dividing Line of Control (LOC) in Kashmir and then on their international borders.

Both countries have amassed their armed forces, with over half million Indian soldiers on the Indo-Pakistani borders which has now become the biggest 'mine zone' border in the world.

According to media reports, over 100,000 people have been forced to migrate from the LOC alone. In the three districts [...] including Jammu, Poonch and Rajoori, over 36,000 thousand school children after their holidays found their schools housing refugee families [...]" (CWI, January 2002)

"The current tension between India and Pakistan and the military build-up along the international border and the Line of Control has caused the inhabitants of several dozen villages close to the border to leave their homes and seek refuge in safer areas. While most of the displaced people are staying temporarily with friends and relatives, several thousand of them are having to camp in buildings such as schools, a commercial centre and a disused factory." (ICRC, 1 February 2002)

Jammu has received the majority of the Hindu Pandits displaced from the Kashmir Valley and residents in border villages have been forced to flee on several occasions :

"Jammu District lies on South East of Jammu and Kashmir State. It is separated from Pakistan by International border and Line of Control (LoC) While LoC is in the Akhnoor Tehsil(Block), International

border is in Samba, Ranbir Singh Pura and Bishnah Tehsil. Jammu District covers 3097 sq. km. with 10 towns, 1054 villages with 15,71,911 souls as per 2001 census.

[...]

The displacement of border villagers has been a common phenomenon since 1947. It was considered a temporary situation during either war or large scale military exercises by Government."

[...]

The displacement in Jammu District has occurred in three phases [...]

First, in Akhnoor Sector since June 99 during Kargil war.

Secondly, in Samba and Akhnoor Sector since December 2001 (Deployment of forces at border from December 18, 2001, after terrorists attack on Indian Parliament).

Thirdly, in R.S.Pura and Bishnah Sector since May 25, 2002 after Kaluchak (Army Camp, Jammu) massacre on May 14, 2002 [...]. "(Bhay/ Dayal, May 2003, pp. 4,6)

A ceasefire has raised hopes for a durable solution for internally displaced from the border areas (November 2003, March 2004)

- India accepted Pakistan's offer of a ceasefire along the LoC, but said it could become durable only if Pakistan stopped allowing extremists into Indian-administered Kashmir
- Several confidence-building measures between India and Pakistan have been implemented
- A vast demining operation has been launched to remove one million mines laid following the buildup of troops after the December 2001 attack on the Indian Parliament

"The two countries had earlier ordered troops to halt firing along the de facto border, or Line of Control (LoC)

[...]

India accepted Pakistan's offer of a ceasefire along the LoC and said it would extend it to the disputed Siachen glacier area - the world's highest battlefield.

However, the Indian foreign ministry said the ceasefire could become durable only if Pakistan stopped allowing extremists into Indian-administered Kashmir.

Pakistan has always denied arming the 14-year-old uprising against Indian rule in Kashmir, saying it only lends diplomatic backing to an indigenous insurgency.

Spokesmen for the largest separatist groups have said they are not bound by the ceasefire and will continue their guerrilla war.

Hours before the start of the ceasefire, a clash near Jammu in Indian-administered Kashmir left two soldiers and two militants dead, police said.

The first night of the ceasefire was welcomed by villagers living along the LoC, who have long lived in fear of falling artillery shells.

Villagers stayed up late and left lights burning in their houses, while children played in exposed outdoor areas for the first time in years.

Other peace proposals put forward by Mr Jamali [...] include:

- Accepting an Indian offer to set up a bus service linking Indian and Pakistani-administered parts of Kashmir
- Setting up a train service linking the two countries through the Thar desert
- Holding talks so that Indian and Pakistani prisons can release long-serving prisoners from each other's countries
- Agreeing to India's proposal for a ferry service between the ports of Bombay (Mumbai) and Karachi
- Allowing people aged over 65 to cross the border crossing at Wagah on foot

- Setting up another bus service between the Pakistani city of Lahore and Delhi." (BBC World, 26 November 2003)

"As part of continuing confidence-building measures between India and Pakistan, border officials of the highest level of both countries have begun 3-day talks in Lahore, Pakistan to discuss solutions to border disputes between the two countries. The resumption of border talks, which have not taken place since May 2001, were agreed upon between India and Pakistan during landmark talks last month. Inspector-General JS Gill led the delegation of the Indian Border Security Force (BSF), while Major-General Javed Zia led the delegation for the Pakistani Rangers. The two sides are expected to discuss illegal trafficking in arms and drugs, among other border issues. The border official meetings will be held twice a year before the summer and winter seasons, following the previous schedule before the talks were suspended in 2001. In addition, Indian and Pakistani officials are due to discuss the re-opening of bus routes between the two countries on April 8-9, instead of this coming Monday (March 29). No reasons were given for the delay. Meanwhile, the Indian army says that it has "almost completed" clearing mines from thousands of acres of land along the Pakistani border. According to an Indian senior army official quoted in The Kashmir Times, operations to remove the nearly 1.05 million mines laid following the buildup of troops after the December 2001 attack on the Indian Parliament, were "100 percent complete" in the northern Indian state of Rajasthan. He added that the operations were "96 percent complete" in Kashmir and "98 percent complete" in Punjab state. The mining operation, which has taken more than a year, is one of the Indian army's largest and most dangerous peacetime operations. NGOs have said that the 2001 mining operation was one of the largest in the world, however, numbers cannot be independently verified." (COE-DMHA, 26 March 2004)

See: *"Thousands of displaced families return to their villages along the international border and Line of Control in India-controlled Kashmir"* under the return section.

Internal displacement in the North-East

Short presentation of the seven north-eastern states (2003)

- The North-East comprises Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Mizoram and Tripura
- North-East India is a geographically and politically isolated area with critical strategic significance for India
- The region is characterised by extraordinary ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic diversity, with more than 160 scheduled tribes (listed in the Indian constitution) belonging to five different ethnic groups, and a large and diverse non-tribal population
- The actual number of ethnic groups comprehends over 400 distinct tribal and sub-tribal groupings

"Arunachal Pradesh is an area of 33,000 square kilometers, that is almost entirely mountaineous. The total population of 864,558 is almost completely tribal.

Assam, with a population of about 22 million, is the biggest state in the North East. Its native population includes the Assamese who are mostly Hindus with a few Muslims; the Plains Tribes such as the Bodos, Mishings, Kacharis, Rabhas, Lalungs and Deorias; the Hill Tribes such as the Karbis, the Dimasas and the Kukis. In addition, the Tea Garden Laborers belonging to groups such as the Santhals, Mundas and Oraons, who were brought from Central India to work in the tea plantations in the 19th century and early part of the 20th century, are beginning to get integrated into the mainstream. Finally, there are a large number of recent immigrants, mostly from Bangladesh and rest of India.

Manipur, one of the smallest states in India, has a population of about 1.8 million. There have been waves of migration of Aryans, Mongolians, and even Dravidians to Manipur over the centuries. The Meiteis, usually referred to as Manipuris constitute more than 50% of the population. The Meiteis are Vaishnavite Hindus. The Manipuri Muslims or the Pangans constitute 17% of the total population of Manipur. Nagas and Kukis also live in Manipur. The Kukis are a group of Zo or Chin people who migrated from the Chin Hills of Myanmar.

Meghalaya has a total population of 17,74,778 (1991 census). 85.53% are indigenous people. The main tribes of Meghalaya are the Hynniew Trep, a conglomerate of the Khasis and the Jaintia or Pnars, and the Achiks or the Garos.

The Nagas, with a total population of about 3 million, inhabit the hilly Patkai range running roughly parallel to the Brahmaputra Valley. This 1,00,000 square kilometer region is bound by the Hukwang Valley in Myanmar in the northeast, the plains of the Brahmaputra in the northwest, Cachar in Assam in the southwest and Chindwin in Myanmar in the east. About 40% of the Nagas live in Myanmar and the rest in India. The Nagas, who are demographically Mongolian, are divided into about forty tribes such as Angami, Sema, Lotha, Ao, Tangkhul, Chasesang, Konyak, Zeliangrong, Rengma, and Mao. Each tribe and sub-tribe speaks a different language. In Nagaland, the Assamese-based Nagamese is commonly spoken as the lingua franca.

Mizoram has a diverse population of communities such as the Lushais, Chakmas, Ralte, Paite, Baite, Pawi, Dhilen, Lakher, Hmar and Piang. Most tribes are Christian (84%). Riangs and Chakmas are Buddhists (8%). There are some Hindus and Muslims. The main languages of Mizoram are Mizo, Hmar, Chakma, Lai, Mara and Ralte.

Tripura has a land area of 10,466 square miles and shares 80% of its border with Bangladesh. This geographical location has led to a situation where the native Tripuris who were 95% of the population in 1931 have been reduced to a mere 31% in the 1991. This demographic sea-change has been caused by migration of hundreds of thousands of Bangladeshis. The indigenous population is composed of 19 tribes that are collectively called Boroks. The language they use is called Kok Borok." (The Assam Homepage, 2003)

"These States cover a combined area of over 255,088 sq. km. (7.7 per cent of the country's territory) and, according to the 2001 Census of India, a population of 38,495,089 persons (3.74 per cent of national population). The region is characterised by extraordinary ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic diversity, with more than 160 Scheduled Tribes [...] belonging to five different ethnic groups, and a large and diverse non-tribal population as well. The 'scheduled tribes' only refer to the tribes listed in the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, and do not reflect the actual complexity of the ethnic mosaic of the region, which comprehends over 400 distinct tribal and sub-tribal groupings.

Contrary to widespread perception, however, the tribal population of the region constitutes only about 30 per cent of the total population, though the distribution is skewed. While the 'non-tribals' dominate Assam and Tripura, over 60 per cent of the population of Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland is drawn from the Scheduled Tribes.

[...]

The Northeast region has critical strategic significance and, as is often remarked, remains tenuously connected with the rest of India through a narrow corridor, the 'chicken's neck' or 'Shiliguri Corridor', in North Bengal, with an approximate width of 33 kilometres on the eastern side and 21 kilometres on the western side.[...] This constitutes barely one per cent of the boundaries of the region, while the remaining over 99 per cent of its borders are international – with China to the North; Bangladesh to the South West; Bhutan to the North West; and Myanmar to the East." (Sahni, Faultlines, Volume 12, pp. 1-2)

General background to internal displacement in North-East India (2003)

- The North-East has witnessed at least seven major cases of strife-induced internal displacement in fifty years
- Every state in the region is currently affected by insurgent and terrorist violence and ethnic strife is a major cause for large scale displacement
- Self-determination rather than religious, cultural or economic factors has been a major factor in the ethnic conflicts in the North-East
- The unequal tribal /non-tribal and inter-tribal power relations have also played a major role in most of the conflicts
- Since ethnic rebel groups are often not equipped to engage each other militarily, much of the violence has been directed against civilians
- Non-Bodo communities and Bengali settlers are among the targeted communities

"India's Northeast is the location of the earliest and longest lasting insurgency in the country, in Nagaland, where separatist violence commenced in 1952, as well as of a multiplicity of more recent conflicts that have proliferated, especially since the late 1970s. Every State in the region is currently affected by insurgent and terrorist violence,[...] and four of these – Assam, Manipur, Nagaland and Tripura – witness scales of conflict that can be categorised as low intensity wars, defined as conflicts in which fatalities are over 100 but less than 1000 per annum.

[...]

In addition, the Tirap and Changlang districts of Arunachal Pradesh witness the spillover effect of insurgencies from the neighbouring States, particularly Nagaland, Assam and Manipur.

[...]

Mizoram has remained largely free from terrorist violence since the political resolution of the insurgency in this State in 1986, [...] but the activities of the Bru National Liberation Front (BNLF) have given cause for concern, and have inflicted some civilian and security force (SF) casualties.

Illegal migration of Bangladeshi nationals into India and the use of Bangladeshi and Bhutanese territory by insurgents operating in India's North East are a grave security concern for the region.

[...]

Internal conflicts in India's Northeast are overwhelmingly conceptualised within the framework of unique ethnic identities that are threatened by, and in confrontation with, the nationalist state, which is often seen as a representative of an inchoate cultural 'mainstream'. While some of the conflicts in the region certainly fit into this general framework of interpretation, few, if any, are completely explained by it; others, moreover, are entirely unrelated to this reductionist scheme of 'freedom struggles' by ethnic minorities against the 'homogenising state'. Indeed, even where militant groups direct their rhetoric and their violence against the symbols of the state, the underlying motives and ideologies are more correctly interpreted in terms of conflicting tribal identities and histories of internecine warfare based entirely on tribal, sub-tribal, or tribal-outsider rivalries and corresponding competition over limited resources, especially land. It is, consequently, appropriate to analyse and assess conflicts in the Northeast in terms of three basic 'faultlines':

-Tribal groups vs. the state

-Tribal vs. tribal (Internecine)

-Tribal vs. non-tribal

In any single conflict, moreover, more than one of these elements would tend to overlap, giving rise to complications both of analysis and of resolution. The multiplicity of tribal and sub-tribal groupings in each of the States in the region, and continuous re-alignments between some of these, create further difficulties. Within such a context, mobilisation of populations along issues relating to exclusionary and conflicting tribal identities has become a basic feature, both of electoral politics and of more extreme movements, across the Northeast region." (Sahni, Faultlines 2003, Volume 12, pp. 1-2, 4)

"The states have often used displacement issues to score political points against each other. The Centre has not been far behind.

[...]

The Northeast has witnessed at least seven major cases of strife-induced internal displacement in the fifty years of the Indian Republic. They are as follows: (a) the displacement of Bengalis from Assam (particularly Bodo areas) and Meghalaya; (b) the displacement of Bengalis from Tripura; (c) the displacement of 'tea tribes' in western Assam; (d) the displacement of Reangs from Mizoram; (e) the displacement of Nagas, Kukis and Paites in Manipur; (f) the displacement of Chakmas from Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram. Except in Manipur, the displacement has spilled over to the other states – and at least twice to neighboring countries. [I]n most of the six cases listed above, the government has been rarely successful in its efforts to either restore law and order or ethnic harmony or maintain adequate levels of relief supplies and ensure rehabilitation. It has failed to stem the tide of Bengali displacement in Tripura, it has failed to control the Bodo insurrectionary activities that led to large scale displacement of non-Bodo populations in western Assam, it has failed, despite several interventions by the Home Ministry, to ensure the return of the Reang refugees from Tripura to Mizoram, it has failed to prevent the ethnic relocation of populations in Manipur in the wake of the bloody feuds and it has failed to grant citizenship to the Chakmas and the Hajongs and thus guarantee them a safe future in Arunachal Pradesh."

[...]The northeast Indian states have seen five types of displacement [...one of which is the] displacement caused by ethnic or religious strife, belatedly marked by systematic ethnic cleansing.

[...]

Since the 1980s, ethnic cleansing has become much more systematic in the Northeast and that has been the major cause of large scale internal displacement." (Bhaumik, February 2000, pp.21, 22-24,26)

"The Government of India has appealed to all the militants groups operating in the North East to give up the path of violence and to come forward for talks without conditions." (GOI 2002-2003, Chapter III, pp.29-30)

For more background information, read Baruah, Sanjib: "Citizens and Denizens: Ethnicity, Homelands and the Crisis of Displacement in the Northeast India", Journal of Refugee Studies, Vol. 16, No.1 2003

Assam: general causes for displacement (2000-2003)

- Since the early 1960s, Assam has lost much territory to new states emerging from within its borders
- Several Bodo insurgent groups strive for goals ranging from the establishment of a separate Bodo autonomous council, to a separate Bodo state within India, to total independence from India
- In the early 1980s, resentment among the Assamese against "foreigners", mostly immigrants from Bangladesh, led to widespread violence
- After 1993, the Bodos have systematically targetted the non-Bodo communities in the four districts they see as forming the core of their separate homeland

"Since the early 1960s, Assam has lost much territory to new states emerging from within its borders. In 1963 the Naga Hills district became the 16th state of the Indian Union under the name of Nagaland. Part of

Tuensang, a former territory of the North East Frontier Agency, was also added to Nagaland. In 1970, in response to the demands of the tribal people of the Meghalaya Plateau, the United Khasi and Jaintia Hills and the Garo districts were formed into an autonomous state within Assam; in 1972 it became the separate state of Meghalaya. Also in 1972 Arunachal Pradesh (the North East Frontier Agency) and Mizoram (from the Mizo Hills in the south) were separated from Assam as union territories; both became states in 1986.

Despite the separation of these ethnic-based states, communal tensions and violence have remained a problem in Assam. In the early 1980s, resentment among the Assamese against "foreigners", mostly immigrants from Bangladesh, led to widespread violence and considerable loss of life. Subsequently, disaffected Bodo tribesmen agitated for an autonomous state. The militant United Liberation Front of Assam waged a guerrilla campaign for the outright secession of Assam from India until agreeing to end their rebellion in 1992." (BritannicaIndia 2001)

The number of militant insurgent groups increased sharply during the latter half of the 1990s:

"The latter half of the 1990s saw the mushrooming of militant organisations along tribal, religious and cultural fissures. The culture of violence propagated by the ULFA and the Bodo outfits seems to have set a pattern for a number of copycat insurgent groups. Currently, there are as many as 34 insurgent groups listed in the State, though the ULFA is the main player. Among other terrorist outfits, the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB), Bodo Liberation Tigers (BLT), United People's Democratic Solidarity (UPDS), Dima Halim Daoga (DHD), and Muslim United Liberation Tigers of Assam (MULTA) are prominent. The NDFB operates in the Bodo-areas of the State and the UPDS dominates the Karbi-Anglong and North Cachar districts. Most of the other groups listed are currently dormant.

[...]

Since its initiation, [...], both the NDFB and the BLTF have condemned the Bodo Accord, and have, since the mid-1990s, been engaged in a campaign of violence directed against other ethnic groups within 'Bodo areas'." (Sahni, Faultlines 2003, vol.12, pp.4-5,7)

USCR says Bodo attacks are aimed at altering the demographic balance in Assam:

"Bodos displaced an estimated 60,000 Bengalis in the early 1990s, primarily between 1991 and 1993.

[...]

As with their earlier attacks on Bengalis and other ethnic groups, Bodos' 1996 attacks appeared aimed at altering the demographic balance. Bhaumik told USCR, "The drive to create majority populations in areas in order to back demands for separate home-lands is in large part the fundamental cause of internal displacement. " Virtually all of the displaced Bodos and a majority of the Santhals returned home during 1997.

[...]

Further Bodo attacks in May 1998 led to the displacement of another 25,000 people, again mostly Santhals, but also including ethnic Nepalis.

[...]

Bengali Hindus in Assam have also experienced displacement. According to representatives of Assam's Bengali Hindu community, thousands of Bengali Hindus have been displaced during the 1990s as a result of terrorism directed at members of their community by Assamese nationalist organizations such as the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA). This terrorism has included the taking of Bengalis as hostages for ransom and the killing of more than 200 people. Most of those displaced, the community leaders said, left Northeast India for West Bengal or other parts of India." (USCR January 2000, p.7-9)

"Since its origin in 1999, with the avowed objective of establishing a land for the Karbis, the UPDS [*the United Peoples' Democratic Solidarity*- a Karbi militant group] has pursued a systematic campaign of cleansing the area of non-Karbhis. As a result, the Kukis, like the Bodos, Nepalis and the Hindi-speaking people in the district, become natural targets. Over the last two years, the UPDS has targeted the ginger-producing Kukis in the Singhasan Hill range for systematic extortion.

[...]

