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DATABASE

**PROFILE OF INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT :
BANGLADESH**

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Norwegian Refugee Council/Global IDP Project
Chemin Moïse Duboule, 59
1209 Geneva - Switzerland
Tel: +41 22 799 07 00
Fax: +41 22 799 07 01
E-mail : idpsurvey@nrc.ch

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PROFILE SUMMARY

Bangladesh: land disputes perpetuate internal displacement

More than 500,000 people may be internally displaced in Bangladesh due to conflict over land and religious persecution. The majority (estimates range between 60,000 to 500,000) remains displaced in the aftermath of a 25-year long armed conflict in the Chittagong Hill Tracts in the southeastern part of Bangladesh. The conflict was provoked by government policies to forcibly settle Muslim populations from elsewhere in Bangladesh on land traditionally belonging to tribal groups. It formally ended in 1997 with the signing of a peace agreement which granted the Chittagong Hill Tracts a higher degree of self-governance. The peace agreement was contested from both the tribal and Bengali population in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. The election of the right-wing Bangladesh National Party in October 2001 has put the agreement on hold, as the new government feels it erodes Bangladeshi sovereignty. This has prompted new violence and disrupted the reintegration of those displaced. The election of the BNP also triggered further displacement as a wave of post-election violence led to Islamic fundamentalist groups forcing out up to 200,000 Hindus and other minority groups. According to one estimate, 20,000 remain internally displaced today.

Information about people displaced by conflict in Bangladesh is virtually non-existent. However, violence against minorities in Bangladesh is reportedly on the rise, increasing the potential for further displacement. The specific needs of the internally displaced can only be properly addressed if the UN, NGOs, and the donor community in Bangladesh start to monitor IDP situations in a more comprehensive manner.

Displacement of minorities following October 2001 elections

Bangladesh is one of the most densely populated countries in the world. The population is overwhelmingly Muslim, with a minority population making up 12.5 percent of its 130 million people according to a 1991 census. But throughout its short history, Bangladesh's minority population has been steadily diminishing as repressive policies have forced many people to leave. This is particularly true for the Hindu minority, many of whom have emigrated to India. At the time of the partition of India in 1947 Hindus made up 25 per cent of the population; today they count for less than 10 per cent. Hindus lost a large part of their lands during the communal riots in 1947, and continued to do so as a result of land reforms while the territory formed part of Pakistan (1947-1971). According to a local NGO, 30 percent of Hindu households have been affected by a Vested Property Act which functioned as a tool to dispossess and displace Hindus. The Act was only abolished under the former Awami League Government (Rehman, May 2003, HRF 12 December 2001, SATP 2003).

National elections on 1 October 2001 brought a massive victory to the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). In the aftermath of the elections, its supporters attacked Hindus and other religious minorities who traditionally have been supporters of the defeated government party, the Awami League and other opposition parties. Violence and threats, especially in rural areas, forced up to 200,000 people to flee (USCR 2003). There are no reliable estimates of the number remaining displaced today, although one source states a figure of 20,000 persons (USCR 2003; RI August 2003). Anecdotal information about displacement of minority groups from villages, as well as reports of continued and systematic intimidation and human rights violations, suggest that minorities continue to be displaced (ALRC 10 March 2003; SATP Assessment 2003). However, no information has been found about their present conditions.

Conflict background and causes of displacement in the Chittagong Hill Tracts

Due to the high population density and scarcity of land in Bangladesh, conflict often erupts between Bengali settlers and tribal groups who claim the right to their ancestral homeland. The settlers' issue has spawned numerous ethnic conflicts, most notably in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT). This has long been a problematic region of Bangladesh, firstly because of its strategic location between India and Burma and secondly because of its unique topography of thick forest (BBC 8 August 2003, Feeny 2001).

Prior to the creation of Bangladesh as a state in 1971, the population in the CHT was mainly composed of 13 different indigenous ethnic groups. These people differ from the rest of the Bangladesh population with regard to religion, culture and social customs. Until the 1960s, they were subjected to little interference from the central rulers. Since the early 1970s, pursuing an agenda of Bengali hegemony and provoked by autonomy demands from the indigenous populations, the government started a campaign to gain control of the CHT by deploying a large number of troops and changing the ethnic composition. Local indigenous populations were forcefully evicted from their land to make way for landless and poor peasant Muslim Bengalis from the delta region. This policy led to the creation of an armed indigenous insurgent group, *Shanti Bahini*, and the start of a 25-year civil war.