The UPDS action against the Kukis has brought the KRA, primarily a Manipur-based outfit, into the scene opening up another and most violent front of conflict. The group, with a declared objective of protecting the interest of the Kukis, is seen to be a serious challenge to the militancy of the UPDS, which till recently enjoyed a local monopoly over violence. Both these groups have clashed repeatedly, and have not only targeted each others' armed cadres, but also civilians, conveniently projected as the rival's sympathizers. The result is that the district has come to witness significant internal displacements, mostly into Nagaland and Manipur. More importantly, the rising violence has pushed the KNA's autonomy demand into the background." (SATP 29 March 2004)

Assam: internally displaced in the Bodo-Santhal conflict (2003 - 2004)

- In May 1996, more than 250,000 persons were displaced as a result of Bodo large-scale attacks on ethnic Santhals
- In 1997, the majority returned home, but were forced to flee after renewed fighting during 1998
- While thousands returned to their homes, retaliation from Santhals and other non-Bodo communities has, in turn, resulted in significant displacement of the Bodo population from areas where they are a minority
- The situation in the district have improved considerably in the past couple of years and many people have begun returning home
- More than 100,000 Santhals remain displaced
- An unknown number of Bodos are also living in three relief camps
- One relief camp houses displaced from the Rabhas ethnic group

"In May 1996 and September 1998 Kokrajhar district (lower Assam), consisting of two subdivisions - Kokrajhar and Gossaigaon - witnessed violent ethnic conflict between the majority Bodos and the minority migrant Santhal community. (Although the conflict affected other districts such as Dhubri and Bongaigaon, Kokrajhar was the worst affected.) Hundreds were reportedly killed, thousands of homes destroyed, and many people of both communities displaced. The Assam State government brought in military forces to quell the rioting, and over 250,000 people took refuge in 68 relief camps." (ACT- LWSI, 20 February 2004)

"...[A]fter 1993, the Bodos have systematically targetted the non-Bodo communities in the four districts they see as forming the core of their separate homeland. Having got the structure for a future homeland, but one which is still heavily populated by non-Bodos, the Bodo militants have resorted to systematic attacks on non-Bodo communities to further their strategy of ethnic cleansing.

[...]

The Bengalis, Hindus and Muslims who control prime agricultural land (that they cleared and worked in) and the retail businesses, are also the prime targets of ethnic cleansing in the Bodo-areas of Assam." (Bhaumik March 2000, pp. 22,24)

The number of militant insurgent groups increased sharply during the latter half of the 1990s, which among other resulted in significant displacement of the Bodo population:

"The latter half of the 1990s saw the mushrooming of militant organisations along tribal, religious and cultural fissures. The culture of violence propagated by the ULFA and the Bodo outfits seems to have set a pattern for a number of copycat insurgent groups. Currently, there are as many as 34 insurgent groups listed in the State, though the ULFA is the main player. Among other terrorist outfits, the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB), Bodo Liberation Tigers (BLT), United People's Democratic Solidarity (UPDS), Dima Halim Daoga (DHD), and Muslim United Liberation Tigers of Assam (MULTA) are

prominent. The NDFB operates in the Bodo-areas of the State and the UPDS dominates the Karbi-Anglong and North Cachar districts. Most of the other groups listed are currently dormant.

[...]

Since its initiation, [...], both the NDFB and the BLTF have condemned the Bodo Accord, and have, since the mid-1990s, been engaged in a campaign of violence directed against other ethnic groups within 'Bodo areas'. Large-scale attacks were carried out against Santhal tribals in May 1996, displacing tens of thousands of people. A second wave of attacks in May 1998 resulted in further distress migration. The Santhals and other non-Bodo communities have also begun to arm themselves and fight back. This has, in turn, resulted in significant displacement of the Bodo population from areas where they are a minority. (Sahni, Faultlines 2003, vol.12, pp.4-5,7)

"In 1997, the majority of the refugees returned to their original villages and homesteads, with government provided rehabilitation grants. However, 23,000 families, designated "encroachers" (illegally occupying homestead lands), were unable to return. In addition, there were about 3,000 families who – despite having received rehabilitation grants – were unable to return to their original homes, living in small huts made of bamboo and plastic sheeting, close their to their original villages or on relief camp sites.

However violence erupted in 1998 on two occasions, causing people to once again flee to the safety of the camps." (LWS-I, Appeal 2003)

Despite incidents of fighting between Santhals and Bodos, the security situation has improved:

"With the situation in the district having improved considerably in the past couple of years, many people have begun returning to their original villages and fields, and the government has begun a conscious process of resettling people in their original places or elsewhere, outside the camps." (LWS-I, Appeal, April 2003)

But according to a national newspaper, most of the displaced still remain in relief camps:

"More than 100,000 people are estimated to be still staying in relief camps in the Kokrajhar district, more than seven years after the riots between Bodos and Santhals that had left nearly 250,000 people homeless.

Of those, while some arrived in the camps in 1996, in the first phase of the riots, and others in 1998, in its second phase." (Times of India 8 January 2004)

"According to officials, 19 camps house Santhals, 3 house Bodos and one houses the Rabhas ethnic group." (COE-DMHA, 14 January 2004)

Assam: civilians fled fighting between the Hmar and Dimasa ethnic groups in February 2003 (April 2003 - March 2004)

- Fighting between the Hmar and Dimasa tribes erupted during spring 2003, mainly due to disagreement over territorial supremacy
- Thousands of Hmars and Dimasas took shelter in 25 relief centres. Many more fled to villages where their respective communities are in majority - these people were not counted among the displaced
- Some estimate that almost 25 percent of the population in the North Cachar Hills were displaced during the conflict
- The Dimasa- Hmar Conflict also forced members of the Pnar tribe to flee from Assam to Meghalaya in July 2003

"Ethnic rebels in Assam, in India's Northeast, are engaged in a bloody turf war that has not only opened a new front in the strategic border State's insurgency scenario, but has drawn a large civilian population into the vortex of this latest conflict.

[...]

The root of the Hmar-Dimasa ethnic feud can be traced to the February 24, 2003, abduction of three important members of the Dima Halim Daogah (DHD), a rebel group active in the area, by cadres of its former ally, the National Socialist Council of Nagalim - Isak-Muivah faction (NSCN-IM). This abduction, apparently carried out with the help of Hmar rebels of the HPC-D, led to a string of retaliatory attacks by the Dimasa armed group. On March 3, Dimasa militants, said to be cadres of the DHD - a group that had entered into a ceasefire with the Government last year - struck back by kidnapping three Hmar farmers. Two days later, on March 5, armed Dimasas attacked two Hmar villages in North Cachar Hills district (adjoining Cachar district where the March 31 killings took place), forcing nearly 800 Hmars to desert their homes and flee to Lakhipur, on the Assam-Mizoram border. Again on March 26, Dimasa rebels launched a fresh attack on some Hmar villages in the area, and ordered the Hmar people to leave North Cachar Hills or face dire consequences.

These attacks and counter-attacks culminated in the latest massacre that has worsened relations between the two ethnic groups that are concentrated in the Southern Assam districts of North Cachar Hills and Cachar on the border with Manipur and Mizoram, two other Northeast Indian States. Both tribal groups are very small in number. The 1991 Census put the total population of Dimasas in Assam at 65,104, and the Hmars at 11,189. The immediate provocations aside, the latest string of attacks is seen as a battle for territorial supremacy." (Hussain, SAIR April 2003, Vol. 1, no. 38)

"The worst carnage took place in April when about 23 Dimasas were brutally killed by Hmar militants. Since then, each has been routinely killing members of the other and burning down villages. This has not only spread terror in and around the Cachar district, but resulted in thousands of Dimasas and Hmars being displaced from their gutted down villages, to take shelter in about 25 relief centres. The area has been intermittently under curfew, and this had led to a severe scarcity of essential food items because of the disruption in supplies and the people's inability to go to or set up the market in the midst of all the violence." (The Telegraph, 20 June 2003)

"Almost a quarter of the population of NC Hills got displaced in this period. People belonging to both the communities fled to villages where their respective communities command the majority. These are not identified as refugee camps in the official 'situation reports' sent by the government agencies, which do not reflect the true magnitude of the tragedy." (Liberation, June 2003)

A peace treaty was signed in June, but fighting erupted again:

"Less than a week after leaders of the warring Dimasa and Hmar tribes signed a peace treaty, Assam's North Cachar Hills district erupted in a fresh wave of violence that left two Dimasa youths dead and reduced clusters of huts to ashes." (The Telegraph, 18 June 2003)

The Dimasa- Hmar Conflict led to displacement of the Pnar tribe from Assam to Meghalaya (July 2003):

"The Meghalaya Home Minister on Thursday informed the State Assembly that approximately 350 Pnar people having close affinity with the Jaintia community of Meghalaya have fled the North Cachar Hills district during the last few months following the ethnic clashes in the Assam district between the Hmars and the Dimasas. He further said that these refugees are taking shelter in the adjoining Jaintia Hills. Replying to a call attention motion raised by NCP MLA Ardhendu Chaudhury, the State Home Minister further said that these people have been forced to flee after they received threats and intimidations from Hmar militants.

"The Pnars have been driven out by Hmar militants on the charges that they have been aiding the Dimasa militants," he said. The fleeing Pnars hail from Jatinga, Haflong, Jericho, Dimbacherra, Brulekhewa and Sutomugle among other places, the Minister informed.

He further said that the Meghalaya Government has apprised the Assam Government of the matter, and requested it to provide safety and security to the Pnars. Meanwhile, the Meghalaya Government has instructed the Jaintia Hills district administration to extend the necessary humanitarian assistance to the refugees who are staying with friends and relatives." (The Assam Chronicle, 4 July 2003)

It is uncertain how many remain displaced as of May 2004. One source says 2,000 Dimasas remain in camps:

"At least fifty Dimasas have been killed and 28 Dimasa villages were burnt down by the HPC (D) extremists. About 2000 Dimasas are living in relief camps in unhygienic and inhuman condition since April 2003." (Organiser, March 2004)

Assam: threats from Karbi militants displaced 4,000 Khasis and Pnars in November 2003

- During November/December 2003, militants from the United Peoples' Democratic Solidarity (UPDS) and the Karbi National Volunteers (KNV) attacked Khasi-Pnar villages in Karbi Anglong - Assam, along the Assam-Meghalaya border
- The UPDS, whose main objective is to establish a land for the Karbis, targeted the Khasi-Pnars after they were seen as cooperating with the Meghalaya based Khasi militant outfit HNLC (Hynniewtre National Liberation Council)
- More than 4000 persons, mainly Khasis and Pnars, fled from Assam to Meghalaya
- The displaced were sheltered in camps and local authorities provided relief
- After two months in camps, the Khasi-Pnar displaced people returned to their homes
- There were reports of continuing security problems after the displaced had returned to their homeland
- The Khasi-Pnars in Assam say that Karbi organisations have been continuously violating their human rights

"MORE than 4000 persons, mainly Khasis and Pnars, have taken shelter in Meghalaya following threats from militants. The Meghalaya Government said that it had been negotiating with successive Assam governments for retransfer of the two troubled blocks in Karbi Anglong district to it as a majority of the population there were Pnars.

According to the Additional Deputy Commissioner of Jaintia Hills district, Jyrwa 4241 Khasis and Pnars who had fled Karbi Anglong, had been sheltered in camps. The administration was providing them relief. An official release said that Meghalaya had been consistently negotiating with Assam for the two blocks to Meghalaya's Jaintia Hills and Ri-Bhoi districts.

[...]

Denying the charge that the Lapang Government in the State had failed to tackle the situation, Meghalaya Government claimed that the Chief Minister, the Home Minister, the Chief Secretary and the Director General of Police were in constant touch with their Assam counterparts over the influx from Karbi Anglong to Meghalaya and monitoring the situation." (NENA, 6 December 2003)

"Five thousand Khasi-Pnar tribals have fled into Sahnsiang in Jaintia hills of Meghalaya as a result of the atrocities inflicted upon them by the United Peoples' Democratic Solidarity (UPDS) and the Karbi National Volunteers (KNV) militants. This has added a new chapter to the narrative on ethnic conflicts in India's

northeast. Earlier too, following clashes between the Dimasas and the Hmars, Pnars (the displacement figure is not available in this case) had to flee across the border.

[...]

According to the 1991 census figures, the population of Khasi-Pnars in Assam was 11,358 out of which 8,452 were in Karbi Anglong and 2,906 were in the NC Hills district. Pnars, a sub-tribe of the Khasis have been settled in the Block I and Block II areas of Karbi Anglong's Hamren subdivision and constitute a minority among the six lakh [600,000] Karbi population in the district.

Intelligence reports suggest that the current problem started when UPDS cadres started their extortion activities targeting the Khasi-Pnars in the Block I and Block II areas soon after HNLC (Hynniewtrep National Liberation Council) cadres crossed borders from their makeshift camps in the Khasi and Jaintia hills [in Assam] and served tax notices on the Karbi population. In the absence of law enforcement agencies, insurgent outfits in remote areas have been successful in carrying the mantle of protector of civilian rights. The UPDS, with its purported objective of establishing a land for the Karbis, thus targeted its ire against the Khasi-Pnars, who appeared to be working in tandem with the HNLC.

The problem has gotten intertwined with the boundary row between Assam and Meghalaya. The official stand of the Meghalaya government which confirmed that these areas belonged to Assam has been criticised by various organisations in the state. These organisations claim the Block I and Block II areas along the border for Meghalaya. In 1951, these areas had been transferred to the Karbi Anglong (then termed as United Mikir and North Kachar Hills) after slicing them from the erstwhile Khasi and Jaintia Hills district and these remained with the state even after the birth of Meghalaya in 1972.. Since then, the Khasi-Pnars of the area have often expressed their desire to be a part of Meghalaya.

During the ongoing debate over an individual state's claim over the areas, it has come to notice that even the villagers of one particular village, Psiar, which is well inside the Meghalaya boundary have been also been affected by UPDS extortion.. The whole village was deserted as the militant cadres threatened the villagers with death unless they paid up. The entire village was set afire after the villagers took refuge in Sahnsiang.

There is also a growing feeling of ethnic exclusivity among the refugees, which is likely to create assimilation problems even if they return to their original villages. A Pnar refugee was quoted saying, "we have nothing against Assam or the Karbi people but our culture, language and habit was different from them. We are Khasi-Pnar community."" (IPCS, Routray, 18 December 2003)

After two months in camps, the Khasi-Pnar displaced people returned to their homes:

"The last batch of Khasi-Pnar refugees returned to their homes in Karbi Anglong yesterday after spending over two months in Meghalaya.

[...]

A police source in Diphu, the district headquarters, said all Khasi-Pnars who had fled their homes along the disputed Assam-Meghalaya border in the wake of the UPDS offensive were back. The return of the refugees was made possible by several rounds of negotiations between officials of Assam and Meghalaya. Security has been beefed up in the border areas as fear of attacks by Karbi militants continues to haunt the Khasi-Pnar residents. Police pickets have been set up in the Khasi-inhabited areas along the border.

[...]

Meghalaya chief minister D.D. Lapang and his Assam counterpart Tarun Gogoi have been in touch with each other since agreeing to jointly tackle the ethnic conflict, but differences between the neighbours remain. Meghalaya home minister R.G. Lyngdoh has been constantly reminding his Assam counterpart Rockybul Hussain to start a joint operation along the border with Karbi Anglong, but Assam has yet to make a commitment on this. The Lapang government had constituted a committee to speed up the process of rehabilitation of the Khasi-Pnar refugees. Revenue minister F.A. Khonglam headed the panel. "We want to ensure that all the Khasi-Pnars who have been displaced are back safely in their homes in block I," he

said recently. Officer on special duty B. Dhar monitored the process of rehabilitation along with his counterpart in Karbi Anglong." (Northeast Vigil, 23 December 2003)

There were reports of continuing security problems after the displaced had returned to their homeland along the Assam-Meghalaya border:

"The crisis arising out of the Khasi-Pnar exodus showed no signs of abating even after the return of the 4,000-odd people to their homeland along the Assam-Meghalaya border. The Khasi-Pnars, after returning to this border subdivision of Karbi Anglong, today came down heavily on the Karbis, alleging that Karbi organisations, including the banned UPDS and the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) have been continuously violating the human rights of the Khasi-Pnars living in Assam.

The newly-floated apex body of the Khasi-Pnars of the region, The Save Khasi-Pnars Committee has also urged Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee to visit the Assam-Meghalaya border areas and see for himself the human rights abuse.

The organisation, in a memorandum to the Prime Minister, alleged that the Karbis are killing, raping, kidnapping, torching houses and grabbing land belonging to the tribes." (Yahoo!, India News, 1 January 2004)

Assam: during November 2003, violence against Hindi-speaking people forced thousands to flee the state

- Thousands of Hindi-speaking people, predominantly from Bihar, fled Assam after days of violence in November 2003 in which at least 50 people were killed and hundreds of homes torched
- The violence was triggered by a conflict over the allocation of jobs between Assamese and Hindi-speaking groups
- The outlawed United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA), fighting for an independent Assam nation, ordered Biharis to leave Assam or be killed
- Violence took place both in urban and rural areas
- More than 17,000 people fled Assam and were sheltered in relief camps - an unknown number remained internally displaced within Assam
- There is no information on the number of people who have returned as of May 2004

"Thousands of migrants rushed to leave India's northeast state of Assam on Friday after days of violence in which at least 34 people have died and hundreds of homes torched.

Most of the dead are settlers from neighbouring Bihar state in a conflict triggered by competition for jobs in Assam.

Thousands of settlers, some leaving behind their possessions, crowded railway stations across the state to catch trains headed for Bihar.

"We want to leave this place at the earliest. Our lives are at risk," said Raghu Narayan, a Bihari labourer, waiting at Guwahati's railway station with his wife and three children.

"Most of them (Biharis) are travelling without tickets as they fled leaving behind whatever they had in their houses and they have no money," said Ashim Dey, a railway ticket collector.

Peace has returned slowly to the state after troops were deployed to quell an orgy of killing, looting and arson that began on Monday.

"The situation has fast returned to normal though some minor incidents of assaults have taken place in interior areas," K.D. Tripathi, Assam's interior commissioner, told Reuters.

The outlawed United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA), fighting for an independent Assam nation, on Wednesday ordered Biharis to leave or be killed. The group has been blamed for most of the killings this week.

Army soldiers patrolled the riot-torn areas, set up check-points and raided possible hideouts of attackers.

[...]

More than 700 people suspected of involvement in rioting have been arrested from across the state, police said.

The violence was triggered by attacks on Assamese train travellers in Bihar last week after reports of assaults on Bihari students who came to Assam to do tests for railway jobs. Assamese students feared Biharis would snatch the prized jobs. (Reuters Alert-Net, 21 November 2003)

"More than 17,000 people have fled their homes in north-east India's Assam state to escape attacks on Hindi-speaking settlers by Assamese mobs and rebels.

The refugees, mostly migrant workers from the nearby state of Bihar, are being housed in makeshift camps. Violence erupted between Assamese and Bihari groups a fortnight ago because of a row over the allocation of jobs.

Over 50 people have died in the clashes, despite a government decision to send troops to calm the situation

[...]

Assam's home secretary, BN Mazumder, [...] warned that attacks on the Hindi-speakers had not stopped.

But he said the state government was making provisions for the fleeing settlers, and would make sure troops had calmed the unrest before they were allowed to return.

[...]

It is unclear how many Hindi-speakers of Bihari origin remain in Assam after the recent violence.

An organisation representing the Hindi-speakers, the Purbottar Hindibhasi Sammelan, said that at least 10,000 of their community had already fled Assam state.

[...]

Over a week ago, train passengers arriving in Bihar state from Assam became the target of attacks by mobs. The Bihar mobs were angry that youths in Assam had physically prevented candidates from Bihar from taking recruitment interviews for jobs at the state-run Indian Railways." (BBC World, 26 November 2003)

"The victims of these so-called Assamese-Bihari clashes are almost entirely the so-called Biharis, more correctly Hindi-speaking people from many parts of India, including, perhaps predominantly, Bihar, whose ancestors had settled down in the State or the region generations ago. The backlash began in Guwahati but spread soon to areas in Upper Assam, with the major toll being in Tinsukia district. Two weeks after the first outbreak, the officially admitted death toll was 56. The victims, who included women and children, were hacked to death, as in the case of a whole family in Tinsukia, or stabbed or shot. The violence was not confined to "remote" areas; hundreds of houses, homesteads and settlements in Guwahati, including in the capital complex Dispur and the Guwahati University campus, were burnt. Livestock too was destroyed.

[...]

Many of the survivors have abandoned their homes and taken shelter in refugee camps. Given the spread of the Hindi-speaking people all over the State, including villages and small towns (the 1991 Census in Assam enumerated 10,35,474 persons as Hindi-speaking, although the figures do not tell how many of these are second or third generation settlers, bilingual in Hindi and Assamese, and in varying degrees of acculturation into Assamese society), no official figures of those internally displaced and those who have fled the State were given. Even the number of persons in the relief camps is constantly changing. Leaving aside the uncounted numbers of those internally displaced, about 20,000 persons, perhaps more, are believed to have fled the State." (Frontline 6 December 2003)

Assam: fighting displaced over thousand Kuki and Karbi tribals in November 2003

- In November 2003, fighting between the Karbi and Kuki tribal groups killed at least 10 people and forced more than 1,500 to flee their homes

- Two tribal insurgent groups, the United Peoples Democratic Solidarity, the Karbi rebel group, and the Kuki Revolutionary Army, appear to be battling for territorial supremacy in the Karbi-Anglong district
- More than 300 Karbi families took shelter in relief camps in the Manja district of Karbi Anglong
- There were also reports of about 125 Kuki ethnic people who fled to the neighboring state of Manipur following the violence

"Soldiers were deployed to an insurgent-ridden district in Gauhati, India [...] after fighting between two tribal groups killed at least 10 people and forced more than 1,500 to flee their homes.

Heavily armed rebels - representing the Karbi and Kuki tribal groups in Assam state - have battled this past week, with each claiming civilians were kidnapped and killed in Karbi Anglong district, Gauhati, the state capital.

The United Peoples Democratic Solidarity, the Karbi rebel group, and the Kuki Revolutionary Army appear to be battling for territorial supremacy in the district, surrounded by dense jungles and hills." (Daily Times, 15 November 2003)

"According to the Daily Excelsior on Tuesday (December 3), 2 members of the rebel Kuki Revolutionary Army (KRA) were killed along with 3 members of the rival Karbi ethnic group which was already reported in the northeastern state of Assam, taking the toll to 15 in the conflict. More than 300 families have reportedly fled the ethnic conflict and are in relief camps in Manja district. Earlier this week, it was reported that about 125 Kuki ethnic people had fled to the neighboring state of Manipur. The violence had first erupted on November 19 as Kukis and Karbis clashed over a territorial dispute in remote villages. Assam Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi has said that additional security forces have been sent to the interior hill district to control the violence. Today, Gogoi continued to urge Indian Defense Minister George Fernandes to provide additional paramilitary forces to the state." (COE-DMHA, 5 December 2003)

Assam: more than 2,000 Karbis and several hundred Kukis fled fighting in March 2004 (April 2004)

- The Karbis are Karbi Anglong's majority ethnic group and they have long competed for land with the Kuki minority group
- The Kuki Liberation Army accuses the powerful Karbi community of trying to chase out Kukis from about 100 villages in the district
- The Karbis maintain that the Kukis have no place in the district
- In March 2004, attacks by Kuki insurgent groups displaced an estimated 2,000 Karbi villagers from Karbi-Anglong
- The majority took shelter in government-run relief camps
- About three hundred Kukis fled to Dimapur in Nagaland while hundreds more took refuge in the neighboring state of Manipur

"Suspected insurgents of the Kuki Revolutionary Army (KRA) are reported to have killed at least 34 Karbi villagers in three separate places in the Karbi Anglong district of Assam on March 24, 2004. In the first incident, a group of about 30 KRA cadres raided Uden Tisso and Sarpo Terong villages under Bokajan police station jurisdiction and killed 28 persons and wounded eight others. Separately, another group of KRA cadres attacked Jari Teron, a Karbi village under Manja police outpost, and killed another six Karbis. Inspector-General of Police (Special Branch), Khagen Sharma, said that the attacks were carried out by separate hit squads of the KRA, who also set fire to many houses in these villages. In what suggests the

beginning of a sustained campaign, the Kukis struck again on March 27, 2004, killing five Karbi villagers and setting 60 houses on fire in remote villages of the upper Deopani area under the Bokajan police station. [...]

On the surface, the conflict appears to be a case of innocent civilians being caught in the crossfire of a battle of attrition between two insurgent groups, the United Peoples' Democratic Solidarity (UPDS) and KRA. However, the discord is inherently rooted in the growing schism between two communities at a time when local politics in the district has witnessed significant transformations." (SATP 29 March 2004)

"Authorities have called in the Army to help stem the violence as nearly 2,000 people of the Karbi ethnic group have fled their homes near the town of Bokajan in the district of Karbi Anglong. Assam Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi confirmed the numbers and said that most IDPs (internally-displaced persons) were in government-run relief camps. Kuki tribesmen had killed 28 people in attacks early last Wednesday (March 24) and Thursday (March 25). Although previous estimates had put the toll at 34, Inspector-General of Assam Police, Khagen Sarma, said that last week's toll was 28, making the current toll 33. The attacks were among the bloodiest in recent years in India's restive northeast. He said that the majority Karbi tribe, which lives in Karbi Anglong, is being targeted by minority Kukis due to bitter disputes over land and jobs. He added that the killings were done by the Kuki Revolutionary Army (KRA) in revenge for a March 19 attack by the Karbi rebel United People's Democratic Solidarity (UPDS) group, in which 6 Kukis were killed. The KRA is fighting for a separate Kuki homeland in eastern Assam. The UPDS last week issued public threats against the KRA for the most recent attacks. In the last major outbreak of violence, at least 15 Kukis and Karbis were killed when they clashed in Karbi Anglong district in November 2003, forcing at least 400 people from both groups to flee. Clashes between the 2 groups have reportedly claimed nearly 100 lives in the past year. Authorities fear that the situation could escalate further in the upcoming general elections next month. There are about 30 rebel groups and 200 ethnic groups in India's restive northeast" (COE-DMHA, 29 March 2004)

"The death toll rose as police, who are currently reportedly conducting relief operations in the area, discovered bodies of additional massacre victims. Meanwhile, the schools, transportation and business in the district were paralyzed by a strike called by the Autonomous State Demand Committee (ASDC) to protest the violence. Authorities have also imposed an indefinite curfew on the four affected villages. Reports say that villagers who fled the scene have been given temporary shelter and relief items, but there were no further details on how many fled and what relief was provided. The Karbi's are the region's majority ethnic group and they have long competed for land in hilly Assam state with the Kuki minority group, which is fighting for a separate homeland in India's northeast." (COE-DMHA, 25 March 2004)

"The genesis of the ethnic clashes was an alleged move by the majority Karbi community of the hill district to cleanse their 'homeland' of outsiders. Two communities, Kukis and the Khasi-Pnars were targeted." (Hindustan Times.com, 25 March 2004)

"The massacre [of 33 villagers of the Karbi community] suggests that there has been no perceptible change in the situation on the ground. The Kuki Liberation Army accuses the powerful Karbi community of trying to chase out Kukis from about 100 villages in the district. It claims that the Karbi community is jealous of their being prosperous by cultivating ginger in the Singhasan Hills. The Karbi, however, maintain that the Kukis have no place in the district as they have imported gun culture from Manipur, their homeland." (The Tribune, 27 March 2004)

For further analysis, please consult South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP), 29 March 2004, South Asia Intelligence Review (SAIR) Vol. 2, No. 37 - Assam: Karbi-Kuki Clashes [\[Internet\]](#)

"Hundreds of Kuki men, women and children fleeing from the clashes in Karbi Anglong between the Karbi militant group UPDS and the Kuki group KRA, are pouring into Dimapur town and Senapati and Churachandpur districts of Manipur in search of safe shelter.

About three hundred Kukis have fled their native villages in Karbi Anglong district to take refuge in Dimapur while hundreds more have taken refuge in the neighboring state of Manipur.

Kuki community leaders here told Newmai News Network that these displaced Kukis from Karbi Anglong are mostly taking shelter at Churachandpur and are rehabilitated by Kuki Khanglai Lawmpi (KKL), a youth organization.

All the victims hail from Hedipi and Shinghason Hills of Karbi Anglong under Bokajan sub-division." (The Sangai Express, 7 April)

Tripura: internal displacement due to conflict between tribals and non-tribals (2000-2004)

- In Tripura, there has been serious ethnic conflict between the tribals and the non-tribal Bengalis since the 1980s
- In response to the Bengalis' rapid attainment of majority status in the state, tribal militant groups have sought to establish autonomous areas by attacking Bengali communities
- More than 4000 people have died in Tripura since the ethnic riots of 1980, the same number have been kidnapped and more than 100,000 Bengali settlers have been internally displaced according to BBC
- No information has been found regarding the situation of the internally displaced Bengalis, but anecdotal information suggests that they remain non-assisted. Some choose to go to Bangladesh
- While some of the main insurgent groups have started peace negotiations with the government, other insurgent groups signal that they will continue to fight
-

"Tripura, is a tiny hilly State of 10,486 sq.km in the North East of India. It is bounded by Bangladesh in the North, West and the South having 930 k.m of the international boundary and the States of Assam and Mizoram in the East. The Bengalees and the greater Tripura tribal community comprising of as many 19 tribes constitute the major bulk of the population. The Tripuris are the numerically largest tribe followed by the Reangs. The other tribes in the state are Halam, Jamatiya, Bhil, Bhutia, Chaimal, Chakma, Garoo, Khasia, Kuki, Lepcha, Lushai, Mog, Munda, Noatia, Orang, Santhal and Uchais. The State since 1980 has witnessed serious ethnic conflict between the tribals and the non-tribal Bengalees. This had resulted in the internal displacement of thousands of Bengalees as well as tribals from time to time.

[...]

The internal displacements in the State have been due to (i) the clashes between the tribals and the non-tribals (ii) the attacks by the tribals and the Bengalee insurgent groups in isolated villages (iii) the fleeing of the villagers fearing retaliation from the other community. The pattern of insurgent attacks since 1993 shows that the tribal insurgent groups not only attacked the non-tribals but also resorted to the burning of their houses. The tribals living near the villages which were attacked by the insurgents often had to leave their villages fearing retaliation from the non-tribals.

[...]

The tribals in the State had resented the influx of the Bengalees from the erstwhile East Pakistan. But the Government as a matter of policy settled them in the State and had provided rehabilitation assistance. The influx of large number of Bengalees over a long period of time brought about demographic changes in the State whereby the tribals got marginalized. The percentage of tribal population in 1951 was 36.85% when the major influx of Bengalees after partition of India in 1947 had already taken place. The percentage of tribal population came down further to 30.94% in 1991 as influx of Bengalees continued in the later years. The census figures of 1931 and 1941 show that the State was a tribal majority State." In 1931, the tribal population was 203,327 as against the non-tribal population of 179,123. In 1941 the tribal population was

256,991 as against the non-tribal population of 256,091."770 Bhattacharya S.R, op.cit, 39 0 As early as 1954 Sardar Patel the then Union Home Minister had said that no more Bengali displaced persons should be brought in the State. But the influx of displaced Bengalees continued which gradually changed the demographic composition of the State reducing the status of the tribals to that of minority.

[...]

The Central and the State Governments ignored the tribal protests. The tribal organizations like Seng-krak and others strongly protested against the influx of the displaced persons. The other tribal insurgent groups the ATTF and the NLFT demanded a separate State for the tribals.

[...]

The decision of the State Government to create the ADC [autonomous council] in 1982 did not meet the aspirations of the tribals. The Council has emerged as an another tier of administration. Because of the administrative hurdles and the constraints of resources it has not played any meaningful role in addressing the grievances of the tribals.

[...]

The general resentment of the tribals afforded an excellent opportunity to the insurgent groups to establish themselves. They successfully exploited a series of tribal concerns to mobilize the tribals. Initially they raised the issue of restoration of land alienated by tribals, expulsion of foreigners etc. In the initial years they did not enjoy the support of the tribals but gradually by show of strength and terrorization they succeeded in bringing a substantial number of the tribals under their control.

The domination of the insurgent groups increased as they committed one daring act after the other. In course of time they acquired more sophisticated arms. They also established contact with other insurgent groups in the North-East. They could get shelter in their areas whenever the security forces pursued them. Moreover taking advantage of the terrain they could cross over to Bangladesh. The situation got further complicated with the multiplicity of the insurgent groups.

[...]

The insurgents targeted particularly the non-tribals in rural areas killing them indiscriminately including women and children and burning their houses. The government failed to provide security to non-tribals living in scattered villages. The Bengalee insurgent groups also resorted to the acts of violence against the tribals." (Saha, pp. 8-10)

Exodus of non-tribals was reported in local media during the first months of 2003:

"Alarmed by the sudden spurt in violence, the Tripura government has [...] been pressurising the Centre to take up with the Bangladesh government the issue of camps run by these outfits [*National Liberation Front of Tripura and All Tripura Tiger Force*] inside that country.

Meanwhile, the latest killings [*of 40 people by National Liberation Front of Tripura and All Tripura Tiger Force*] have sparked off an exodus of non-tribal Bengalis from the interiors of the state. The latest round of violence is seen as part of efforts at ethnic cleansing undertaken by the militant outfits since 1993, when the second and bloodier phase of Tripura's insurgency began.

Analysts in the state mark the first phase of exodus with the killings of non-tribals by the erstwhile Tripura National Volunteers. TNV militants surrendered en masse in 1988.

The next phase of killings of non-tribals was launched by NLFT and ATTF in 1993 and led to the exodus of more than 200,000 non-tribals from interior areas of the state in all three districts.

The worst affected were villages in Bishalgarh and Sadar subdivisions where many non-tribals had been resettled on government land under the rehabilitation scheme for erstwhile refugees from the then East Pakistan. Similar exodus took place from interior areas of Khowai, Kamalpur, Longtarai valley, Kanchanpur, Gandacherra and Udaipur subdivisions." (Rediff.Com, 12 May 2003)

As of May 2004, BBC reported that more than 100,000 Bengali settlers have been internally displaced in Tripura:

"More than 4000 people have died in Tripura since [ethnic riots of 1980], the same number have been kidnapped and more than 100,000 Bengali settlers have been internally displaced in Tripura due to the rebel violence." (BBC News, 6 May 2004)

No information has been found regarding the situation of the internally displaced non-tribals, but anecdotal information suggests that they remain non-assisted. Some choose to go to Bangladesh:

"With political parties and the civil administration showing no inclination to rehabilitate them, some victims of terrorist attacks do not want to stay on in India

After suffering six months of depression at refugee camp in Sadar North of West Tripura, Mangal Sarkar, an trader and resident of Simna village, Agartala finally left the country.

Even after about a year the poor villagers could not forget the brutal scene of carnage on the ill-fated night of May 6, 2003. Militants of the outlawed All Tripura Tiger Force (ATTF) killed 21 innocent non-tribals including three minors and six women in Simna Kalibari village and set fire to all the houses.

All 33 families of the remote hamlet (39 kilometres from the town) including that of Mangal's, were evacuated from the area and took shelter in nearby government institutions as each and every house was burnt down. Despite government commitment the villagers could not be absorbed in public service. No rehabilitation and help was extended for their survival. (Deccan Herald, 20 March 2004)

Hopes for a more peaceful future have been raised with a ceasefire between the federal government and the National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT). However, other insurgent groups signal that they will continue to fight:

"In what is seen as a further break-up of the state's once strongest rebel group, the National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT), the group's former general secretary, Mantu Koloi, said more surrenders were expected from the NLFT ranks.

Another faction of the NLFT, led by Nayanbashi Jamatia, opened negotiations with Delhi in April and declared a ceasefire, but guerrillas of that faction are yet to surrender.

This leaves only a small number of fighters with the NLFT chairman Biswamohan Debbarma, who, the surrendered rebels say, is in a small camp in the remote Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh.

[...]

Mantu Koloi appealed to both the NLFT chairman, Biswamohan Debbarma, and the All Tripura Tiger Force (ATTF) chief Ranjit Debbarma to come forward for talks with the Indian government and resolve the crisis in Tripura.

But both the rebel leaders have refused to talk and have said they will fight on." (BBC 6 May 2004)

Tripura: internally displaced Reangs from Mizoram (2000-2003)

- Ethnic conflict between the major tribal group Mizo and the minority Reang has resulted in the flight of 15,000 to 50,000 (U.S. State Department says 41,000) Reangs since 1997
- The violence started when a political party of the Reangs demanded an Autonomous District Council for the Reangs within Mizoram
- The Reangs are living in camps in the neighbouring state of Tripura
- Peace talks are being held between the Government of Mizoram and the insurgent group, but the issue of repatriation of the Reang internally displaced remain to be solved

"The Reangs, second largest tribal group of Mizoram, had long been demanding setting up of an Autonomous District Council (ADC) based on 6th schedule of the Constitution in Reang-dominated areas of Southern Mizoram. The demand had been raised under the banner of a new party called Reang Democratic Party (RDP). Long-accustomed to treating Reangs as 'bonded labourers and slaves', the majority Mizo tribesmen have looked upon the Reang demand with deep hostility." (Deccan Herald, 17 August 2003)

"The exodus of Reangs to the adjoining Cachar in Assam and north Tripura started in October 1997 following generalized violence against their community. The controversy started when the Bru National Union, a political party of Reangs formed in the early 90s, in a general assembly meeting in September 1997 passed a resolution demanding an Autonomous District Council for the Reangs within Mizoram. There was a strong reaction from Mizo Student Federation (MZF) who said that "if the Reangs wanted to divide or disintegrate Mizoram further, it would be better that they go away. The resolution demanding Autonomous District Council could not be accepted by MZF. If the Reangs go ahead with their plan, the MZF was ready to fight against such a demand. Mizoram is the only land Mizos have and it could not be lost to foreigners or other communities." The Reangs who crossed over to Tripura spoke of "a fear psychosis following the killing in October, 1997 of 10 Reangs, allegedly by the MZF. The flow was not stopped, suggesting tension and lack of security. MZF went on the rampage after the murder of a Mizo forest warden allegedly by the Bru National Liberation Front.

An armed militant group called the Bru National Army (BNA), believed to be the Militant Wing of the Bru National Union (BNU), was formed in 1994 to protect, develop and uplift the Reangs. According to the Bru leaders, their cultural practices were obstructed and they were forced to adopt Mizo names and Mizo languages as their medium of instruction instead of the native Kokbarak. The Bru leaders also alleged that the names of about 20,000 Reangs were deleted from the Electoral Rolls.

The Mizos have always lived in isolation and they have a very strong attachment to their homeland. Thus the moment any minority tribal groups talks of autonomy and demands creation of separate District Council for themselves. Mizos consider it as an attempt to fragment the Mizo State further and it becomes a very emotive issue. To counter such demands such minority tribal groups are branded as outsiders who have settled in Mizoram. And all sorts of attempts are made for de-legitimising their claims by deletion of names from the voters' list, questioning the census report, etc. Any minor incident can provoke a violent reaction from the majority tribal group. In the case of Reangs, killing of a forest warden allegedly by Bru National Army resulted in burning of hundreds of houses of Reangs in many villages and killings of many Reangs. The entire Reang community was considered as the enemy of the Mizo people. Consequently, panic gripped the Reang community and many of them were forced to flee their homes. The insurgent groups affiliated to the minority tribal groups take full advantage of such a situation and project that it is they who can protect the interest of the minority tribal groups. The Bru National Army, the insurgent outfit of the Reangs claims to protect the interests of the Reangs. The Reangs in the adjoining State of Tripura are the second largest tribal community in the State. The internally displaced Reangs from Mizoram took shelter in Tripura with the hope that they would get support from the Reang community of Tripura. Before proposing a possible course of solution, it is proposed to consider U.N. Guidelines on Internal Displacement in the context of internally displaced Reangs. Though the guidelines have not been adopted by any country, they may help the Reangs to make their demands to the State and the Central Governments. Moreover, these guidelines would make the State and the Central Governments aware of their responsibilities." (Saha 2000 pp 6-7,10)

"In Mizoram fearing persecution from the ethnic majority Mizos, 15,000 to 50,000 Reang tribals have fled their homes since 1997 and found shelter in north Tripura, border villages of Assam and the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh. In order to accelerate the repatriation process, the Tripura government discontinued food rations and medical services in some camps, causing at least 16 people to starve to death. At least 260 IDPs died as a result of inadequate shelter and unclean water, and around 1,400 reportedly became seriously ill. Additionally, displacement camps are susceptible to attacks and mismanagement, for

which the National Human Rights Commission castigated the Mizoram government in a 1998 report." (SAHRDC March 2001)

Peace talks are being held between BNLF and the Mizoram Government, but the repatriation of the Reang internally displaced remain to be discussed:

"The ninth round of talks between the Bru National Liberation Front (BNLF) and the Mizoram Government has ended on a positive note with both sides agreeing to meet again in August to formulate the final draft of a prospective peace agreement. Senior Government officials today said that an end to the long deliberations could be expected soon.