The government responded by forcefully accelerated its strategy of "Bengalizing" the CHT. In addition to a fast growing military presence in the region, Bengali settlers were also mobilized against the indigenous population. In addition to being forced off their land, the conflict itself, and the military atrocities which came with it, became a major cause for the displacement of indigenous groups. The affected populations sought refuge in neighbouring villages, urban areas or took refuge in the areas of dense forest. Tens of thousands also became refugees in the neighbouring Indian state of Tripura.

A peace agreement came into effect in December 1997, signed between the then ruling Awami League and the main indigenous political party, PCJSS (AI February 2000). The agreement brought some stability to the region, although indigenous groups expressed frustration over the slow pace of its implementation. National elections in October 2001 created new insecurity because the victorious BNP views the 1997 peace accord as a loss of Bangladeshi sovereignty. The BNP has since halted implementation of remaining provisions of the accord, prompting violence in 2002 between tribal groups and security forces. Open disagreement has also emerged between tribal factions that supported the peace agreement (primarily the PCJSS) and those that opposed it (particularly the United People's Democratic Front) (USCR 2003, SATP 2003).

Recently, tensions have re-emerged because of government decisions which are seen to favour Bengali settlers over the indigenous population. From July 2003, the government ceased the provision of rice rations to 65,000 tribal internally displaced persons, while continuing supplies to 26,000 Bengali settlers in villages near the Indian border. In another development, indigenous interest groups have protested against the government's decision to permanently settle more than 20,000 Bengali families in the CHT (OneWorld.Com, 20 October 2003). On 26 August violent clashes erupted between the indigenous population and Bengali settlers, reportedly displacing 1,500 indigenous people (COE-DMHA, 5 September 2003).

IDP figures in the Chittagong Hill Tracts

During the conflict period, the demography of the CHT changed drastically: from constituting only 9 percent of the population in 1947, the non-tribal percentage increased to 45 percent in the 1991 census (Sen 1998, p140). Information about the displacement of the indigenous population varies. Amnesty International has reported that more than 50 percent of the indigenous population fled the armed conflict (AI 2000, section 1), USCR estimates that some 64,000 indigenous people sought refuge in India while more than 60,000 others became internally displaced (USCR 2003).

The government task force created to supervise the rehabilitation process compiled in 2000 a list of around 128,364 internally displaced families (around 500,000 persons): 90,208 indigenous and 38,156 Bengali settler families (CHTC 2000, p 48). It should however be noted that it is unclear whether the government

task force figure refers to families or individuals. The figure has been used somewhat arbitrarily and the Global IDP Project has so far not succeeded in obtaining a confirmation regarding the actual number of internally displaced. The inclusion of settlers is also a controversial issue and opposed by representatives of the indigenous population. PCJSS, for example, does not consider non-tribal people internally displaced and demands that they be relocated outside the CHT (RAWOO 2000). There are no recent reports of reintegration or rehabilitation of the internally displaced population. It is therefore probable that the number of displaced remains fairly stable.

Return and reintegration

The peace agreement paved the way for the return of the indigenous populations who had sought refuge in India, but did not resolve the problem of internal displacement in the CHT. The land issue remains at the core of the current problems. While property rights of the tribal population have been regulated by local traditions and not registered in public records, the Bengali settlers obtained official documents certifying their ownership of the land.

Not surprisingly, many Bengali settlers, backed by the military and the main opposition party in Bangladesh, have refused to give up the land to the returning indigenous people. Based on available figures, it may be suggested that about 30,000 returning refugees have not been able to regain possession of their land – thus placing them in a situation of internal displacement upon return to the CHT (AI February 2000, section 5.2). However, in accordance with the peace accord, some Bengali settlers have lost their ownership rights to land belonging to returning indigenous refugees. Many Bengali settlers have therefore been required to relocate several times during recent years, and in some cases made landless.

While at least half of the refugees got their land back upon return from India, the large majority of the internally displaced are waiting for their case to be solved by a land commission that was created as part of the Peace Accord. The land situation for many of the internally displaced has therefore not changed significantly since the civil war ended in 1997.

Humanitarian Access

Although the peace accord caught the attention of the international community, the presence of international actors on the ground is limited – updated information about the situation in the CHT is thus scarce. Anecdotal information indicates that many of the internally displaced remain scattered in the remote and inhospitable hill and forest areas with limited livelihood and poor access to health care facilities. It has been reported that the civil war left a large amount of small arms in the CHT and that crime and social disintegration, including drug abuse, is an increasing problem among tribal youth (Feeny October 2001). Humanitarian access has improved over the last few years, although the region was once again closed off after the upsurge of violence in August 2003. As the only humanitarian organisation being allowed to operate, the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society delivered assistance to the displaced population (IFRC 5 November 2003). The European Union and several other donor governments have made implementation of the peace agreement a condition for funding of development programmes in the region. Apart from the land question, other parts of the peace agreement remain to be implemented, the most serious being that most of the temporary army bases have not been closed down.