However, official sources informed here that the crucial issue of the repatriation of Bru refugees from neighbouring Tripura was yet to be discussed and remained a major stumbling block in the peace process." (The Hindu, 13 July 2003)

Manipur: Internal displacement due to inter-ethnic strife between the Nagas and the Kukis (2000-2003)

- Over 1,000 individuals have been killed and as many as 130,000 persons have been displaced since inter-ethnic strife between the Nagas and the Kukis started in mid 1992
- The Indian Central Government and its agencies have allegedly aiding, abetting and stocking the Naga-Kuki conflict
- Ethnically mixed villages, once common in Manipur, have virtually ceased to exist

"Manipur has been riven by internal conflict and has been under a permanent state of emergency for decades, fuelled by economic under-development, drug smuggling and corruption." (AI April 2000, Part III, "Threats and violence against human rights defenders in Manipur")

"Nearly 90 per cent of the landmass of Manipur comprises its hill areas, and the remaining 10 per cent constitutes the Imphal Valley. The Valley is home to the Vaishnavite (Hindu) Meiteis, who comprise more than 50 per cent of the State's population, and the Muslim Meitei-Pangals. The hills are exclusively reserved for the 'tribals' – mainly Nagas and Kukis. The State has a peculiar land tenure system – the Manipur Land Revenue and Land Reform Act – under which the hill tribes are allowed to settle in the Valley, but no Meitei or Meitei-Pangal is allowed to buy land or settle in the hills. The Meiteis are, moreover, classified as non-tribals, and consequently denied benefits under various reverse discrimination provisions that create reservations in jobs and educational institutions for the tribals.

The insurgency in Manipur entered its 38th year in 2002. [...] Among the 35 insurgent groups in the State, as many as 18 are reported to be currently active. The primary conflict in the State involves various insurgent groups, constituted along tribal affiliations, fighting against the Government for sovereign or separate homelands. A multiplicity of secondary conflicts has arisen out of tensions between various ethnic and tribal subgroups, often as a result of changes in patterns of land tenure and distribution.

[...]

After peaking in 1997, insurgent violence has remained at an unstable plateau over the past three years [...]. As in other conflicts in the Northeast, however, the situation is not a matter of a simple opposition between the government and outlawed revolutionary groups arraigned against it. The various militant groups have been substantially criminalised and there is overwhelming evidence of a complex web of collusion between terrorist outfits and various political parties." (Sahni, Faultlines 2003, vol.12, pp. 9-11, 2003)

The conflict has led to widespread killings and internal displacement of Kukis, Paites and Nagas:

"Additional tribal tensions reinforce instability in the state. Kukis and Paites have clashed since 1997 and friction persists between the Nagas and Meiteis. Violence between these groups has reportedly left 50,000 people homeless as entire villages are burned to the ground. Militants have also burned granaries, putting thousands of people at risk of malnutrition and starvation. Eleven thousand people now live in displacement camps and the government of neighbouring Mizoram has restricted the displaced from crossing into its territory." (SAHRDC March 2001)

"Conflict between tribal groups in Manipur and Nagaland reportedly has led to the displacement (at least temporarily) of as many as 130,000 Kukis, Paites, and Nagas since 1992.

[...]

The inter-ethnic conflict in Manipur has been among the various tribal groups and has not directly involved the majority Meiteis. The largest clashes in Manipur were between ethnic Nagas and Kukis from 1992 to 1996. The conflict continued between 1996 and 1998, but on a much reduced scale. Nagas are the predominant ethnic group in neighboring Nagaland State. Since India's independence, Naga insurgents have fought for an independent Nagaland, an area that they say encompasses not only the present state of Nagaland, but also sections of other states, including Manipur, as well as parts of neighboring Burma. The Nagas accuse the government of India of arming and supplying the Kukis, whom Nagas accuse of siding with the national government in opposing Naga independence. Kukis also seek an autonomous (though not independent) Kuki territory, but Kukis are widely dispersed, and only form a majority in a few pockets of land, primarily in Manipur. Kukis wish to include in Kuki territory some areas of Manipur that contain large Naga populations, areas that Nagas consider part of greater Nagaland. Among these is land bordering Burma, through which a lucrative drug traffic flows. These conflicting claims have led to conflict between Nagas and Kukis in northern Manipur, with each group displacing members of the other. Ethnically mixed villages, once common in Manipur, have virtually ceased to exist. Kukis say that more than 40,000 Kukis were displaced, primarily between 1992 and 1996. Most have now resettled in other Kuki communities. Naga sources claim that the Naga/Kuki conflict has displaced as many as 90,000 Nagas in Manipur and another 5,000 in Nagaland, of whom only some 20,000 to 25,000 remained displaced as of mid-1998. According to one Naga leader, Artax Shimray, displaced Nagas in Manipur included 30,000 from Chenaburi District, 30,000 from Chandel District, 10,000 from Okrur District, and 20,000 from Tamelung District. Shimray said that displaced Nagas are not visible because they never established camps. "There is a strong support system among Nagas. Who ever became displaced was sheltered in the home of another Naga family," he said. In mid-1997, the Naga-Kuki conflict led to a spin-off conflict between Kukis and Paites in southern Manipur. The cause of the conflict is unclear: each side gives a different version of its genesis. Generally speaking, it appears that Kukis, who consider the Paites to be a Kuki sub-tribe, expected the Paites to support them against the Nagas. The Paites consider themselves a separate, distinct tribe from the Kukis, although they do say that both they and the Kuki, as well as the Mizo and Burmese Chin, are all part of what they call the Zomi peoples. Fighting between the Kuki and Paites displaced more than 15,000 Paites. Most were displaced within Manipur, where a Paites relief group set up 30 temporary camps for them, most often very near their original homes. Although as of mid-1998 many had not yet rebuilt their houses, they were living in their communities of origin and no longer displaced. Some 3,500 Paites fled into Mizoram, where the state government created three camps for them. The 3,500 who fled to Mizoram returned in July 1998, after the Kukis and Paites signed an agreement aimed at ending their rift." (USCR January 2000, p.9-10)

Manipur: protests against a ceasefire in 2001 created a new wave of displacement (2001-2003)

- A cease fire agreement signed by the Central Government with the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Issac-Muivah) [NSCN (IM)] to extend the cease-fire by another year without territorial restrictions create violent protests, especially in Manipur
- While Nagaland welcomes the agreement, it was seen as intruding upon the territorial integrity of the neighbouring States of Manipur, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh

- Violent protests led to the displacement of at least 50,000 Nagas and an unknown number of non-Nagas in Manipur and Nagaland
- An unknown number remain displaced today
- While the peace agreement moves forward, fighting continues between several militant groups and episodes of displacement still occur

After June 2001, a ceasefire between the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) and the Indian government led to protests and a new wave of displacement of Nagas due to violent protests in neighbouring states. More than 50,000 Nagas fled Manipur following the riots due to fear of revenge attacks. The number of Nagas remaining displaced is unknown. The Naga International Support Centre says most have returned to their villages.

"The June 14, 2001 cease fire agreement between the National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Isak-Muivah (NSCN-IM) and the Union government without territorial limits received widespread approval in Nagaland. In addition to the organisations such as the Naga Hoho, the apex tribal council, terrorist outfits such as the Naga National Council-Federal (NNC-F) and the National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Khaplang (NSCN-K) welcomed the development. However, the move, which was seen to be intruding upon the territorial integrity of the neighbouring States of Manipur, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh led to frayed passions and large-scale violence in those States, especially in Manipur. The Union government was forced to review the decision of extending the cease-fire without territorial limits." (SATP assessment 2001)

"Following continuous threats by the Meitei population most Nagas no longer felt safe in their homes. They left for the hills where Naga brothers and sisters at Senapati and Ukhrul district took them in. More than 40,000 souls are still in camps while others were fortunate enough to be taken in by family living in all parts of the Naga Hills in Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur itself." (NISC, 9 October 2001, Press Release)

By the end of July 2001, the Government of India announced that the ceasefire with the NSCN (IM) would be extended to Nagaland only. A peace agreement is still being discussed and the ceasefire extended until 31 July 2004:

"The last round of talks with NSCN (I/M) leaders was held in New Delhi between 21st - 23rd January, 2003. A wide range of substantive issues put up by the NSCN in their proposal were discussed. The NSCN raised the issues relating to the distinct identity of the Nagas and their stand on the unification of Naga areas. As the discussions were inconclusive there was agreement to continue the peace talks until a lasting settlement is reached. Both sides, reaffirmed the need for a peaceful and violence-free environment. Ceasefire with NSCN (K)

[...]

The Government of India has also entered into formal ceasefire with NSCN (K), which has been extended upto 28th April 2003." (GOI 2002-2003, Chapter III, 33)

"The Union government and the National Socialist Council of Nagalim (I-M) [...] decided to extend the ceasefire in Nagaland by a year beyond July 31." (Rediff Com, 17 July 2003)

"[...] Indian government negotiators are expected to meet with separatists from northeastern Nagaland state next month in Bangkok, Thailand in an effort to end the decades-old insurgency movement there.

[...]

About one year ago, the NSCN Isak-Muivah faction held landmark talks in New Delhi, the first time that the separatist group was allowed to meet high-ranking Indian government officials and visit India in 36 years. The NSCN-IM since then has agreed to a ceasefire with Indian security forces that has largely held in the past year.

[...]

The NSCN entered an initial ceasefire with New Delhi in 1997 and has held several rounds of talks in Switzerland, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Thailand, Japan and Malaysia." (COE-DMHA 29 January 2004)

There have been incidents of fighting between Meiteis and Nagas during 2003 which have displaced an unknown number of people living in the hills of Manipur (May 2003):

"The 'homeland war' is once again rocking the Northeast Indian State of Manipur, as the majority Meitei community is gripped by apprehensions that New Delhi is pushing ahead with a secret plan to slice off the Naga inhabited areas of their State, and merge them with the adjoining Nagaland State as part of a possible deal with the separatist National Socialist Council of Nagalim (Isak-Muivah faction, NSCN-IM). The Indian Government is engaged in peace negotiations with the NSCN-IM.

Stoked by this fear, there has been a fresh Meitei uprising to protect their State's territorial integrity. The trouble began early last week, resulting in renewed confrontation with the Nagas, both within Manipur, as well as in nearby Nagaland." (Hussain, SAIR, 13 October 2003)

"For almost a week [...] after clashes between two underground militant organizations, the United Kuki Liberation Front (UKLF) and the United National Liberation Front (UNLF) in the Chakpikarong sub-division of the Chandel district, in Manipur, residents of a number of villages were subject to widespread fear, forcing many to flee their homes. Although the exact numbers are not known or disclosed, both the underground organizations acknowledged having suffered casualties. Clashes between underground organizations are not altogether new in this area, but the tragedy has been not so much theirs, as it has been for the unarmed and hapless public, most often impoverished villagers in sparsely populated peripheries of the State." (Phanjoubam Pradip, SAIR, 26 May 2003)

Manipur: Biharis and Kukis displaced from Assam seek safety in the state (November 2003)

"Several Biharis and Kukis from Assam have crossed over to Manipur in the wake of separate attacks against the two communities in Assam during the past few days, official sources said on Monday, reports PTI. Some Biharis had entered Manipur from Cachar district of Assam through the border town of Jiribam, about 222 km west of here, in Imphal East district some days back, the sources said. The exact number of such people was not known.

Meanwhile, nearly a hundred Kukis also crossed over to Manipur and were being sheltered at Tuibong area in Churachandpur district, the sources said.

Several other Biharis and Kukis were at the Manipur-Assam border.

While the Biharis had entered following anti-Bihari campaign in Assam after several Assamese train passengers were beaten up in Bihar, the Kukis came over to the State following clashes between two underground groups in Karbi Anglong district of Assam, official reports said.

Several social organisations, including the apex United Committee Manipur, urged the State government to prevent further entry of people as it would create problems." (Assam Tribune 25 November 2003)

Manipur: a group of Bengalis living near the Assam-Manipur border had to flee attacks from insurgent groups (April 2003)

"A third dimension to the ethnic conflict is also developing. Bengali families living in Manipur near Assam-Manipur border are being targeted by two Manipuri militant outfits, the UNLF and the PLA. Over a hundred Bengalees have fled and taken shelter in Barak Valley of Assam. The Assam Government is understood to have taken up the matter with the Manipur Government and urged it to provide security to the Bengalees so that they may return to their homes." (The Hindu, 6 April 2003)

Arunachal Pradesh: threats and discrimination against Chakmas (2000- April 2004)

- The Chakmas and Hajongs are legal residents of India. In 1964, the Government of India granted migration certificates into the country to approximately 35,000 Chakmas and 1,000 Hajongs
- The Chakma and Hajong population has grown to some 65,000 (as of 2000) and is now the third largest ethnic group in the state of Arunachal Pradesh
- The Chakma and Hajong communities remain stateless, disenfranchised, discriminated against by state authorities and the target of attacks by xenophobic groups in the state
- Both local groups (The All Arunachal Pradesh Students' Union), and the state government have called for the Chakmas' expulsion from Arunachal Pradesh
- Local groups have violently displaced at least 3,000 Chakmas, a figure which is likely to increase
- During 2003, the All Arunachal Pradesh Student Union (AAPSU) gave a quit notice on the Chakmas and Hajongs in last June and demanded that the Chakmas be deported from Arunachal Pradesh
- In April 2004, the AAPSU reacted also strongly against a decision by the Election Commission to include 1,500 Chakma citizens in the voters lists

"In Arunachal Pradesh, residents have protested the presence of the Chakmas, who began arriving from the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh in 1964. Many residents still view the Chakmas as refugees, despite a ruling of India's supreme court in 2000 directing the government to grant the Chakmas citizenship. In June, the All Arunachal Pradesh Students Union vowed to launch a "vigorous mass movement" to drive out the Chakmas." (USCR 2003)

"Some historical background is necessary to understand the devastating nature of the present situation. The Chakmas of Arunachal Pradesh belong to a tribal group that has for centuries inhabited the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHTs) of Bangladesh. Despite the fact that most of the inhabitants of the CHTs are either Buddhist or Hindu, the region became a part of Pakistan with the partition of India in 1947. In 1964, communal violence and the construction of the Kaptai hydroelectric dam displaced nearly 100,000 Chakmas. A large number of these displaced people sought refuge in India.

Nearly 1,000 members of the Hajong tribe, a Hindu group from the Mymensingh district of Bangladesh, were also settled in these areas. In the more than 30 years since their resettlement, the Chakmas and Hajongs have built villages, developed the land granted to them and paid state taxes on their land. Additionally, they have become integrated into the social fabric of Arunachal Pradesh and established strong ties to the region. Many of these Chakmas and Hajongs, who now number about 65,000, were born in India and know no other home.

The Chakmas and Hajongs are legal residents of India. In 1964, the Government of India granted migration certificates into the country to approximately 35,000 Chakmas and 1,000 Hajongs. The migrants were settled by the Government of India in the erstwhile North East Frontier Agency, an area that comprises the present-day districts of Lohit, Changlang and Papumpare in Arunachal Pradesh. These certificates indicated legal entry into India and the willingness of the Government of India to accept the migrants as future citizens. Additionally, under the Indira-Mujib Agreement of 1972, it was determined that India and not Bangladesh would be responsible for all migrants who entered India before 25 March 1971.

Many Chakmas and Hajongs also have the right to citizenship and the right to vote.

[...]

To date, not a single Chakma or Hajong has been included in the electoral rolls.

[...]

The Government of Arunachal Pradesh has systematically denied the Chakmas and Hajongs access to social, economic and political rights to which they are entitled under Indian and international law. It has conducted a three-pronged strategy of discrimination against them – denying them political rights, economic opportunity and access to basic social infrastructure. Additionally, the State Government has not checked the intimidation and threats issued by the AAPSU. In fact, on occasion it has openly supported AAPSU activities. The Chakmas have been suffering forcible eviction at the hands of the State Government for decades – one particular village in the district of Changlang, Vijoypur, was reportedly destroyed on three occasions, in 1989, 1994 and 1995.

The State Government has steadily dismantled basic social infrastructure in Chakma and Hajong settlements, rendering these people ever more vulnerable. All persons legally resident in India are entitled to ration cards if their income falls below a specified amount. In October 1991, the State Government discontinued issuance of ration cards to Chakmas and Hajongs, many of whom live in extreme poverty. In September 1994 the State Government began a campaign of school closing, burning and relocations that have effectively denied the Chakmas and Hajongs their right to education. Schools built by the Chakmas using local community resources were closed down or destroyed. Also, health facilities in Chakma and Hajong areas are all but nonexistent." (SAHRDC 6 August 2001)

"Over the years, the Chakma population has grown to some 65,000; they have become the third largest ethnic group in the state, which has a total population of only some 500,000. The tribal groups' resentment toward the Chakmas has also grown. In recent years, both local groups, most notably the All Arunachal Pradesh Students' Union (AAPSU), and the state government itself, have called for the Chakmas' expulsion from A.P.

[...]

Local groups' antagonism has turned violent, and as many as 3,000 Chakmas have become internally displaced. An unknown number of others have left the area altogether. Be-cause of the growing tension over the issue, USCR is concerned that violence toward the Chakmas will increase, resulting in greater displacement."(USCR January 2000, p.10-11)

Chakma residents are threatened by indigenous groups:

"Two pertinent issues arise. First, the All Arunachal Pradesh Student Union (AAPSU) had served a quit notice on the *Chakmas* and *Hajongs* in last June and have threatened a widespread agitation unless the refugees are deported from Arunachal Pradesh. While its mainstream leadership and the state government are pursuing peaceful protest, the threat of violence and consequent threat to refugees comes from radical elements within the indigenous community who take to the path of violence to evict 'aliens' from their 'land'. The Convener of the Core Committee on Deportation of *Chakma* Refugees (CCDCR), *Domin Loya*, delivered a threat recently when he stated that New Delhi's belligerent stand allowing the *Chakmas* to settle in Arunachal might force some people to take up arms and fight them.

This problem poses imminent threats to security at different levels. The threat of violence by radical elements within the community, the seeds of which lie in the formation of the Eastern India Liberation Tigers Front (EILTF), could result in another prolonged insurgency movement given the fact that militancy tends to develop its own dynamics. This has generated a counter-reaction from the refugees, with a section of *Chakma* and *Hajong* refugee youths having crossed over to Bangladesh to smuggle in arms. The prospect of a violent ethnic conflict looms large on the horizon, unless a timely resolution to the problem is found." (IPCS, 19 September 2003)

The All Arunachal Pradesh Students' Union (AAPSU), reacted strongly after 1,500 Chakmas were enrolled in the voters list (April 2004):

"India's Election Commission had included the names of 1,497 Buddhist Chakma and Hajong refugees in the state's electoral rolls following a verdict by the Supreme Court.

[...]

We can't allow the refugees to decide the fate of the state's elections and we shall fight to prevent them from voting," a senior AAPSU leader told IANS on telephone from state capital Itanagar.

The AAPSU and political parties, including the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government in the state, have been urging New Delhi to evict the refugees from Arunachal Pradesh and resettle them elsewhere in the country." (Kerala Next.com, 29 April 2004)

Internal displacement in Gujarat

Gujarat: displacement due to communal violence (April 2002-2003)

- Hindu-Muslim violence in 1969, 1985, 1989, and 1992 caused increasing ghettoization of the Muslim population
- In 1998 and 1999, Hindu nationalist groups attacked Christian communities
- The 2002 violence was historically unusual, both because of state involvement and the involvement of all societal classes
- The violence in Gujarat started after Muslims attacked Hindu activists travelling by train
- Between 28 February 2002 and 2 March 2002 Hindu retaliation killed hundreds and displaced more than 100,000 Muslims
- Although the attacks were defined as 'spontaneous', human rights organisations stated that they were planned with extensive involvement of state and police

"Communal violence is not new to Gujarat. Successive episodes of Hindu-Muslim violence (in 1969, 1985, 1989, and 1992) have resulted in the increasing ghettoization of the state's Muslim community, a pattern that promises to reinforce itself as Muslim residents once again look for safety in numbers and refuse to return to what is left of their residences alongside Hindu neighbors. After the experience of earlier riots, many Muslim establishments had also taken Hindu names. Those too were selectively targeted for attacks using lists prepared in advance. The current climate also cannot be divorced from heightened conflict in Kashmir, India's deteriorating relations with Pakistan, and the VHP's ongoing temple construction campaign in Ayodhya.

Hindu nationalist groups were also directly responsible for the spate of violence against the state's Christian community in 1998 and 1999.

[...]

Between December 25, 1998, and January 3, 1999, churches and prayer halls were damaged, attacked, or burned down in at least twenty-five villages in the state. Scores of individuals were physically assaulted, and in some cases tied up, beaten, and robbed of their belongings while angry mobs invaded and damaged their homes. Thousands of Christian tribal community members in the region were also forced to undergo conversions to Hinduism.

[...]

A history of communal violence has left its mark. Over one hundred areas in Gujarat have long been declared "sensitive" or violence-prone by state authorities, yet few, if any, of the state's many guidelines on preventive measures to address communal violence at the first sign of trouble were implemented following the Godhra attack." (HRW, April 2002, pp. 45-46)

"In 2002, India experienced its greatest human rights crisis in a decade: orchestrated violence against Muslims in the state of Gujarat that claimed at least 2,000 lives in a matter of days. On February 27, 2002, in the town of Godhra, a Muslim mob attacked a train on which Hindu nationalists were traveling. Two train cars were set on fire, killing at least fifty-eight people. In the days following the Godhra massacre, Muslims were branded as terrorists by government officials and the local media while armed gangs set out on a four-day retaliatory killing spree. Muslim homes, businesses, and places of worship were destroyed. Hundreds of women and girls were gang-raped and sexually mutilated before being burnt to death. In the weeks that followed the massacres, Muslims destroyed Hindu homes and businesses in continued retaliatory violence. According to one official estimate, a total of 151 towns and 993 villages, covering 154 out of 182 assembly constituencies in the state, were affected by the violence." (HRW July 2003, *Compounding Injustice*, p.4.)

"The destruction, enmity, and insecurity left by the communal violence in Gujarat forced more than one hundred thousand Muslims into more than one hundred makeshift relief camps throughout the state, some located in Muslim graveyards. Between June and October 2002, the government unilaterally began to close the camps, forcing thousands of victims either to enter unofficial relief camps or to return to villages and neighborhoods where their security was continually threatened." (HRW July 2003, *Compounding Injustice*, p. 6)

"Human Rights Watch's investigations, and those of Indian human rights groups, revealed that much of the violence was planned well in advance of the Godhra attack and was carried out with state approval and orchestration. Gujarat is headed by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), a Hindu nationalist party that also heads a coalition government at the center. State officials and the police were directly involved in the violence: In many cases, the police led the charge, using gunfire to kill Muslims who got in the mobs' way. The groups most directly responsible for this violence against Muslims included the VHP, the Bajrang Dal (the militant youth wing of the VHP), and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (National Volunteer Corps, RSS), collectively forming the *sangh parivar* (or "family" of Hindu nationalist groups)." (HRW 2003, *World Report- India*)

"Reports indicate that the violence was State wide, affecting at least twenty-one cities and sixty-eight provinces. Information from these areas also suggest a consistent pattern in the methods used, undermining government assertions that these were 'spontaneous' 'communal riots.' There is more than enough evidence to show how there was State complicity in the attacks all along. As one activist noted, 'no riot lasts for three days without the active connivance of the State.' 2000 people were killed in the violence although the official figure is 762 (822 including Godhra). 2500 people are 'missing' (or killed) according to unofficial estimates and around 113,000 people were displaced and were living in relief camps.¹⁵⁵

Attacks on Muslims took place in 19 districts of Gujarat, and were particularly intense in 8 districts along the northeast and southwest axis. These were Ahmedabad, Sabarkantha, Panchmahals, Mehsana, Anand, Kheda, Vadodara, and Dahod. The attacks took place in distinct phases. These districts were engulfed in the most organized armed mob attacks between February 28th and March 3rd when most of the attacks were concentrated. This was the most intensive, bestial and horrifying phase of violence, marked by large scale hacking, looting, raping and burning men, women and children to death. Mobs continued to be on the rampage until mid-March. Nowhere were the mobs less than 2-3,000, more often they were over 5-10,000 in number.

[...]

Another horrifying feature of the violence in Gujarat was the speed and extent to which the violence simultaneously spread to rural areas, in some cases to places that had no history of communal tension. In Sabarkantha district, 94 villages were affected." (International Initiative of Justice, December 2003, p. 156)

Gujarat: violence against the Muslim community continued during 2003 (December 2003)

- There were reports displacement due to of killing and looting also during 2003 - still carried out with impunity
- During 2003, there were more than 25 instances of communal rioting in Ahmedabad district, the most volatile area of the Gujarat state
- The International Initiative for Justice accuses the state government for continuing to be complicit in the ongoing violence against the Muslim population
- The Muslim community is above all being discriminated against in a way that makes economic rehabilitation impossible

"Sporadic incidences of killing and looting continued even in March and April, 2003. Communities were severely affected in and around the villages of Sabli, Wadali, Himmatnagar and Idar in Sabarkanta and Makadi village in Banaskanta districts. They also fled to relief camps but very little support was provided either from government or NGOs in these rural areas." (ACT-LWS-I, Final Narrative Report, April 2003)

"The State continues to be complicit in the on-going violence against the Muslim community in Gujarat. The violence has extended far beyond the duration of the pogrom and has had an impact well beyond the lives of the tens of thousands who were directly affected. The IJJ team, which visited Gujarat over nine months after the worst violence, found that the violence was continuing in different and frightening forms, with long term physical, psychological, economic, and social consequences for all members of the Muslim community and particularly for women.

[...]

The Muslim community is today facing an aggressive campaign of economic violence designed to strangle them. The IJJ team saw overwhelming evidence of this at all levels, whether people owned, a business or a petty trade, or worked for wages. Livelihoods and the very survival of Muslims are at stake and the state of "normalcy" pronounced by the government is a patent lie.

The pogrom in February-March 2002 had not only targeted Muslim lives and homes, but Muslim-owned businesses, business establishments and all means of livelihood. The IJJ team found evidence that the economic violence unleashed then was continuing nine months later. Hindutva forces have managed to sustain a systematic economic boycott against the Muslim community in all the affected areas of Gujarat, aimed at depriving survivors of their means of livelihood." (International Initiative of Justice, December 2003, p. 59)

"With more than 25 instances of communal rioting in the last 10 months [*as of November 2003*], Ahmedabad district still remains the most volatile areas of communally sensitive Gujarat state which witnessed widespread riots last year [*in 2002*].

But while other areas have lost their virulence and have settled down to quieter times, it is Ahmedabad which accounted for half of the 1,000 lives lost in the violence in 2002, which keeps the embers burning." (Times of India, 4 November 2003)

Internal Displacement in Kerala

Incident of internal displacement in Kerala in May 2003 (July-May 2004)

- Nearly 400 Muslim families fled the village of Marad in May 2003 after the killing of nine Hindu people in the village
- According to newspaper reports, return of the displaced population took place during October 2003

"Hindus account for 57.2% of the 31.8 million people in Kerala, Muslims 23.3% and Christians 19.3%. The state also has a small number of people from other religions." (Rediff.com, 7 May 2004)

"Nearly 400 families had to flee Marad after the killing of nine people in the village on May 2 [2003]. While the police have arrested most of the accused in the killing, and the charge sheets against them are getting prepared, the rehabilitation of the families has led to stiff resistance from local Hindu groups. The Araya Samaja, a local Hindu community group, has come out in the open against rehabilitating the Muslim families in Marad.

[...]

The wedge between the Hindu and Muslims has been on the increase in the village after activists belonging to various Muslim groups and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh talked on communal lines.

The ruling Congress leaders allege the Bharatiya Janata Party has unleashed anti-minority and communal propaganda in Marad to step up disharmony in the coastal village." (Rediff.com, 1 July 2003)

Hindu and Muslim leaders met during the beginning of October 2003 to resolve the issues of return and rehabilitation of the Muslim families. An agreement over a rehabilitation package was reached and return was implemented during October 2003:

"Most of the Muslim families that escaped from the village and lived for months in refugee camps have returned home.

Chief Minister A K Antony had entrusted the rehabilitation of the Muslim families not to political parties, but to a set of Gandhians.

The Gandhi Smaraka Nidhi, Sarvodaya Mandalam and Gandhi Peace Foundation have been working hard to ensure that there are no more killings in the village." (Rediff .com 7 May 2004)

Internal displacement in Chhattisgarh

Chhattisgarh: Pre-election violence displaced 1,200 people (April 2004)

- Threats by Maoist guerillas made 1,200 villagers in Chhattisgarh flee their homes and move into the nearest town
- The villagers were expected to return after a few days.

"Chhattisgarh is a state in central India. It is a comparatively new state, carved out of the originally large state of Madhya Pradesh on November 1, 2000. Its capital is Raipur.

It is bordered on the northwest by Madhya Pradesh, on the west by Maharashtra, on the south by Andhra Pradesh, on the east by Orissa, and the northeast by Jharkhand.

The predominant language of the region is Hindi." (Online Encyclopedia, April 2004)

"Fearing retribution from Maoist guerrillas for attending a political rally, an entire bloc of 1,200 villagers in Chhattisgarh have left their homes and moved into the nearest town.

The tribals from Garpa village in Bastar district, 275 km from here, fled after the outlawed People's War Group (PWG) circulated pamphlets threatening to chop off hands of those who either voted or even participated in election campaigning.

The villagers have moved to the district headquarters in Jagdalpur, 38 km away.

Inspector general of the area Girdhari Nayak said the threats came after the villagers attended a rally organised by the Bastar Rajya Party Wednesday. He said the villagers were expected to return after a few days." (Indo-Asian News Service, 2 April 2004)

Development induced displacement

Links to information on development-induced displacement in India

While the focus of the Global IDP Project is on conflict-induced displacement, development and urban infrastructure projects are the main reasons for involuntary displacement in India. The tribal population has been disproportionately affected: An estimated two per cent of the total Indian population has been displaced by development projects. Of these, 40 percent are tribals although they constitute only 8 percent of the total population (Courtland Robinson, May 2003 pp. 10-11). This envelope includes some basic information on displacement due to development projects and also provides links to internet pages with more exhaustive information.

During the last fifty years, some 3,300 big dams have been constructed in India and another 1,000 are under construction (Courtland Robinson, May 2003 p. 17). Many of them have led to large-scale forced eviction of vulnerable groups. The situation of the *adivasis* or tribal people is of special concern as they are reported to constitute between 40 and 50% of the displaced population. As a result of misguided (or non-existing) state policy, project-affected communities have been subject to sudden eviction, lack of information, failure to prepare rehabilitation plans, low compensation, loss of assets and livelihoods, traumatic relocation, destruction of community bonds, discrimination and impoverishment (Mander, August 1999, p.4-5, 13-17). Amnesty International has documented human rights abuses against those who protest against forced displacement (AI 2000).

There are no official statistics on the numbers of people displaced by large projects since independence. In 1994, the Government mentioned the figure of 15.5 million internally displaced and acknowledged that some 11.5 million were still awaiting rehabilitation. However, calculations based on the number of dams constructed since independence indicate that as many as 21 to 33 million persons are likely to have been displaced (Fernandes 2000, p.277; Mander, August 1999, p.5). However, these estimates do not include persons displaced by canals, or by the construction of colonies or other infrastructure. Neither do they include those who have been subjected to multiple displacements (Rangachari, 2000, p. 116-117).

The resettlement and rehabilitation of the large number of persons displaced by development projects has been far from successful. A major obstacle has been the government's reluctance to adopt a clear "land-for-land" policy. Instead, insufficient cash compensation or poorly designed non-land based projects has left many destitute. At the same time, local social networks and traditional support systems have been destroyed, leaving many development-displaced with no option but to head for the slums of the major cities (Mander, August 1999, p.8-10, 13-14).

One of the most controversial development projects in India is the Narmada Valley Development Project. It envisages building 3,200 dams that will reconstitute the Narmada and her 419 tributaries into a series of step-reservoirs – an immense staircase of amenable water. Of these, 30 will be major dams, 135 medium and the rest small. Two of the major dams will be multi-purpose mega dams. The Sardar Sarovar in Gujarat and the Narmada Sagar in Madhya Pradesh, will, between them, hold more water than any other reservoir in the Indian subcontinent (Roy 5 February 2000).

The first dam on the Narmada River, the Bargi Dam which was completed in 1990, reportedly displaced 114,000 people from 162 villages and today irrigates only 5% of the land it was said to benefit. Most of the evicted got no compensation for lost land and livelihood (Roy 5 February 2000).

The construction of the Sardar Sarovar Reservoir has been the most contested so far. In 1979, the official estimate for the number of families that would be displaced by the Sardar Sarovar Reservoir was about 6,000. Today, the official estimate range between 40,000 and 42,000 families, which means about 200,000 people. However, this figure is strongly contested by local activist groups. The NBA [*Narmada Bachao Andolan*-Movement to Save Narmada], estimates that close to half a million people will be affected by the project (Roy 5 February 2000).

In what was seen as a major victory for the anti-dam activists, the World Bank withdrew from the Narmada project in 1993 and the construction of the Sardar Sarovar Dam was stopped shortly afterwards (BBC 16 November 2000). However, an October 2000 ruling by the Indian Supreme Court authorizes renewed construction of the Sardar Sarovar Dam. The ruling stipulated that those displaced by the dam would be compensated. However, many human rights advocates and NGO's continued to allege that the construction of the dam would displace 40,000 families without adequately compensating those who are resettled (U.S.DOS February 2001).

For further reading:

The Paper "Risks and Rights: Causes, Consequences, and Challenges of Development-Induced Displacement" by Courtland Robinson (Brookings-SAIS, May 2003) contains a substantial bibliography on development induced displacement in India:

<http://www.brook.edu/fp/projects/idp/articles/didreport.pdf>

The World Commission on Dams (WCD) has published several reports:

Rangachari, R./ Sengupta, Nirmal/ Iyer R. Ramaswamy/ Banerji, Pranab / Singh, Shekhar, November 2000, Large Dams: India's Experience, Case Study Prepared for the World Commission on Dams
<http://www.dams.org/studies/in/>

Patwardhan, Amrita: 2000, Dams and Tribal People in India, Thematic Review 1.2: Dams, Indigenous People and vulnerable ethnic minorities
<http://www.damsreport.org/docs/kbase/contrib/soc207.pdf>

World Commission on Dams (WCD) The Report of the World Commission on Dams, 16 November 2000:
<http://www.damsreport.org/docs/report/wcdreport.pdf>

Subir Bhaumik writes about the threat of development-induced displacement in Tripura: The Dam and the Tribal- in Himal South Asian, May 2004:
<http://www.himalmag.com/2004/may/perspective.htm>

PATTERNS OF DISPLACEMENT

General

Jammu and Kashmir, people living along the international border and Line of Control were forced to flee several times due to military tension (2002 – 2003)

- Most of the displaced people stayed temporarily with friends and relatives, but thousands also camped in public buildings and tents
- Between 1995-1998 displacement occurred from various areas of the Doda district
- Since 1999, tension between India and Pakistan displaced people from border areas in Jammu, the majority of whom took shelter with friends and relatives
- The Akhnoor sector has been particularly hard hit by displacement and many have lost their houses which have been either occupied by the Army or destroyed in cross-border shelling
- Most of the internally displaced from the Akhnoor sector live in camps (as of May 2003)

"Forcing migration of civilians has remained one of the main features of the 14-year long proxy war. It first started with the migration of over 3.50 lakh Hindus from the Kashmir valley in 1990. This was followed by migration from various areas of Doda district between 1995 and 1998.

Since the Kargil conflict of 1999 Pakistan triggered migration from several segments of the Akhnoor sector where at least 20 villages, including Pallanwala and Panjtoot, were targeted by the Pak gunners. From May 1999 onwards more than 45,000 people in the border villages of the Akhnoor sector fled to safer places." (The Tribune 16 February 2003)

" The Jammu District hosting three types of migrants :

- (i) One is the group of migrants who had come in the wake of armed attack in 1948:
- (ii) The second group is the Kashmiri Pandits who have been sheltered by Government in Jammu region; and
- (iii) The third group is the border migrants who had to flee the borders because of constant firing by the Pakistan rangers and Pakistani Army on International border and Line of Control running along Jammu District.

[...]

The displacement in Jammu District has occurred in three phases[...]:

First, in Akhnoor Sector since June 99 during Kargil war. Secondly, in Samba and Akhnoor Sector since December 2001 (Deployment of forces at border from December 18, 2001, after terrorists attack on Indian Parliament). Thirdly, in R.S.Pura and Bishnah Sector since May 25, 2002 after Kaluchak (Army Camp, Jammu) massacre on May 14, 2002) [...]

[...]

The first mass displacement took place in Akhnoor block during June 1999. This block witnessed largest and the longest displacement. Initially, the people stayed with their relatives or in rented accommodation which obviously could not be a permanent arrangement. They spent out their small savings and had to sell off their valuable possessions and livestock to sustain. This persistent problem of instability forced them to approach the Government for relief. The second most affected Block is Samba. Here the zero line villages

like Bain-Glad, Chagla Camp, Chak Fakira and Sordli etc. were advised by the Army to evacuate. With more intense firing on border the District Administration asked the people to shift designated camps

[...]

R.S.Pura and Bishnah block witnessed migration for shorter period during the month of January 2002 [...]. However, mass displacement occurred in the month of May 2002 as aftermath of Kaluchak massacre. According to Block officer of Bishnah and Ranbir Singh, this displacement was also temporary and the emigrants moved back to their native places after 10 to 15 days as cross border firing subdued.

The displacement phenomenon was different in Akhnoor Block. People could not return to their houses since June 1999. Their houses were either occupied by the Army or destroyed in cross-border shelling. Incursions and counter-incursion by Indian and Pakistani Armies kept the LoC alive. The prolonged displacement and ceaseless efforts to highlight the difficulties faced by them at various times at various levels of Government yielded in the form of relief and temporary shelter w.e.f. September 1999 [...]."
(Bhair, Dayal, May 2003 pp. 11-12)

"While most of the displaced people are staying temporarily with friends and relatives, several thousand of them are having to camp in buildings such as schools, a commercial centre and a disused factory." (ICRC, 1 February 2002)

Large number of displaced from Kashmir valley received by relatives, while ninety-five percent of IDPs in Assam (Northeast India) had to be sheltered in camps (2000)

- A large section of the displaced people Kashmiri Pandits are educated and many of them are government employees (2000)

"The ratio of number of families staying in the camps compared to those in private rented accommodation is coming down. It was never high as in other cases of mass exodus. Advisees, mainly Santhals when they became displaced in western Assam had to be accommodated in fifty-eight relief and rehabilitation camps and more than ninety-five percent of them lived in these camps. In contrast, many Kashmiri displaced families received strong support of their community members and relatives staying in Jammu, Delhi and elsewhere. A sizeable section of the displaced people from the valley was educated and a sizeable number of them were government employees. It was thus possible for a large section of them to manage to avoid the harsh condition of living in the camps."
(Mishra, Sect.III)

Gujarat: displaced live in ghettos (December 2003)

"Displaced Muslims today live, for the most part, in ghettoised clusters, for there is a perception that vulnerability is greater when one is physically isolated and conversely that there is some strength in numbers and increased perception of vulnerability if one is physically isolated. As many survivors emphasized, most people try to settle in more secure places with a predominantly Muslim population.

[...]