Information about people displaced by conflict in Bangladesh is virtually non-existent and the issue has seemingly not been raised by the international community in Bangladesh. The specific protection needs of the internally displaced can only be properly addressed if the UN, NGOs, and the donor community in Bangladesh start to monitor IDP situations in a more comprehensive manner in the future.

For further information about displacement due to natural disasters, consult Reliefweb at www.reliefweb.org.

On forced evictions, see the web site of COHRE: www.cohre.org, or the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (ACHR): www.achr.net.

CAUSES AND BACKGROUND OF DISPLACEMENT

Background on displacement of minorities

Repression of the minority population has led millions to leave Bangladesh (2003)

- Bangladesh has a significant minority population, estimated in the 1991 census at 12.6 per cent of the total population of around 130 million
- Demographic changes have had a wide-ranging impact on minority communities in Bangladesh, often depriving them of land, forests and property
- The Hindu population, who has lived in a climate of repression since partition from India, decreased from 25 percent of the population in 1947 to an estimated 10.5 percent in 1991
- Millions of Hindus have emigrated or fled to India after having been deprived of property. Others have been dispossessed while in India
- The emergence of extremist parties in Bangladesh politics made the governments more sensitive to the interests of the Muslim majority

"Bangladesh has a significant minority population, estimated in the 1991 census at 12.6 per cent of the total. It includes Hindus (10.5 per cent), Buddhists (0.6 per cent), Christians (0.3 per cent), and other religious minorities (0.3. per cent). The Buddhists are largely concentrated in the Chittagong area while the other communities are spread across the country. Besides, there are 27 ethnic minorities, accounting for 1.13 per cent of the population, that are concentrated in the Chittagong Hill Tracts and the northern Bangladesh. Several analysts have argued that the population of ethnic minorities may be higher than the official figures.

[...]

The proportion of the largest religious minority, the Hindus, in the country's population has been going down. In 1941 they formed 28.3 p.c. of the population. In 1947, when the territory became part of Pakistan, the figure came down to 25 .c., and further down to 12.6 p.c. in 1991. The head count shows that while the population of Muslims rose by 219.5 per cent during 1941-91 that of Hindus increased only by 4.5 per cent. The demographic change in the area of concentration of the ethno-linguistic minority has been most pronounced. In the Chittagong Hill Tracts the indigenous population was 97 per cent in 1947, by 1991 it had declined to 51.5 per cent while the Bengali population had jumped from 2 p.c. to 48.5 per cent.

These demographic changes have had a wide-ranging impact on the rights and properties (especially land) of the minority communities. In the Chittagong Hill Tracts, the British had made special laws that allowed the indigenous tribes considerable autonomy under their chiefs. This included some autonomy in land regulations and administration of justice and declaration of excluded (from government's control) areas. By 1937 the powers of the tribal chiefs had been reduced and, more importantly, in that year the safeguard against immigration was withdrawn. The special administrative status of the Hill tracts was ended in 1964.

The government policy of setting Bengalis in the hill tracts deprived the indigenous tribes of substantial parts of their land and forests, and sparked an insurgency which continued for two decades and ended only with the signing of a peace accord with the government of Sheikh Hasina Wajid in December 1997. Saleem Samad notes the view of Philip Jain, a widely respected research scholar, that "the principal causes of the political and economic disturbances in the Adivasi areas are attacks on its soil, forests and local resources." And he quotes an indigenous community's leader who argued that "the nation-state, through the expansion of the market economy into the adivasi-inhabited areas, had seriously threatened their traditional rights." Of

late complaints of non-implementation of the peace accord have multiplied and the tribal people are reported to be up in arms against not only the government in Dhaka but also against their own leader who had signed the accord in good faith.