What is significant in the rural areas is that all of the Muslim population in a village under attack was displaced. In the cities on the other hand, the integration of Hindu and Muslim communities made it difficult to displace the Muslim population." (International Initiative of Justice, pp. 54, 157)

PHYSICAL SECURITY & FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

Physical Security

Reangs in Mizoram state: UN Guiding Principles on protection from displacement violated (2000)

- Preventive measures were not taken by the State and the Central Government to stop the violence, which led to the forced displacement of the Reangs

"The Principles relating to Protection from Displacements particularly those contained in Principles 5 and 9 were completely violated in their case. In terms of the Principle 5 the State and the Central Government were required to take all such measures which could have prevented their displacement. Effective measures were not taken by the State and the Central Government to contain the generalized violence towards the community. The Reangs under the circumstances were obliged to flee their homes. Principle 9 puts special obligation on States to protect against the displacement of indigenous minorities. The conflict between the majority Mizos and the minority Reangs had been brewing over a period of time but no special protection measures were taken by the State for their protection."
(Saha 2000 p.11)

In 1996, the Supreme Court of India directed the government of Arunachal Pradesh to ensure protection of the life and personal liberty of Chakma residents (2001)

"On 9 January 1996, the Supreme Court of India, ruling in the case of *National Human Rights Commission vs State of Arunachal Pradesh and Anr*, directed the government of Arunachal Pradesh to ensure protection of the life and personal liberty of Chakmas resident in the state, and to process their applications for citizenship in accordance with law. The Supreme Court's judgement was followed by a positive decision by the Delhi High Court. In the case of *People's Union for Civil Liberties and Committee for Citizenship Rights of the Chakmas of Arunachal Pradesh vs Election Commission of India and others*, the Delhi High Court ruled in favour of registering Chakmas and Hajongs as voters in Arunachal Pradesh. However, these court directives have been ignored." (SAHRDC 6 August 2001)

Gujarat: displaced were forced to return to the scene of crime without protection (July 2003)

"Promised financial assistance has only trickled in, forcing many victims back to the scene of the crime where their tormentors remain at large. And the government has done little to curb insidious discrimination against Muslims that has proliferated in Gujarat's marketplaces and offices since the massacres. [...] The destruction as well as enmity and insecurity left by the communal violence in Gujarat in February and March 2002 forced more than one hundred thousand Muslims into over one hundred makeshift relief camps throughout the state, some located in Muslim graveyards. By October 2002, virtually all the camps had been closed by the state, forcing many victims to return to their neighborhoods where their security was continually threatened. Throughout this period, the state government failed to adhere to standards laid out in the U.N. Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (Guiding Principles) and to international human rights standards." (HRW July 2003, pp. 4,38)

Gujarat: displaced Muslim women are still victims of sexual violence (December 2003)

- On-going sexual violence includes threats, insults, obscene gestures and actual attacks
- Women who experienced sexual violence during and after the riots remain silent about it due to the lack of security, obstruction of justice by the state, continued threat perception, and the pressure of ghettoised living

"For women the fear of physical violence is heightened by fear of sexual attacks. Having been subjected to sexual violence themselves, having seen other women from the community being violated, or knowing the extent to which sexual crimes were committed, has engendered a psychological threat perception among all women from the community. This fear has been compounded by the overtly sexualized public discourse of the Hindu Right.

BJP supporters celebrated their election victory by 'informing' women: "Now this is our government. We will make this whole area Hindu. All mothers of Muslims are fucked." (Nahida, AA32 area, Ahmedabad). These threats have also been acted upon. On-going sexual violence includes threats, insults, obscene gestures and actual attack. Violence is not only directed against adult women but also against their daughters. Mothers are warned on the street to keep their daughters inside to prevent them from being raped.

[...]

Ghettoised living means living in a permanent pressure cooker situation in which collective fear is the dominant emotion, and where even a small altercation with any member of the majority community is seen as a collective threat to physical security. Individual fear and trauma merges with the collective fear and trauma. It becomes larger and is re-lived everyday. The lack of security, obstruction of justice by the state, continued threat perception, and the pressure of ghettoised living, has meant that women who were initially willing to talk about sexual assault are no longer ready to do so. So even where the silences around sexual violence were broken they have now been re-imposed." (International Initiative of Justice, pp.53-54)

DOCUMENTATION NEEDS AND CITIZENSHIP

General

NRC workshop stressed need of displaced for personal identification documents (November 2001)

"In order to improve IDPs' access to social services and to guarantee constitutional rights, participants saw a great need for issuance of personal identification documents. Currently, a number of different identity cards are used through out India. Women are often included under the family card issued in the name of the male head of household. It was strongly suggested that any unified system of personal identification card should issue individual documents, also to women." (NRC, November 2001)

Special ID cards for Pandits (2003)

- The Ministry of Home Affairs has requested states to provide identity cards to displaced Kashmiri Pandits
- This will benefit at least 50,000 displaced persons, who were not registered as "migrants" when they left the Kashmir Valley after 1990

"Ministry of Home Affairs has requested the various States/UTs to provide identity cards to Kashmiri migrants staying in their respective States [...]" (ORF Sep. 2003, 'Statement Indicating Kashmiri Migrant Families Living Within and Outside J&K')

"Faced with persistent demands from the Kashmiri Pandits, the Central government has agreed to consider issuing special identity cards to the displaced members of the community who left the Valley after 1990 and were not registered as migrants.

The move is expected to benefit at least 50,000 displaced persons, who moved out of the Valley after 1990 when the registration of migrants was stopped.

"If the bonafides of the Kashmiri migrants are proved, they could be considered for registration in Jammu and the Government of the National Capital Territory of Delhi could accordingly be intimated for issue of identity cards," the Ministry said in a communique to the Kashmiri Samiti, a frontline organisation of the community." (May 26 2003, The Hindu)

Rehabilitation of displaced in Gujarat complicated by the destruction of personal documents (April 2002)

"The process of rehabilitation has been further complicated by the destruction or loss of personal documents during the violence. Many relief camp residents told Human Rights Watch that their identification, education, and even medical certificates had been destroyed during the burning and looting of their homes. At the time of Human Rights Watch's visit, no system was in place to systematically document the numbers and identities of those residing in relief camps." (HRW, April 2002, p.59)

ISSUES OF FAMILY UNITY, IDENTITY AND CULTURE

General

Development of strong Kashmiri Pandit community network has facilitated a unified position vs. the Indian government (2000-2003)

- Strong Kashmiri Pandit community network remains strong despite dispersal of families, loss of cultural identity and psychological stress
- Pandit leaders fear that their language, culture and traditions are disappearing
- Despite several groups having different political affiliations, the displaced have managed to maintain unity on questions of rights, advocacy towards the government and support to the poorer sections of the community
- Different organizations of the displaced have spread their networks in the USA and in Europe
- Some discrepancy remain on the issue of return

"The Pandit leaders feared that their language, culture and tradition and also their number was fast disappearing and it was just a matter of time (few years) when they would be lost for ever. A survey conducted at various Kashmiri Pandit Settlement Centres revealed that 14 years of exile had given rise to dispersal, diaspora and dissipation. The moral fabric of the migrants is tearing apart. The family structure has broken down. The economic, social and administrative support has collapsed. The memories of terror, persecution and violence in the Kashmir Valley are superimposed upon a feeling of being dispossessed and uprooted." (Daily Excelsior, 8 September 2003)

"Pandit homes have been taken over, jobs reassigned, and families split. There has been a change in the Pandit condition as many Pandits lead a precarious material existence. As refugees, their social organisation and political leadership have both ruptured. As a consequence, a change has taken place in Pandit self-definition, as the events of the 1990s have become interwoven with a political history that emphasises Pandit differences from the Muslim majority in the Valley. This shift in historiography was also influenced by exclusivist Muslim accounts of Kashmiri history that also gained ground during the militancy.

Finally, after the shock of the cultural and political fragmentation that followed the Pandit exodus, a new political activism is developing amongst Pandits. This activist agenda can be interpreted as a cultural self-defence mechanism; an attempt to protect a Kashmiri Pandit identity by cloaking it in the discourse of nationhood." (Evans 2001)

"Terrorism and religious extremism and consequent displacement has had devastating consequences on the socio-psychological, physical, health and demographic profile of the uprooted. Displacement has entailed deprivation of multiple rights. The damage wrought to the social base, in terms of breaking up and dispersal of families, loss of identities and psychological set up is incalculable. It has been extremely difficult for the displaced to cope up with the trauma of losing their homes and habitat and severing of cultural and community ties. As observed elsewhere too, the displaced community has seen sharp decline in the birthrate and a phenomenal increase in the death rate due to health and various psychological disorders.

In spite of adversity the Kashmiri Pandits have shown remarkable resilience and unity. A very strong community network has consistently helped to sustain in the struggle for survival and existence of the displaced. In spite of several groups having several political affiliations, the unity of approach on most

questions relayed to securing their rights, petitioning the government and for providing support to the poorer sections of the community, is note worthy . Different organizations of the displaced have spread their networks in the USA and West Europe. In recent years, they have successfully advocated the causes of their community and have brought their plight to the attention of the international community. However, the Kashmiri groups active in Jammu , Delhi and abroad differ how to respond to the measures taken by the government at securing the return of the displaced to their homes . Moreover, a vocal reaction of the community has started demanding 'Panun Kashmir' which envisages a separate homeland on the northeast of river Jhelum with Union Territory status. Not all community members are in agreement with this demand. The younger elements are not very enthusiastic about returning to the valley. The prospect for such a return, however, is contingent on a number of conditions that do not exist today." (Mishra, Sect.III)

Gujarat: children in relief camps felt discriminated and struggled with issues of identity (2003)

"Soon after the violence, principals of English-medium schools in Gujarat were threatened with violence by VHP members if they did not expel Muslim students from their institutions. According to one report, parents were told by school officials to remove their children from these schools on the grounds that their safety could not be guaranteed.[...] These tactics are helping to ensure that Muslim children are increasingly confined to *madrasas*, or Muslim-run religious schools, where education is imparted in Hindi or Urdu-limiting severely the students' career prospects[...] and effectively requiring them to have a religious rather than secular education. Simultaneously, *sangh parivar*-run schools throughout Gujarat and other parts of India continue to impress upon Hindu children a message of religious intolerance.[...]The end result could be toxic to relations between communities for generations to come. In addition to the enormous impact on their health, education, and psychological well-being, children in relief camps also struggled with issues of identity. According to one study: The impact of living like refugees in camps in subhuman conditions for months together increased the feeling of discrimination experienced by children at a time when most Hindu families they knew were safe in their homes. "We feel like outsiders, people who are not wanted," one child said. The carnage impacted the children's sense of self-worth and created immense confusion in their minds about their identity: Are we insiders or outsiders, Indians or Pakistanis, citizens or criminals? Commonly used terms such as "We" and "They," "Us" and "Them" indicated the sharp divide between communities.[...] " (HRW July 2003, p. 50)

PROPERTY ISSUES

General

Displaced from Kashmir demand special tribunal to deal with illegal occupation of Pandit property in Kashmir (2000)

- Displaced Kashmiri Pandits ask for compensation for the 48.000 burned or damaged houses

" Their association, Panun Kashmir, has called on the government [...] to set up a tribunal to deal with illegal occupation of Pandit property, to provide compensation for the 37,000 houses damaged and 11,000 houses burnt, to provide jobs and cash relief and to reserve parliamentary seats for the Pandits." (Saha p.27)

Jammu: internally displaced demand land at safer places (May 2003)

"The most common and basic demands of the people residing in the camps is residential plots at safer place near established towns. The government has not acceded the demands on following grounds:

- that it is a temporary displacement;
- that they already have permanent houses and sufficient land too;
- that the cash-crunch government cannot purchase and allot any land.

As such there is no government land in the periphery of the towns. Moreover increase in population would add more pressure on the already limited resources." (Bhair, Dayal, May 2003 p.19)

Insufficient government rehabilitation for Gujarat's IDPs obstructed their return (May 2002)

- Prospects for return of displaced were very bleak due to violence and a lack of government rehabilitation measures
- In many camps, displaced complained about an under-valuation of property lost

"The refugees' hopes of returning home grow dimmer as the violence continues and the government's half-hearted rehabilitation measures fail to provide any real support. Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's efforts to reassure the riot-affected people during his visit to Gujarat on April 4 came rather late - 35 days after the violence began. His promises regarding relief and rehabilitation have not yet been implemented properly by the State government. The only time Chief Minister Narendra Modi visited a relief camp housing Muslims was when he trailed the Prime Minister.

During his visit, the Prime Minister promised the following rehabilitation measures to the more than 1.5 lakh [150,000] refugees:

[...]

Housing compensation in the rural areas would be Rs.15,000 for those whose homes have been partially damaged and Rs.50,000 for those whose homes have been completely destroyed. In the urban areas, the

Central government would bear the cost of reconstruction on the basis of an estimate made after a comprehensive survey.

[...]

In every camp in Ahmedabad, people complained about the under-valuation of property lost. "Most of the people have got cheques for Rs.2,000 to 3,000. No one here has received more than Rs.14,000 as compensation, which is only a fraction of the actual value of their houses and belongings," said a camp organiser at Vatva. In rural Gujarat, the situation is no better. At Bamanwad village in Panchmahal district, Ganibhai Khatri's house was razed to the ground. He received only Rs.23,075 as compensation, instead of the Rs.50,000 promised by the Prime Minister. In this village the houses of around 27 Muslim families were burned. Yet, only seven families have received compensation. The government has not even recognised the presence of the relief camp in the village. Hindu neighbours of those in the camp have been helping them with food for the past two months." (Frontline, vol.19 issue 10, 11-24 May 2002)

PATTERNS OF RETURN AND RESETTLEMENT

Return

The Jammu and Kashmir Government has prepared an action plan to return and rehabilitate 125,000 Kashmiri Pandits (2003)

- The Jammu and Kashmir government is working on a resettlement plan for 125,000 displaced Kashmiri Pandits to the Kashmir Valley.
- The Action Plan is to be implemented in phases, which envisages return and rehabilitation in areas with a sizeable Kashmiri Pandit population and where security is already provided

"The Jammu and Kashmir government is working on a plan to develop an area in Anantnag district, in the Kashmir Valley and 40 miles southeast of Srinagar, for resettling around 300,000 [the Government states 125,000] displaced Kashmiri Pandits to the valley. The government plans to build around 500 apartment flats with provision of security and essential facilities in the vicinity of Mattan temple, a pilgrimage center in Anantnag, for the Pandits to stay until they can repair their own houses. If the experiment succeeds here, it will be replicated at another prominent pilgrimage center – Kheer Bhavani. The Mufti Sayeed-led state government is also making efforts to persuade the displaced people to return. About 300,000 Pandits, constituting almost the entire community, moved out of Kashmir valley in late 1989 after militancy erupted there. Many have been living in squalid camps around Jammu for more than a decade." (Hindu Press International, 9 March 2003)

"3.85 In order to enable safe and honourable return of migrants to their native places in the Valley, the State Government constituted an Apex-level Committee under the Chairmanship of Revenue, Relief and Rehabilitation Minister to look into all aspect of this problem and suggest solutions. Government of J&K finalized an Action Plan for the return and rehabilitation of Kashmiri migrants involving a total amount of Rs.2589.73 crores to enable Kashmiri migrants comprising about 1.25 lakhs souls at present residing in Jammu, Delhi and other States/UTs to return to the Valley. The Action Plan envisages rehabilitation grant per family @ Rs.1.50 lakhs; grant for repair of houses @ Rs.1 lakh for houses intact and Rs.3 lakhs for houses damaged; grant for household goods @ Rs.0.50 lakhs and furniture @ Rs.0.50 lakhs; interest free loan @ Rs.1-2 lakhs per person; compensation for loss of income from agriculture upto Rs.1.50 lakhs per family; interest free loan of Rs.1.50 lakhs per family for investment in agricultural operations and sustenance of Rs.2,000 per month for one year.

3.86 The Action Plan is to be implemented in phases, which envisages return and rehabilitation of migrant families in areas where clusters of migrant houses are available and in villages/mohallas in the Kashmir Valley Districts with sizeable Kashmiri Pandit population and where security is already provided. To begin with, 166 houses forming 15 clusters have been identified in Srinagar and Badgam Districts which are considered safe for the return of the owners of these houses. The list of these clusters was published in the newspapers and steps were taken to identify the families and find their willingness to return to their homes. About 50 families who were registered with the Relief organization, Jammu were contacted personally to give their consent for return to the Valley on the basis of the package announced by the Government. Interaction meetings with some of these families were also held but none of the families have agreed to return to the Valley so far." (GOI 2002-2003, Chapter III, pp. 27-28)

"As per the latest proposal to set up cluster colonies for migrant families, the government claims that 1,100 migrant families have already been identified for return to the Valley. But whether this project, estimated at

Rs. 55 crore and hoped to be funded by the Centre, turns out to be the proverbial case of a slip between cup and lip is yet to be seen. The Mufti government is more than optimistic and was seen as initiating a serious step towards the endeavour since at one of the meetings with Advani in Delhi, the rehabilitation proposal also came in for discussion.

[...]

"In striking contrast is the scepticism of the relief commissioner, Jammu, RK Thussu. He says that the actual rehabilitation proposal began in 2000, when it was conceived as a composite, integrated project based on the recommendations of the former financial commissioner, ML Kaul. However, the Centre asked the state government to envisage the project (estimated at Rs. 2,500 crore) in phases, in view of the huge costs involved. It was considered too high a demand for the Centre to meet. Following the failure of this proposal, yet another Rs. 43 crore project, which envisaged the setting up of clusters and repair of houses, was formulated by the then divisional commissioner, Srinagar, in 2001 and sent to the Centre for approval. It was probably also approved by the Centre. However, the project remained in limbo until the new government took over.

The coalition government decided to pursue the proposal and go ahead with the project since the 'safe and dignified return of Kashmiri Pandits' was also part of its joint common minimum programme. But Thussu is categorical that no money has been released by the Centre so far and that the project stands frozen as of today. Regarding the employment package by the state government, he states there is nothing concrete to offer the migrants. It is merely that the government has maintained that in all appointments, migrants should also be given due consideration." (Communalism Combat, January 2004)

Kashmiri Pandits remain reluctant to return plan (2003-January 2004)

- Most of the Pandits who have left the Valley since 1990 are reluctant to return due to continuing violence and activism by Muslim militants and very few have accepted the Action Plan
- While the Mufti government have been optimistic about prospects of return, several Kashmiri Pandit organizations have been against a return in phases and maintain that this would lead to division and fragmentation in Kashmiri society
- Expectations were that a return to civilian rule in Kashmir would stabilise the security situation and encourage Hindu Pandits to go back
- There is high degree of distrust between Kashmiri Pandits and their former Muslim neighbours
- Conditions for return, as laid out in principle 28 of the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement would have to be fulfilled in order to make Hindu Pandits return to the Kashmir Valley in safety and dignity

"While there are confusing and contradictory notes from within the government about the fate of Kashmiri Pandits in the camps, there is also a cacophony of voices from Kashmiri Pandit organisations, even before the rehabilitation and employment package acquires a final shape. The RSS and Panun Kashmir have been vociferous against a return in phases and maintain that this would lead to division and fragmentation in Kashmiri society. In fact, the Panun Kashmir, which has been seeking a separate homeland for Kashmiris south of the Valley, has also been instrumental in raking up propaganda to wean away families living in the Valley, especially in the wake of the Nadimarg massacre last year.

[...]

In view of the issue becoming more politicised, can the Pandits return to the Valley ever be a possibility? Most Pandits who are keen to go back realise that there is need for dialogue with the majority community. Unless the latter come forward and provide the Pandits with the confidence to return, no amount of security

camps can succeed in guaranteeing safety. Such measures would also help revive the secular fabric of the Valley. However, today there is no infrastructure in place to initiate such a dialogue or move. While several Pandits yearn to go back, many Muslims in the Valley also feel that their return is important to revive lost traditions, the vibrant culture symbolic of a plural society of which the Valley has been robbed. Even separatist leaders in the Valley have been mouthing concern over the plight of Pandits and feel that their return would be significant.

[...]

The controversy is further complicated by the dispute over the number of those displaced in the first place. While most Kashmiri organisations put the number of displaced Hindus anywhere between 3 lakhs and 4 lakhs, the total number of registered migrant families is approximately 55,000. In the last assembly polls of 2002, about 59,000 displaced Kashmiris were listed as voters. Out of the total number of those displaced about 36,000 families comprising 1.40 lakhs are in Jammu and its environs while 19,000 families live in camps or stay on their own in Delhi and other parts of the country. Many displaced Kashmiris also include Muslims, Sikhs and other minorities, though they may comprise a minuscule number for which figures were not available. Only about 5,274 families live in various camps in Jammu and most of them hail from rural areas. These may be the only ones keen to return.

Most of the other Kashmiri Hindus come from affluent sections of society or have settled well in their new habitat over the past 14 years. Any thought of return may disturb their sense of security. Besides, there are changing perceptions within the younger generation, which has grown up in an alien culture and adopted it because they had no choice. A common reality in many Kashmiri Pandit homes has the older generation pining to go back, the middle generation lukewarm on the issue and youngsters who loathe the idea of a native land that is alien to them." (Communalism Combat, January 2004)

"In case the Pandits return to the valley safely and with dignity, essential conditions of Internally Displaced Persons return as per the **UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement**, would have to be fulfilled. India's inaction on Internally Displaced Persons rehabilitation is also due to its inability to improve conditions of return inside insurgency-ridden Kashmir valley. **UN Guiding Principle 28** states, "Competent authorities have the primary duty and responsibility to establish conditions, as well as provide the means, which allow internally displaced persons to return voluntarily to their homes or places of habitual residence." The onus thus is on the state to establish law and order, curb threats to minorities and create space for the reintegration of returnees. India's failure to defeat Pakistan-sponsored Islamist terrorism in Kashmir for the last twelve years renders talk of returning Internally Displaced Persons impractical.