The Hindus lost a large part of their lands during the communal riots at the time of partition of India in 1947, through the land reforms in the early fifties, and as a result of migrations to India during riots in fifties and the sixties. While the territory formed part of Pakistan (1947-71), many Hindus also lost their lands and houses under the Enemy Property Act, which empowered the government to seize the property of all those who had migrated or had been deemed to have abandoned their country in periods of conflict with India. The replacement of the Enemy Property Act with the Vested Property Act sustained the process of depriving the Hindus of their property. According to Mohammed Tajuddin, "the Vested Property Act is being rampantly misused to appropriate the properties of Hindus by declaring them as migrants to India before 1965. The Hindu owner might not have migrated to India and may be a citizen of Bangladesh. The act has become a tool in the hands of the rural elites to dispossess and displace the Hindus." According to Saleem Samad, the Bangladesh parliament was informed in July 1991 that 827,705 acres of land was listed as vested property, and a Bengali daily reported in 1993 that 757,704 acres of land was under the Ministry of land, 28,768 houses were listed as vested property, and a few jute mills, textile mills and other industries were under the various ministries. Resistance by the Hindu community has brought some relief but the bulk of the loss to the minority is irreparable. The Awami League government did honour its pledge to repeal the Vested Property Act but left the matters of already seized properties undecided and the number of people seeking justice is quite large." (Rehman, May 2003)

"Attacks on Hindus in Bangladesh are not a new phenomenon. The community has suffered discrimination and harassment since the 1947 Partition of India. In 1965, following the Indo-Pakistan war, the then Pakistan Government introduced the Enemy Property (Custody and Registration) Order II of 1965. The Defence of Pakistan Rules identified the minority Hindus in then East Pakistan as enemies and dispossessed them of their properties.

[...]

After independence from Pakistan, the President of Bangladesh, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in his Order No. 29 of 1972 changed the nomenclature from Enemy Properties Act (EPA) to 'Vested Property Act' (VPA). The repression of minorities however did not end – this, in spite of the fact that Bangladesh's liberation war was an antithesis of the 1947 Partition that took place on religious lines. Linguistic and cultural similarities also do not seem to have induced efforts to ensure equal treatment of the country's Hindu minority. Rather Clause 2 of the Order stated, "Nothing contained in this Order shall be called in question in any court." In fact, one of the reasons for Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's continuation of the VPA was the forcible takeover of Hindu-owned lands by Awami League leaders during the Pakistani regime, and opposition to the repeal of the EPA.

The consequences of the continuation of the VPA have been devastating. The Association for Land Reform and Development (ALRD), a Dhaka-based NGO, estimates that a total of 10,48,390 Hindu households have been affected by the Vested Properties Act, and estimates that 1.05 million acres of land have been dispossessed. About 30 percent of the Hindu households (including those that are categorised as missing households) or 10 out of every 34 Hindu households are the victims of the VPA/EPA. These estimates, although based on various plausible assumptions, should be considered as sufficiently indicative of the gravity of the situation.

The Hindu minority suffers under Governments of both the Awami League and the Bangladesh National Party. The Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK), a prominent Bangladeshi NGO, in its report *'Power, Safety and the Minorities: A Brief Report'* states, " [i]n 1999, about 29 cases of forceful occupation of land and property of the Hindu community have been reported in different newspapers ... In the Sunamgonj district out of 21,000 acres of vested property land 16,000 acres have been illegally occupied; likewise in the Mymensingh district out of 29,722 acres of vested property land, 28,000 acres of land and 300 houses (vested property) have been occupied by one influential person... It matters little if the party is in power or in opposition. In 1995, 72 per cent of all vested property was acquired by members of (the) Bangladesh

National Party (BNP); and in 1998, 44 per cent was acquired by the Awami League and 32 per cent by the BNP."

Because of such atrocities, hundreds of thousands of Hindus have fled from Bangladesh and have taken shelter in neighbouring States of India. According to ALRD, "the implementation of Enemy Property Act/Vested Property Act has accelerated the process of mass out-migration of Hindu population from mid 1960s onward. The estimated size of such out-migration (missing Hindu population) during 1964-1991 was 5.3 million, or 538 persons each day since 1964, with as high as 703 persons per day during 1964-1971. If the above estimates are close to reality, then it would not be an exaggeration to conclude that the Enemy/Vested Property Acts acted as an effective tool for the extermination of Hindu minorities." (HRF 12 December 2001)

"[...], it seems that the key common denominator with regard to the problems described is the exploitation of religion for political ends. The involvement of extremist religious parties in Bangladesh politics and the use of Islam as a stepping stone to power has led to the adoption of a similar strategy by other political parties. Another consequence is that the State appears more sensitive to the interests of the Muslim majority. For non-Muslim minorities and ethnic groups, this is reflected in a number of obstacles to access to public-sector jobs, especially positions of responsibility, and lukewarm financial support for their religious community institutions and the teaching of their religion in public schools. The same approach appears to be the reason for the delays in the full implementation of the Peace Accord in favour of the ethnic communities of the Chittagong Hill Tracts." (CHR 13 February 2001)

Causes of displacement related to elections in October 2001

The national elections on 1 October 2001 started a wave of violence against the minority population (2001-2003)

- Minorities face a much harsher environment than before as violence in general has become widespread and much of it appears to be religiously and politically motivated
- Systematic attacks - rape, looting and burning - on Hindu communities across the country started after the Bangladesh National Party (BNP) won the elections in October 2001
- An unknown number of Hindu families (USCR claims up to 200,000) fled their homes and sought refuge in safe areas or crossed into India
- Women were particularly targeted – in many cases rape of female family members made it impossible for the family to stay in their villages
- There are reports of continued violence and displacement of the minority population

"The present wave of attacks was triggered by the 2001 elections when violence flared across Bangladesh. The Human Rights Congress for Bangladeshi Minorities estimated that dozens of people were killed, more than 1,000 women from minority groups were raped and several thousand people lost their land in the three months around the election." (Guardian Unlimited, 21 July 2003, "Britain ignores Bangladeshi persecution")

"In the weeks following the 1 October 2001 general elections, Bangladesh witnessed an outburst of systematic attacks on the minority Hindu community across the country, in addition to attacks on activists of the freshly ousted Awami League.

By 8 October 2001, at least 30 people had been killed and more than 1,000 others injured. Their houses were torched, ransacked and in many cases seized, women were raped, and temples were desecrated.

The Hindu-dominated areas in Barisal, Bhola, Pirojpur, Satkhira, Jessore, Khulna, Kushtia, Jhenidah, Bagerhat, Feni, Tangail, Noakhali, Natore, Bogra, Sirajganj, Munshiganj, Narayanganj, Narsingdi, Brahmanbaria, Gazipur and Chittagong were the worst hit.

Many Hindu families [...] reportedly fled their homes and sought refuge in areas considered 'safe.' The Bangladesh Observer reported that at least 10,000 people of the minority community from Barisal district had left their homes following attacks by activists of the fundamentalist Jamaat-i-Islami party and had taken shelter in neighbouring Gopalganj district, the electorate of the former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Many others fled to the Indian states of Tripura and West Bengal" (HRF March 2002)

"Post election violence and oppression against minority has displaced more than 15 thousands minority families in Barishal and Bagerhat districts. The affected upazilas (sub-districts) are Gournadi, Ujipur, Agailjara, Mullahat and Chitalmari. Hindu minorities from those upazilas are being forced out of their land and taken shelter at various villages in Ramshil upazila under Khotalipara districts. The displaced minorities have taken shelter to various schools and colleges at Ramshil bazaar and their relatives in those areas.

Islamic fundamentalists have initiated a rain of terror forcing minorities to endure living in a nightmare condition in those areas. Janakantha correspondence Mr. Mojammeel Haq after visiting the affected areas today (Tuesday) described that the situation is far grave than the atrocities of 1971. Those family even not displaced in 1971, now they are facing far severe condition and being forced out of their own native land. The oppressed minority reported that due their support for Awami league in the election, BNP supporters went on rampage setting ablaze houses and raping women in Chadshi, Bahadurpur, Barthi, Pingolkati, Ashukati, Tarki Bandar, Narchira, and Sharikal under Gournadi and Rangtha, Bakal, Rajihar, Chingatia, Ramshidha, Dhanduba, Jayrampatti under Agailjara upazila and everywhere in Ujipur." (HRCBM, 10 October 2001)

Women were particularly targeted – in many cases rape of female family members made it impossible for the family to stay in their villages:

"By a letter dated 10 December 2002, the Special Rapporteur informed the Government that she had received information that more than 2,000 women in Bangladesh between the ages of 7 and 80 had been raped, gang-raped, beaten and subjected to degrading treatment by fundamentalist groups following the 1 October 2001 elections. Much of the violence allegedly took place in small villages, and the perpetrators in many cases were identified as activists of the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) or the group Jamat-e-Islami. It is alleged that the police and the civil administration have not provided protection for the victims, and that no judicial inquiry has been made regarding these incidents. In particular the Special Rapporteur advised the Government that she had received information regarding the following cases." (CHR, Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, 14 January 2003)

There are reports of continued violence and displacement of the minority population. Persecution of minorities in Bangladesh was also reported to the Commission on Human Rights in 2003:

"[...] the buildings of religious minorities were looted and destroyed, land seized, and their community members raped, beaten, harassed, forcefully converted and exiled in the wake of the October 2001 general election. To date many continue to be victims, living as internally displaced refugees who have not been properly compensated for their losses. Hindu minorities have been forced to pay special taxes to live in their own homes, but law enforcement authorities have reportedly failed to respond and so the violence against religious minorities has gone on unabated." (ALRC, 10 March 2003)

"Soon after the last general election which brought Khaleda Zia back into power there were widespread reports of violence against religious minorities. The opposition alleged genocide though its protests sounded somewhat exaggerated. Nevertheless, few discount the view that life for the minorities has become much harsher than before. The situation is unlikely to change for the better, considering the course the state

has adopted. Bangladesh may not be as conservative as Pakistan but it has also created many of the obstacles to the realisation of minorities' rights noticed in Pakistan." (Rehman, May 2003)

"Violence in general has become widespread and much of it appears to be religiously and politically motivated. The Society for Environment and Human Development (SEHD), a prominent Bangladeshi NGO, claimed: "The intimidation of the minorities which had begun before the election, became worse afterwards." Amnesty International reported in December 2001 that Hindus — who now make up less than 10 per cent of Bangladesh's population of 130 million — in particular have come under attack. Hindu places of worship have been ransacked, villages destroyed and scores of Hindu women are reported to have been raped." (SATP, Assessment 2003)

"In Bangladesh, over a year has passed since the buildings of religious minorities were looted and destroyed, land seized, and their community members raped, beaten, harassed, forcefully converted and exiled in the wake of the October 2001 general election. To date many continue to be victims, living as internally displaced refugees who have not been properly compensated for their losses. Hindu minorities have been forced to pay special taxes to live in their own homes, but law enforcement authorities have reportedly failed to respond and so the violence against religious minorities has gone on unabated." (ALRC, 10 March 2003)

"Serious attacks on and persecution of religious minorities by Islamic fundamentalists are increasing, [shows] a detailed dossier on 18 months of persecution of religious minorities

[...]

Evidence is emerging that the oppression of minorities is becoming systematic. Bangladesh, which is 85% Muslim but has a long tradition of tolerance to religious minorities, is, say local organisations, being pushed towards fundamentalism by the Jamaat-e-Islami, which is growing rapidly in rural areas with the deepest poverty and runs two key ministries.

"This is like a silent revolution. We are returning to the dark ages," a leading lawyer said, asking not to be named.

[...]

In the village of Fhainjana, a mob of 200 fundamentalists recently looted 10 Christian houses, allegedly assaulting many women and children. Christians were seriously beaten and others molested after refusing to give money to thugs in the village of Kamalapur, near Dhaka. In Deuatala Bazaar, gangs of young men with knives told Hindus to leave. Hundreds fled.

Many villages are said to be now empty of minorities. Elsewhere, Hindus have been burned alive and gangs have desecrated temples." (Guardian Unlimited, 21 July 2003, "Rape and Torture empties the villages")

Background of displacement in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT)

Geographical overview of the Chittagong Hill Tracts and ethnic composition of the population

- Most of the CHT was barely habited before the large scale in-migration in the 17th and 18th century.
- About 13 indigenous ethnic groups, collectively known as the Jumma people, live in the CHT area
- The indigenous people in the CHT differ ethnically, culturally and religiously from the rest of the population in Bangladesh

- In 1947, the share of indigenous population in the CHT exceeded 90 percent. The last census in 1991 concluded that the indigenous population amounted to 51% of the total population while 49% were non-indigenous Bengalis
- CHT enjoyed limited self-government during British rule, but the Pakistan withdraws this special status in 1963

"The Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) in southeastern Bangladesh covers an area of approximately 5,093 square miles, about 10 per cent of the total land area of Bangladesh. It borders India to the north and Myanmar (Burma) to the east. It consists of several valleys running in a northwest to south easterly direction, with ridges rising to 3,000 feet. This upland, forested area is in stark contrast to the landscape of other parts of Bangladesh, which is flat and subject to regular monsoon flooding. The area is relatively rich in natural resources, with fruit growing there in abundance. There is also timber, bamboo and gas, and possibilities for oil exploration have been actively pursued in recent years." (AI February 2000, section 2)

"However, the region is much poorer than the rest of the country. Per capita income is 40 percent lower than the national average. The literacy rate is also lower due to the limited income of parents, poor access to schools, a shortage of teachers and the fact that children are kept at home for household and income-generating activities." (ADB 26 October 2000)