Internal: There are a number of reasons due to which the Pandits are unable to return to Kashmir. The primary reason is the continuing terrorist threat in the valley. Due to this, neither the government nor the Kashmiri Pandits organizations are pushing for their immediate return. Though intermittently they give a call for return to the Valley, no significant effort has been made. For instance, the Mufti Mohammad Sayeed government after coming to power planned to rehabilitate the Pandits in the Valley itself at Mattan in Anantnag and the holy spring shrine of Khirbhawani in Sri Nagar. However, the massacres of the Pandits at Nadimarg on 23 March, 2003 have stalled this process.

Political pragmatism is another reason due to which the plight of the Kashmiri Pandits, has not been highlighted. As they number less than 4,000 in the Valley as a result of displacement, they don't constitute a significant vote bank.

Continuing violence, and the fact that Kashmiri militant groups are not rushing to welcome the Pandits back, also reduces the likelihood of an early return. The Hizbullah militants threatened Pandits in September 1995, warning that they would never be allowed to settle in Kashmir unless they joined the 'freedom struggle'. Following a communal massacre in a Valley village on March 23, 1997 there were further reports of Pandits leaving the Valley. Thus, beyond calling periodically for the Pandits to return,

successive state governments have done little to reassure Pandits that their future in the Valley can be secured.

Thus it is for the Kashmiri Pandits themselves to determine when and if conditions are right to return." (ORF, Sep.2003, Bhati)

Kashmiri Pandits protest against the terms of return:

"Kashmiri pandits on March 12[2003] rejected Jammu and Kashmir government's plans to take the community members to two locations in the valley and asserted that "there can be no dignified return till dignified talks" over the matter.

Seven major organisations reacted sharply to the statement of Deputy Prime Minister L K Advani in Parliament that the government had earmarked Rs 10 crore for resettling pandits at Kheer Bhavani and Mattan in Kashmir.

"This has confirmed the worst doubts of the displaced community," said a joint statement issued by Kashmiri Samiti, All India Kashmiri Pandit Conference, Kashmiri Pandit United Forum, Vichar Manch, All India Kashmiri Samaj, Displaced Employees Forum and Kashmir Culture and Education Society.

"Any attempt to herd groups of displaced people to any part of Kashmir valley without first ensuring adequate security of life and livelihood for them is fraught with serious consequences," said the statement issued hours after Advani's remarks.

They alleged that the Mufti Sayeed government wanted to "condemn Kashmiri pandits to a ghetto life" and felt that the move was aimed at "creating a gulf between the two communities" in the valley. " (IndiaInfo.Com, 13 March 2003)

Also available: Dr Ajay Churungoo Bharat Rakshak Monitor, 2004, Kashmir Pandits: Problem Prospects And Future [Internet]

Thousands of displaced families reported to return to their villages along the international border and Line of Control (March 2004)

The information below states that most of the displaced have returned to their homes. However, one source has informed the Global IDP Project that many move to transit camps awaiting demining of their fields and repair of their houses. These returnees should be considered internally displaced until they have been able to return to their homes in line with Guiding Principles 28 and 29.

"The Jammu and Kashmir government is working on the return of over 100,000 people who fled their homes along the border due to stepped up shelling by Pakistani forces, officials said.

The government move comes in the wake of an assessment showing there had been a discernable fall in Pakistani shelling in areas close to the border in the Jammu region.

The government is exploring the possibility of making fields cultivable again after the removal of thousands of mines laid by Indian forces during last year's standoff with Pakistan." (SAM, 6 November 2003)

By March 2004, most of the displaced had returned home:

"Thousands of migrants who previously lived near the disputed Line of Control (LoC) in Indian-controlled Kashmir (IcK) are reportedly returning to their homes as a November 2003 ceasefire continues to hold between India and Pakistan. The two countries held their initial round of talks last week and have agreed to hold meetings over the next 6 months on a "roadmap" to peace. Many migrants moved out from the area since the 1989 separatist revolution in IcK. IcK Relief and Rehabilitation Minister Hakim Yasin said that the situation has improved substantially along the LoC and claimed that 31,621 out of 39,527 families have returned to their homes. Since humanitarian information is tightly controlled in IcK, it is difficult to independently verify the figures.

[...]

Meanwhile, militant violence continued in IcK as The Statesman reported that militants have begun targeting female Indian Army medical officers that have started work in more remote areas of the region." (COE-DMHA, 5 March 2004)

"The situation has improved substantially in the border areas close to the Line of Control and people have voluntarily returned home after the ceasefire, said Hakim Yasin, the state's relief and rehabilitation minister. 'Of the 39,527 migrant families, 31,621 families have so far returned to their homes in the border areas,' the minister said." (The Indian Express, 5 March 2004)

North-East: Santhals and Bodos return to their villages or are resettled elsewhere (April 2003)

"With the situation in the district having improved considerably in the past couple of years, many people have begun returning to their original villages and fields, and the government has begun a conscious process of resettling people in their original places or elsewhere, outside the camps. This consists of a cash relief of Rs 10,000 per family, and 4,549 families have been rehabilitated to their own revenue / allotted land from 13 camps so far. (Some families have returned even without the cash relief.)

Most families have utilized this money to build houses. Today there is however a serious livelihood risk for these people, since all subsidies from the government has now been stopped. Their poverty is such that the Rs.10,000/- is not enough." (LWS-I, Appeal, April 2003)

Assam: displaced Santhals quote fear of renewed violence upon return and lack of assistance as main reasons for not returning to their villages (January 2004)

- A total of 6,130 families have returned to their villages from relief camps in Gossaigaon in the past four years
- The remaining displaced Santhals fear attacks from militants and prefer to stay in relief camps
- Another reason for why the displaced do not return is that many of the displaced have not received a promised house-building grant which they need in order to restart their lives

"While camp inmates said they were afraid to go back to their villages for fear of facing attacks from militants once again, a police official at Sapkatha said the inmates did not want to return mainly because they were getting free rice at the relief camps.

"Our camp is too close to the forests. We are scared that the militants may still come down from the hills in Bhutan and launch attack on us if we go back," headmaster of Sapkatha camp school Moshe Tudu said. He hoped, however, that the operations against militants in Bhutan would improve the situation.

Another reason why the inmates had not been able to go back was that many of them had not received the house building grant of Rs 10,000 per family which the Assam government had promised to them. A total of 6,130 families had gone back to their villages from the relief camps in Gossaigaon in the past four years. The state government had spent more than Rs 6 crore on their rehabilitation, subdivisional information officer Gagan Narzary said.

"We can still revive our cultivation and go back to normal life if we can go back to our villages," he said. Near both Kochugaon and Sapkatha camps, there were permanent army posts for protection ever since the camps had started. Militant groups had taken an active part in the riots." (The Times of India, 8 January)

Assam: Fighting between the Karbi and Kuki tribes in Assam delayed the return of over 4,000 Khasi-Pnars who fled Karbi militancy in November (December 2003)

- The return of more than 4,000 Khasi-Pnar people staying in camps in Meghalaya was delayed due to general insecurity and threats by militants
- By the end of January 2004, most of the displaced considered the security situation as adequate for return

"Fresh ethnic violence between the Karbi and Kuki in Assam's Karbi Anglong district has halted the process of rehabilitation of over 4000 displaced Khasi-Pnar people now staying in camps in Meghalaya's Jaintia hills for the last three weeks following threats of militants there, reports PTI.

"Since there is a problem going on, they (displaced Khasi-Pnars) want to be here (in Meghalaya) for some more time," Deputy Commissioner of Jaintia Hills district L. Kharkongor told PTI here over phone adding only 34 people have so far returned to their villages in Block-I and Block-II areas.

After staying in camps for over three weeks, the Khasi-Pnar people, who fled their home from Karbi Anglong area of Assam after being threatened and harassed by two Karbi militants, started returning to their villages from Monday last following security arrangements." (Assam Tribune, 4 December 2003)

"Sense of insecurity prevails in the disputed areas of Block-I with many Khasi-Pnar refugees who had returned to their villages coming back to Sahsniang refugee camp expressing their lack of confidence in the role of the Assam Police. Informing this to *The Shillong Times*, General Secretary of Labang-Nongphyllut-Pangam-Raliang Council (LNPRC) M M Thaiang said around 70 refugees had gone to their villages in Block-I but most of them had to return to Sahsniang after finding that the situation was not right for their resettlement.

"The refugees went to their villages but came back after they found that UPDS and other Karbi militants were very much active in those villages" Mr Thaiang said adding that early return of the refugees was unlikely under the present circumstances." (The Shillong Times, 9 December 2003)

By the end of January, most of the displaced considered the security situation as adequate for return:

"[...] most of the 4,000 Khasi-Pnar tribals are now back in their homes in the villages in central Assam's Karbi Anglong district.

[...]

After over three weeks of their stay in the make-shift camps in the village, they started returning home since early December. While the displaced villagers were somehow provided with shelter in the put-up camps, they reportedly faced a lot of hardship initially as there were hardly any basic amenities. Their living conditions improved following a 12-hour bandh called recently by a group of as many as 12 social organisations in the four districts of Meghalaya—Ri-Bhoi, East and West Khasi Hills and Jaintia Hills—in support of their demands. The demands include, inter alia, arrangement of adequate relief measures for the

uprooted Khasi-Pnar people, and the erection of Meghalaya police post at Psiar village at Block-I area in Karbi Anglong district.

[...]

At one point of time, even Assam Health Minister Bhumidhar Barman and his junior colleague ERS Ronghang, together with Meghalaya Chief Minister DD Lapang and Home Minister RG Lyngdoh had to visit the areas where ethnic conflict erupted, to restore confidence in the minds of the Khasi-Pnar people. It is only then that they agreed to leave for their destination." (The Assam Tribune 29 January 2004)

The Mizoram state government refuses repatriation of Reangs displaced into Tripura state (2000-2003)

- Mizos believe that the Reangs are outsiders and hence have no right to claim that they are permanent settlers
- The Chief Minister of Mizoram argues that "Reangs were not original residents of Mizoram and that only 16,000 of the refugees has a valid claim to reside in the state
- Meanwhile, the Reangs are believed to be increasingly joining the insurgent groups to wage war against the Mizos
- The Indian Government and the National Human Rights Commission has called on the Mizoram and Tripura state governments to assure the immediate and safe return of the Reangs
- In August 2000, decisions were made that Reang refugees would be resettled in Tripura and that repatriation of the entire group would be completed by year's end, but nothing had been done to repatriate them by year's end

"Despite continuing efforts of the Tripura government the question of repatriation has made no progress as official representatives of Mizoram persisted with their stand that all those registered as refugees in the camps did not really belong to Mizoram. Both the Tripura government and the Centre have been trying to 'push back' all the Reang people to Mizoram. After a series of discussions held by the officials of the Union home ministry failed to make any progress, Union Home Minister L. K. Advani held a tripartite meeting involving the governments of Mizoram and Tripura. The meeting resolved that the government of Mizoram would start taking back the refugees from October. But the process remains paralysed as Mizoram has been using one pretext or the other to keep the repatriation in abeyance." (Deccan Herald, 17 August 2003)

"The Mizoram Government had sent a delegation led by the State Home Minister, in October, 1997 to persuade the Reangs living in camps in Tripura to return. A programme of repatriation was also chalked out with Tripura Government. "However barring 3000 Reangs most of the Reangs refused to return to Mizoram even after the Government promised to provide adequate security by deploying Central Paramilitary Forces in the area. The State Home Minister also stated that President of the Bru Students Union on March 9, 1998 warned all the Reangs who had not left the state to leave the state by March 22, 1998 or face excommunication by the community or even death.

The Union Home Minister Mr. L.K. Advani during his visit to North East on September, 1998 stated that "the Mizoram Government must take back every Reang tribal now housed in relief camps in Tripura for whom the Centre is bearing the expenses and there was no question of taking back selectively. He rejected the Chief Minister Mr. Lal Thanhawla's assertion that he would take back only those Reang tribals whose names were in Mizoram electoral rolls."

The Reangs living in camps have demanded guaranteed protection from the Mizoram Government as a precondition for their return to their homeland though Mizos believe that the Reangs are rank outsiders and hence have no right to claim that they are permanent settlers. The Chief Minister of Mizoram, Mr Lal Thanhawla in a statement had said that "Reangs were not original residents of Mizoram and they had

crossed over to Mizoram areas from Tripura and the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh in search of land for jhum cultivation and that his Government had no obligation to take back the Reangs." The Reangs are believed to be increasingly joining the insurgent groups to wage war against the Mizos. A high level delegation of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) visited the Reang camps in Tripura. The delegation members talked to the Reang leaders and also the state officials in Tripura regarding problems of the Reangs. Later on the basis of delegation's report the NHRC wrote to the Mizoram Chief Secretary "to make necessary arrangements without any further delay so that they could go back to their villages in Mizoram. Reangs living in camps are residents of Mizoram and that it was the responsibility of the state government to arrange for their immediate repatriation." The Union Government has also requested the Mizoram authorities for taking necessary steps for early return of the Reangs." (Saha 2000 p.7-8)

"Mizoram human rights groups estimate that some 41,000 Reangs, a tribal group from Mizoram that has been displaced due to a sectarian conflict, presently are being sheltered in 6 camps in North Tripura; conditions in such camps are poor and the Tripura government has asked the central Government to allot funds for their care. Reang leaders in the camps say that their community would return to Mizoram if they were granted an autonomous district council, allotted a set number of seats in the Mizoram Assembly, and granted financial assistance for resettlement. The Mizoram government rejected these demands and maintained that only 16,000 of the refugees had a valid claim to reside in the state." (U.S. DOS 2001, Section 2 d)

Observations of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC):

"[On 7 August 2000] Union Home Minister, Shri L.K. Advani held a meeting with Chief Minister, Tripura, Shri Manik Sarkar and the Mizoram Home Minister, Shri Tawnluia to discuss the problem of repatriation of displaced Reangs from Mizoram who are settled in camps inside Tripura. Union Home Secretary, Additional Secretary (Home), Chief Secretary, Tripura and Joint Secretary (North East) in the Union Home Ministry were also present. It was noted that the National Human Right Commission had in October 1999 after discussions with the State Governments of Mizoram and Tripura and the representatives of Ministry of Home Affairs and after the visits to the camps, had made the following observations.

- i. The Reangs living in refugee camps in Kanchanpur sub-division of Tripura are lawful inhabitants of Mizoram and the Government of Mizoram is obliged to take them back in accordance with the agreement made with the Union Home Minister in November, 1997. The Government of Mizoram should take all necessary steps to impart a sense of confidence and security to the refugees who fled from Mizoram in the wake of some ethnic tension in September-October, 1997. Dispute, if any, regarding the number of refugees, can be resolved by joint verification at the camps by a committee comprising the representatives of Government of Tripura and Mizoram and the Ministry of Home Affairs who would consult fully with a representative of the Reang refugees.
- ii. The Government of India is requested to play active role on priority basis to arrange repatriation of the Reangs to Mizoram in accordance with the decision taken in the meeting of Union Home Minister in November, 1997. The Ministry of Home Affairs is further requested to impart urgent and special attention to the safety and security of the Reangs returning to their villages in Mizoram.
- iii. The Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, State Government of Mizoram and Tripura shall keep the Commission informed of the progress made in the matter at regular intervals of at least once in two months.
2. It was noted that there were 311511 [sic: 31,511] displaced Reangs(6956 families) in these Camps in Tripura. Government of Tripura informed that they had sent the full details of the displaced persons to District authorities in Mizoram for verification.
3. Representatives of the Government of Mizoram agreed that they had received the list on 7 July, 2000 and the process of verification is on.
4. It was urged by the Union Home Minister that the verification should be expedited and the process of repatriation commenced at the earliest.

After discussions, the following decisions were taken:-

- i. The first phase of repatriation of 16000 displaced persons verified by the Government of Mizoram who have been displaced from Mizoram would be completed by 30 October, 2000.
- ii. In the second phase, there would be further verification of balance person left in the camps and thereafter, such of those who were found to have been displaced from Mizoram would be repatriated back by 31 December, 2000.
- iii. Simultaneously tripartite talks would be held between Government of India, Government of Mizoram and Reang representatives to bring about a settlement of outstanding issues and an end to violence. (MHA- GoI, 7 August 2000)

"The Reangs [...] and the government of the former state appealed to the Centre on several occasions to take necessary steps to ensure their safe repatriation. Tripartite talks involving Union Home Ministry, Tripura and Mizoram governments were held in 2000 in Delhi. The Union Home Ministry had directed Zoramthanga-led Mizoram government to take back the Reangs but no positive step was taken from that side so far." (The North-East Enquirer, 21 July 2003)

Gujarat: unprotected and fearing for their lives, the displaced were unwilling to return (April 2002 - April 2004)

- The forcible closure of Camps in Gujarat was contrary to the Guiding Principle no. 15
- Displaced in Gujarat, largely unprotected by the police and authorities, have been unable and unwilling to return
- By October 2002, virtually all the camps had been closed by the state, forcing many victims to return to their neighborhoods where their security was continually threatened
- The closure of camps meant an end to funds that provide for food and medicines
- Rehabilitation assistance has been minimal and for many non-existent
- Impunity for attacks against Muslims and periodic episodes of violence have also made it impossible for many families to return to their homes - many remained displaced as of December 2003

"The destruction as well as enmity and insecurity left by the communal violence in Gujarat in February and March 2002 forced more than one hundred thousand Muslims into over one hundred makeshift relief camps throughout the state, some located in Muslim graveyards. By October 2002, virtually all the camps had been closed by the state, forcing many victims to return to their neighborhoods where their security was continually threatened. Throughout this period, the state government failed to adhere to standards laid out in the U.N. Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (Guiding Principles) and to international human rights standards.

[...]

In January 2003, Human Rights Watch visited Shah-e-Alam camp, the largest camp in Ahmedabad. Though the camp area, which is situated in a dargah (a traditional meeting ground for Hindus and Muslims), seemed largely uninhabited at the time of our visit; at the height of the violence approximately 12,500 people resided there. According to one of its managers, the camp was closed on August 23, 2002, two months after the government ended its official support. Between March and June the government provided 300 grams of flour, 100 grams of rice, 50 grams of dal, 50 grams of milk powder, 50 grams of oil, and five rupees per person per day. Apart from this five rupee allotment per person per day the camp received no additional financial support from the government. Instead, money was collected from local community members or by placing advertisements in newspapers.

[...]

By June 2002, 8,500 people had left Shah-e-Alam camp. Many went to relatives' homes, some to rental homes, while others out of necessity returned to their homes in Naroda Patia, Naroda Gam, and elsewhere. At the time of the camp's closure in August, 4,000 people remained. A Muslim charity repaired some 700

homes and constructed approximately sixty-five homes in various Ahmedabad neighborhoods. When asked whether the government provided financial support to run the camps (as opposed to the limited subsidies to victims described above) the manager told Human Rights Watch: "Forget money, they didn't even give us protection. We kept asking for help with rehabilitation, even to [Prime Minister] Vajpayee when he came, but nobody did anything." Some of those who lost family members have been able to construct or buy homes in Muslim majority areas. The remainder have for the most part returned to Naroda Patia. "They returned because they own property there and have been unable to sell it for the price at which it was bought."

[...]

The forcible closure of the camps in circumstances in which it was foreseeable that some camp residents would have no option but to return to unsafe conditions is contrary to Guiding Principle 15(d)-the "right to be protected against forcible return to or resettlement in any place where their life, safety, liberty and/or health would be at risk"-and violates the right to choose one's own residence under article 12(1) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Furthermore, the closure of the camps without an offer of adequate alternative shelter is a clear violation of article 11(1) of the International Covenant of Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)-"the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing."

[...]