"Prior to the creation of Bangladesh in 1971, the population of the area consisted almost entirely of people from 13 different indigenous tribes. The tribal people who differ significantly from the majority population of Bangladesh are of Sino-Tibetan descent, have a distinctive appearance with Mongoloid features and are predominantly Buddhists, with small numbers of Hindus. They differ linguistically and in their social organization, marriage customs, birth and death rites, food, agriculture techniques and other social and cultural customs from the people of the rest of the country." (AI February 2000, section 2)

"About 13 indigenous ethnic groups, collectively known as the Jumma people, live in the CHT area. The three largest groups are the Chakma, the Marma and the Tripura. The total population of the CHT, in 1991 census, was 974,445 of which 51,43% were indigenous Jumma people and 48,57% were non-indigenous Bengalis. At the time of the independence of India in 1947, only 9% of the population of the CHT was non-indigenous." (UNPO 1997, web page)

"The tribal people have been living in the CHT for a long time but they are not the original settlers in that area. Most of the CHT was not habited or barely habited by people till the large scale in-migration in the 17th and 18th century. The Chakmas moved into the CHT with their King when they were driven out by the Marma King of Arakan (most of which lies in Mianmar now). Later on, the Marma people were also driven out of Arakan by the Mughols in 1756 (Hutchinson, 1906). Other tribes of the CHT have similar history." (The Independent 30 April 2000 "People versus Power")

"... non-governmental sources (particularly ethnic communities) noted that under the British administration, the Chittagong Hill Tracts had enjoyed a special autonomous status under which the sale or transfer of land to non-indigenous populations was prohibited. After Pakistan gained independence in 1947, the region lost that special status, particularly as a result of a constitutional amendment introduced in 1963. The Government authorized and encouraged the settling of non-indigenous populations in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, as well as the transfer of land ownership and other resources to non-indigenous populations.

[...]

This policy was pursued after Bangladesh gained independence, despite the demands made in 1972 by indigenous people for the restoration of the Chittagong Hill Tracts' special status. From that point onward, land-related conflicts between the indigenous people and the newly arrived Bengalis (virtually all of whom were Muslim, unlike the indigenous population, which was largely non-Muslim) represented a source of conflict with the Government." (UN GA, 9 August 2000, para 69)

The construction of the Kaptai dam uproots the indigenous population (1957-1963)

- Some 100,000 Chakma tribals, 18,000 families, lose their homes and land during construction of the Kaptai dam
- adequate compensation for lost land
- The Kaptai dam flooded 40% of all arable land in the CHT
- Over 40,000 Chakma tribals cross the border into India

"The origin of the problems in the Chittagong Hill Tracts is believed to be the completion of a dam at Kaptai near Rangamati between 1957 and 1963 when the area was administered by Pakistan. At least 54,000 acres of settled cultivable land, mostly farmed by the Chakma tribe, were lost in 1957 when the government began the construction of the Karnaphuli hydroelectric project. Over 400 square miles of land were submerged with far-reaching effects on the economy and life-style of the tribal people there. Some 100,000 people lost their homes and prime agricultural lands. Compensation for lost land was inadequate and over 40,000 Chakma tribals crossed the border into India where the majority have sought Indian citizenship." (AI February 2000, section 2)

"During construction, the dam flooded some 655 km² area, which included about 22,000 ha of cultivable land – 40% of all such land in the CHT. The lake took away homes of 18,000 families and displaced 100,000 tribal people, of which 70% were Chakma (GOB, 1975). The dam also flooded the original Rangamati town and the palace of the Chakma Raja (King). To make things worse, a rather casual attempt was made to rehabilitate this large group of people – nearly 25% of the local population. Officially, the majority of the displaced people were rehabilitated on the upper reaches of the rivers Kasalong and Chengi during the early phase of the project (construction of the dam began in 1957). In reality, the newly created "environmental refugees" were resettled in the low-lying areas of Langdu, Barkal and Bhaghaichari thanas (thana is an administrative unit under a district) as per the advice of the project officials. However, much of this land area went under water by 1962 when the construction was completed. As a result many were displaced for the second time and this had naturally aggrieved the tribal population as they received little if any of the benefits of the dam. Many of the displaced people had left the country, some estimates say, 40,000 of them went to the sparsely populated states of Mizoram, Tripura, Assam and Arunachal of India. Another 20,000 might have gone to then Burma (Samad, 1994). The Chakma people call this event Bara Parang (the great exodus).

[...]