Ongoing impunity for attacks against Muslims (see Chapter IV) and periodic episodes of violence have also made it impossible for many families to return to their homes where their assailants roam freely in their neighborhoods. " (HRW July 2003, pp. 38-41)

"The problems associated with the Naroda Patia and Gulbarg Society investigations, including the harassment of witnesses, are also found in other parts of the state. During their visit to Gujarat to determine the feasibility of holding early elections, members of India's Election Commission documented similar patterns from almost all of the twelve districts that they covered. According to the Election Commission report:

Everywhere there were complaints of culprits of the violence still moving around scot-free including some prominent political persons and those on bail. These persons threaten the displaced affected persons to withdraw cases against them, failing which they would not be allowed to return to their homes. In Dhakor (Kheda District), the team was told by a delegation, in the presence of senior police officers and the district administration authorities, that the culprits had been identified before the police but no arrests had taken place and the main culprits continued to threaten the villagers to withdraw their FIRs. The team has cited many other such cases from almost all the 12 districts covered by them." (HRW July 2003, p. 21)

"Till the time of writing of this report many Muslims are still unable to return to their homes. Indeed, without a sense of security it is virtually impossible for survivors to go back to places where they witnessed friends and relatives being slaughtered and burned alive." (International Initiative of Justice, pp. 55-56)

"Of the 95 Muslim families in Panwad village (about 80 km south of here), who were attacked by a mob of tribals during the riots two years back, about 30 have still not returned."

Though the Islamic Relief Committee has built new houses in place of the ones which were burnt down, many feel safer living in Chotaudepur, about 20 km away, and commuting to Panvad." (Times of India, 12 April 2004)

Gujarat: the Muslim community is under pressure not to press charges against their attackers before they are allowed to return (December 2003)

- Those who have managed to return to their homes have done so under conditions of economic boycott and "compromise"
- The most important "compromise" condition is the withdrawal of legal cases against Hindus

"Those who have managed to return to their homes have done so under conditions of economic boycott and "compromise." There are many "compromise" villages and neighbourhoods in Gujarat today. Essentially "compromise" refers to an entire set of conditions under which displaced Muslims are being allowed to re-enter their original villages and neighbourhoods, without overt threat of physical harm. The most important "compromise" condition is of course, the withdrawal of legal cases against Hindus. But there is also an agreement that Muslims will live not as free citizens exercising their cultural and religious rights, but as second-class citizens according to terms determined by the Hindus. In some cases, this means cultural conditions such as lowering the volume of the *azaan* from the Mosque. In other cases it means the closure of all neighbourhood beef shops (beef here means buffalo meat, since cow slaughter is banned in Gujarat and many other states of India). For poor Muslims this means a complete change of customary diet since mutton (goat meat) is generally too expensive. These "compromise" agreements are both verbal and in many cases written. But even after having compromised there is no guarantee that the Muslims will be left free to live life as they did before.

In Jhalod in Dahod district, the following conditions were put forth before the community as early as 3rd March, 2002 when the violence was at its peak:[...]

1. No Muslim boy should come out of the house after 10 pm.
2. No *azaan* to be recited on the microphone in the *Masjid*.
3. Close Muslim student hostels.
4. Close slaughter houses on the highway.
5. When Hindu bands cross the *Masjid* (mosque) they will not stop playing.
6. No Muslim children should stand and watch a Hindu *barat* (wedding procession).

According to Urmila and Prakash, both Hindus from BV41 area in Baroda, who saved several Muslim families in their neighbourhood during the pogrom:

An entire new language has been created in Gujarat. The new word is "compro." Muslims will be allowed to come back only once they do "compro"—take back their complaints. Very few people have come back to this area. Out of 150 houses, people from about 20 have returned. Others have tried to go back, but Bajrang Dal cadres go there and don't let them. Yesterday the few people who have returned came to our house again because they were afraid. At 1am last night the BJP [election] victory procession came to our area. Now with the BJP government coming back to power there is no question of the Muslims returning to their homes. They will not dare.

In BV5 and BV6 [administrative districts], the Muslims have agreed to compromise in order to live there. The basic condition is that they drop all charges and discontinue court proceedings. The Muslim community has no choice but to agree because they are entirely dependent on the village for their livelihood and survival. In BV9 there has been a written compromise on stamp paper in the presence of senior district administration officials including the Collector, DSP [District Superintendent of Police], DDO [District Development Officer], TDO [Tribal Development Officer], and *mamlatdaar*. Nearly the entire Muslim community has signed this paper, with just a few exceptions. Now the "compromised" families are living in the village and doing their business. (Harish, paralegal worker, BO1 organization, Anand).

Kazi from BV17 in Anand district testified that most of the 32 pogrom affected families in his village have gone back except for five or six families who have filed complaints. But even those who have been allowed

back are not living like they did before. Although they have not been directly forbidden from returning to the village, they are being told they are not welcome indirectly. The shops they used to rent are not being leased to them again and there is constant tension that something will happen again.

[...]

In BV14 the Muslim community is under pressure to compromise if they want to be rehabilitated in their village. So far there is no compromise and the Muslims are still resisting. But as a result the Muslims have been forbidden to enter the village, operate businesses, or seek a means of livelihood within the village. Most families from this village are currently living in BV37 and BV38. Four to five families are living on the outskirts of BV14. Only three people have returned to BV14. They are the ones who have not filed any pogrom related cases.

[...]

In some cases individual District Collectors, *mamlatdaars*, and other district administration officials claim to have "helped" or "facilitated" people's return to their villages. Testimonies before the IJ team, however, found that this "help" consisted largely of negotiating 'compromises' discussed above. In a few cases the 'help' seemed to consist of little beyond verbal assurances of safety and the attempt to hold village" (International Initiative of Justice, December 2003, p. 55-57)

Resettlement and Rehabilitation

Assam: displaced Bodos and Adivasi see their wishes for rehabilitation realized with a state funded rehabilitation package (February 2002)

- Bodo and Adivasi displaced sheltering in camps expressed their willingness to return or resettle
- The State government stated that they were ready to fulfill these wishes and drew up a four-phase rehabilitation plan

"The Centre has agreed in principle to fund a Rs 33 crore rehabilitation package to resettle an estimated 180,000 Bodo and Adivasi refugees languishing in makeshift relief camps in Kokrajhar district alone since 1996 after they fled their homes in the wake of bloody ethnic riots between the two communities, authorities said on Tuesday.

During the past week, authorities in the district held talks with relief camp inmates who expressed their willingness to return to their villages or be resettled elsewhere provided the government pays them their promised one-time rehabilitation grant of Rs 10,000 per family and ensured their protection with proper security cover.

"We are making definite plans to send the relief camp inmates back or resettle them elsewhere. The State Government has already asked contiguous districts around Kokrajhar to identify land to resettle those inmates who had been encroachers on forest land when they fled in the wake of the violence," Kokrajhar Deputy Commissioner Ashish Kumar Bhutani told this writer by telephone today.

The administration has, in fact, made a four-phase rehabilitation plan for the 'refugees.' In the first phase, it would like those inmates who actually hail from revenue villages to return with the existing normal security

arrangements. The second phase will be for those inmates who would return with 'minimum additional security cover.'

The third phase will be for the inmates from really vulnerable villages where a police post will have to be put up. The last and final phase of resettlement will involve those inmates who were encroachers on forest land, and, therefore, cannot be asked to return and reoccupy those places." (The Sentinel, 20 February 2002)

Assam: rehabilitation of internally displaced returning from relief camps (April 2003)

- Returning families face severe economic and social problems
- The state government is making progress on allocation of land to returning families
- The government has requested the Lutheran World Service-India to implement a rehabilitation project

"LWSI has been approached by the District Commissioner (as well as the Sub Divisional Officer for Gossaigaon sub-division) to assist in rehabilitating those families who have returned to their own lands, by providing a variety of support – infrastructure (roads), housing, drinking water, education and livelihood. LWSI's Emergency Officer discussed the matter with government authorities during a recent visit to Assam, and further in-depth assessments were conducted by LWSI in late April.

There are requests coming from the riot victims and the government officials for rehabilitation that **LWSI should intervene substantially and without delay**, to address the severe economic and social problem being faced by the affected communities in the current situation. The families are pushed in to the current situation mainly due to their prolonged camp life with minimum support from outside. The government allocation of new land is in progress. LWSI plan to start the intervention where people resettled and extend to others as they move in to a permanent settlement.

Villages will be **selected** from the following list of recently rehabilitated villages and also from the existing camps, who are being rehabilitated into new areas within Kokrajhar district, based on further field investigations.

Gossaigaon Subdivision

Previous Relief Camp	Rehabilitated Village	Community	Total Families
Sapkata Adivasi	Matiapara No. 1	Santhal	138
	Matiapara 2	Santhal	83
	Sapkata 2	Santhal	59
	Ramdeo	Santhal	178
	Barasara	Santhal	157
	Bhorpur	Santhal	119
	Lalpur	Santhal	39
	Nayanagar	Santhal	110
Gurufela Adivasi	Kanupara 2	Santhal	170
	Kursumari	Santhal	110
Balagaon Adivasi	Ramdeo	Santhal	170
	Jirampur	Santhal	99
	Arinagar	Santhal	90
	Haltugaon	Santhal	33
	Balagaon Main	Santhal	110

Kasiabari Boro	Bhorpur	Boro	53
	Burasara	Boro	128
	Sindrijhara	Boro	36
	Ramdeo	Boro	143
Jambugiri Boro	Bhorpur	Boro	54
	Jambugiri	Rava	69
	Gaonsulka	Boro	95
	Jiaguri	Boro	172

Kokrajhar Sub-division

Athiabari Santhal	Athiabari	Santhal	77
	Longatula	Santhal	77
	Sarjomtola	Santhal	26
Harnaguri Boro Camp	Hornaguri	Boro	105
TOTAL			2476

[link to internal document]" (LWS-1, Appeal 2003)

Tripura: demands for a rehabilitation policy for conflict induced displacement (2001)

"Opposition Congress has demanded a specific rehabilitation policy and action plan for the internally displaced families, both Bengalis and tribals who had to leave their villages following militant atrocities and communal flare-ups. The demand came close on the heels of about 600 Bengali displaced families agitation programme at Rabindra Shata Barshiki Bhawan recently. Though the displaced families left the Rabindra Bhawan complex after about 30 hours of agitation when the West Tripura District Magistrate Manish Kumar and SP Anurag assured them of some immediate rehabilitation packages and security, Congress which was leading the stir, decided to carry on with the issue further. The issue expected to sway the public sentiment in favour of the opposition party to a great extent particularly in the rural areas where thousands of Bengali families have been rendered homeless and, virtually, a floating population. PCC president Birajit Sinha speaking at a press conference at the Congress Bhawan said, "there has been no action on the part of the State government for the internally displaced families in the State in the wake of insurgent attacks, massacres and communal riot; The government is overtly indifferent to the plight of these families." He claims that there are more than one lakh [100,000] displaced persons in Tripura. Nevertheless, in the wake of the sudden agitation programme which had all potential to snowball in other parts of the State turning the situation all the more grave, and took the government machinery off guard, the district administration decided to set up five camps for the 678 families displaced in the recent ethnic clashes besides providing with employment, food and medical facilities." (The Assam Tribune, 9 October 2001)

Gujarat: internally displaced face discrimination and inadequate rehabilitation measures (2002-2003)

- The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) concludes that relief and rehabilitation measures were inadequate

- There are reports of widespread discrimination against returning Muslims
- A long-lasting drought also complicates the rehabilitation process

"The Commission has taken note of the package of relief and rehabilitation measures announced by the State Government, including the contribution from the Prime Minister's Relief Fund. It has also noted that disbursement of assistance is "still under progress." The Commission is concerned that difficulties have arisen in obtaining death and ownership certificates and has referred to this matter earlier in these Proceedings. Delays have also occurred in assessing damages and paying compensation at an appropriate level. The Commission is aware of the immense amount of work that must be done to ensure proper relief and rehabilitation to those who have suffered. It would, however, urge that procedures be streamlined and expedited to deal with the issues mentioned above. Further, as long as inmates stay in the camps, there is need to ensure that this painful interlude in their lives is redeemed, in part at least, by the provision of work and training, by the maintenance of appropriate nutritional standards, by medical and psychiatric care adequate to the demands of the situation. Particular care should also be taken of the needs of widows, victims of gender-related crimes, and orphans. Further, while a number of special schemes have been announced for the victims of the violence, as indeed they should have been, this should not imply that they should not be eligible for the existing range of anti-poverty and employment schemes. In other words, there should be a convergence of Government schemes for their care.

(iii) The Commission has noted the measures being taken to re-settle the victims. Various reports indicate, however, that compensation for damaged property is often being arbitrarily set at unreasonably low amounts and that pressure is being put on victims that they can return to their homes only if they drop the cases they have filed or if they alter the FIRs that they have lodged. It is important to ensure that conditions are created for the return of victims in dignity and safety to their former locations. Only if they are unwilling to return to their original dwelling sites should alternative sites be developed for them. The response of the State Government of 12 April 2002 does not indicate whether it has acted upon the Commission's recommendation that HUDCO, HDFC and international funding agencies be approached to assist in the work for rehabilitation. The Commission would like a further response to this." (NHRC 31 May 2002)

There are allegations of widespread discrimination against returning Muslims:

"An economic and social boycott of the community was openly encouraged and continues in many parts of Gujarat to date. Agricultural land holdings of Muslims, small and large, have been taken over by dominant community and caste groups. The livelihoods of Muslims have been snatched away, and there is a clear-cut and ongoing design to economically cripple the community and drive out the community." (ALRC, 12 March 2003)

A long-lasting drought also delays reconstruction:

"Since last four years Gujarat has been experiencing drought situation. Due to scanty rainfall and high temperature the water bodies in the region have dried up. Non availability of sufficient water, timely curing of construction works has also been disrupted and progress of construction works." (ACT – LWS-I Final Narrative April 2003)

Gujarat: authorities have failed to provide housing for displaced people upon return (December 2003)

- The state government has failed to secure housing for displaced families
- Displaced families have moved in with surviving family members or stay in rented accommodation

- The few re-building efforts that are taking place are implemented by NGOs and local leaders within the affected community
- Many stay in Muslim majority areas in nearby towns during night and return to their village during the day

"But while the State has been unable to secure the safe return of survivors to their homes, it has also completely failed to either build or provide alternative housing. Affected families have been left with few options. Some have moved in with surviving family members. Others stay in rented accommodation. But with an economic boycott preventing Muslims from securing a regular income, their tenancy is constantly under threat,

[...]

Some victims resort to what most abandoned refugees do the world over - collecting old sheets of plastic, adding a little mud and calling it home,

[...]

Some Muslim migrant labourers have gone back to their respective states. Those with the means to pay for their forced re-location have left for the Southern States, and to Hyderabad city in particular. But many Muslims are still homeless. None of these large numbers of internal refugees have been economically rehabilitated—they have no jobs or no businesses in their new location—and in the current atmosphere of economic boycott, they have little hope of finding any viable work. Their small compensation amounts can only look after daily needs and rent for a short period of time. Once this compensation money runs out, they are looking at complete destitution and starvation of entire families.

[...]

Effective housing rehabilitation would have required large-scale re-construction of burnt and damaged homes in the survivors' original place of residence and alternative housing in new locations for those unable to return. In neither case has the government stepped forward. It has not even provided survivors with resources so that they can initiate their own re-building efforts. The few re-building efforts that the IJ team saw evidence of were undertaken entirely by NGOs and local leaders within the affected community. In PV5, for example, out of 49 Muslim families in the village, only seven remain. The rest who have been living in makeshift shelters in PV39 needed permanent shelters. Community leaders approached two Muslim NGOs to build houses. PO7 gave money for the land and PO8 has now given money for construction.

So acute is the continuing perception of being under threat that even NGOs and community leaders are wary of constructing new houses for fear that they may get damaged again.

[...]

In some cases, the government instead of housing displaced people has used the pogrom as an excuse to acquire land.

[...]

In addition to those who have been permanently displaced, a large number of Muslim families have now been compelled to maintain two shelters. Many are living in a permanent state of insecurity, where constant threats (verbal and physical) and periodic incidents of violence (like the burning of houses and business establishments) make it impossible for them to risk staying in their villages at night. So they live in the relative safety of Muslim majority areas in nearby towns, and return to their village during the day to keep an eye on the land, assets and property that may have survived the pogrom. In a situation where livelihoods have been destroyed, the pressure of constant travel and the burden of maintaining two shelters is crippling." (International Initiative of Justice, December 2003, p. 57)

Opportunities for livelihood for returning displaced Muslims is boycotted by local authorities (December 2003)

- Displaced Muslims have lost access to their previous occupation
- Those who have attempted to return are frequently denied access to their previous jobs
- Many have seen a take-over of their occupations and businesses by the majority population
- The ghettoisation has also meant shrinking financial possibilities for the Muslim community

"For the Muslims in rural areas who own some lands, a vital means of economic rehabilitation is to return to their villages, take control of this land and begin cultivation. But in case after case they have been denied the right to return. Even in villages where they have been allowed to return under the humiliating "compromise" conditions discussed earlier, the IJJ team heard many instances of Muslims still being terrorized. Many were unable to cultivate their lands, were denied the right to use common canals or bore wells for irrigation, or were simply forced to leave their land fallow in the face of threats of physical violence.

[...]

Muslims working in schools, factories, small industry and business establishments – some of them for decades—are also being denied work. The IJJ team heard numerous examples of textile factory workers, construction workers, steel furniture workers, mechanics, and teachers who were fired after years of service as part of the economic boycott. In each case, the excuses differ but the end result is the same. The few Hindus who have tried to stand by their Muslim colleagues have met a similar fate.

[...]

The IJJ team heard many testimonies of the ways in which the forcible exit of Muslims is being accompanied by a take-over of their occupations and businesses by Hindus. This phenomenon can be seen in transport businesses, cassette shops, petty vending on hand carts and other small businesses.

[...]

Ghettoisation thus takes place at various levels and has meant the shrinking of all kinds of spaces. It not only determines the areas in which people can live, but also affects the overall economic situation of the community as its logic dictates where jobs can be taken and what kinds of jobs are available. In the case of trades, it means relying on an already impoverished community with less buying power which leads to a cycle of further deprivation for the community as a whole. This also means a shrinking of the sense of belonging, security and dignity." (International Initiative of Justice, December 2003, pp. 59-61)

HUMANITARIAN ACCESS

General

India shuns international scrutiny and thereby impedes international humanitarian access to IDPs (January 2000- 2003)

- Most of Northeast India, host to some 177,000 IDPs, is off limits to foreigners
- US Committee for Refugees has tried to gain access to the IDPs but the Indian government has denied such access
- India also denies UNHCR access to most refugees and IDPs in India

"While there have been several governmental peace initiatives, multi-track diplomacy and Non-governmental Organisations (NGO) peace activities are at an incipient stage. Governmental policies do not encourage international interventions – direct or indirect – in any conflict resolution processes, though mediated developmental interventions are sanctioned." (Sahni, Faultlines, vol.12, 2003, p.1)

"Although India is a democracy, which suggests some level of transparency and accountability, the Indian government shuns international scrutiny or involvement in anything it considers an "internal af-fair." Most of Northeast India is off limits to foreigners (the British colonial administration was the first to limit access to the area;6 post-independence govern-ments have maintained the restrictions). [...]

The international community's lack of access to refugees and internally displaced persons in India was a major factor in the decision to produce this report. USCR and others have tried to gain access to these populations, but the Indian government has denied access. The Indian government's strong opposition to international scrutiny of its internal affairs, including refugee issues, is well known and long-standing. India is not a signatory to the UN's 1951 Refugee Conven-tion. It does, however, have a seat on UNHCR's Executive Committee (EXCOM). New Delhi continues to deny UNHCR access to most refugees in India even though it sits on the EXCOM. It does not permit the agency direct contact with Burmese Chin refugees in Mizoram State, Bhutanese refugees in northwest India, Tibetan refugees living in various regions, or the estimated 100,000 Sri Lankan refugees living in camps in the state of Tamil Nadu. India does permit UNHCR to assist urban refugees, most of whom live in New Delhi, and for some time permitted UNHCR to interview Sri Lankan refugees who were repatriating, but only at the point of departure." (USCR January 2000, p.4)

Absence of Indian request impeded humanitarian assistance to IDPs after Gujarat violence (2002)

"The Indian government has not as yet made a public request to the U.N. or international humanitarian organizations to provide assistance and protection to those displaced by the communal violence. Without such a request, it is difficult for U.N. and international humanitarian organizations to provide relief assistance to the internally displaced in Gujarat.

As of April 16 the Indian government had not made any requests to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), a leading U.N. agency in India, or to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (UNOCHA) to provide assistance to the relief camps. Officials from these

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