The issue of resettlement of the displaced people was handled poorly because of a number of reasons. First, there was a general lack of understanding of the tribal culture by the Government of Pakistan and the donor agencies (the Dam was funded by the USAID). They thought that these were "nomadic" people and it was unnecessary to design a permanent resettlement program for them. In reality, the tribal people did move from hill to hill but they had a long cycle of jhum cultivation. Before the inundation of the Karnaphuli Valley, the average cycle of jhum cultivation was 7 to 10 years, and in some cases 15-20 years. After the flooding that took away 40% of the fertile agricultural land, this cycle became reduced to only 3-5 years due to loss soil fertility caused by intensive agriculture. This pressure was further increased by rapid population growth during the 1960s and 1970s in the entire CHT area. The other important reason for not having an adequate relocation scheme was simply the lack of adequate budgetary provision. Initially, some compensation was paid for the loss of land, trees and structures but there was little money available for rehabilitating 100,000 people. The majority of them were taken to the Kasalong Valley where a reserved forest was partly cleared to create land for these people. When the water level of the reservoir rose after completion of the dam in 1962, much of this land went under water and the government simply gave up all efforts to resettle these people again, thus contributing to the "Bara Parang." The large scale displacement of the tribal people caused by the Kaptai Dam is certainly one of the important factors that has contributed to the worsening of the relationship between the tribal and Bengali populations in the CHT. In the later part of the 1960s, the rate of influx of the Bengalis increased due to setting up of some major industrial

infrastructures like the Karnafuli Pulp and Paper Mill and administrative offices of various departments of the government." (The Independent 30 April 2001, People versus Power...)

Armed confrontations between government forces and local insurgents start in the mid-1970s

- After the independence of Bangladesh, the government rejects tribal calls for autonomy of the CHT
- This leads to the creation of an insurgent group called the PCJSS - the Chittagong Hill Tracts People's Solidarity Association with an armed wing called Shanti Bahini
- During the 1970s and 1980s a massive influx of non-indigenous settlers in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) ends in violent conflict
- By 1985, the Bengali population amounts to almost 50% of the indigenous population
- At the height of the conflict, almost one third of the Bangladesh army was deployed in the CHT
- After 1980, ten major massacres by Bengali settlers and the security forces led to an exodus of the tribal population

"In December 1971, Bangladesh became independent after a nine-month civil war between the Pakistan army and the insurgency known as *Mukti Bahini* (liberation forces) led by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Some influential figures in the tribal population supported Pakistan while others complained of being excluded from participation in the war of independence. This nonetheless created the perception that the tribal people were against the independence of Bangladesh.

In February 1972, a tribal delegation called on Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to accept four basic demands: autonomy for the Chittagong Hill Tracts, together with provisions for a separate legislative body; retention of the provision of the 1900 Regulation in the Bangladesh Constitution which allowed a form of self government; the continuation of the offices of the traditional tribal chiefs; a constitutional provision restricting amendment of the 1900 Regulation; and the imposition of a ban on the influx of non-tribals into the area.

These demands were rejected, and the 1972 Constitution of Bangladesh made no provision for any special status for the Chittagong Hill Tracts. On 7 March 1972 Manobendra Narayan Larma, together with his brother Bodhi Priyo Larma, formed *Parbattya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samiti* (PCJSS - the Chittagong Hill Tracts People's Solidarity Association).

Its armed wing, *Shanti Bahini* (peace force) was also formed in 1972, although it did not become militarily active until mid-1970s when it began to attack military and paramilitary personnel and their bases in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, as well as non-tribal settlers, resulting in hundreds of deaths and the abduction of foreign nationals for ransom money." (AI February 2000, section 2)

"With the 1971 separation of Bangladesh from Pakistan, the Bengali government in Dhaka began a push to "Bengalize" the Chittagong Hill peoples. The Bengali invasion was stepped up in 1979 by Bangladesh's active encouragement of settlers to move into the area. By 1980, Dhaka had received enough international assistance (US AID, Sweden, World Health Organization, UNICEF) to provide the settlers with transportation, money, a six month food supply, and 2.5 to 5 acres of land for each family. In 1982, an additional 250,000 Bengalis were brought into the area. By 1985, the Bengali population amounted to 400,000 settlers and 40,000 army personnel, almost 75 percent of the original number of the area's inhabitants and owners." (Nietschmann 1986)

"As the struggle gathered strength, the government began relocating Bengalis in the CHT. About 400,000 Bengalis were sent to the CHT, both to ease the pressure on the land in other parts of Bangladesh and to dilute the dominance of the hill people in CHT. In 1975, the struggle went underground. Nearly a third of the Bangladesh army was deployed in the CHT as the government looked for a military solution. As armed confrontation between the security forces and Shanti Bahini escalated, communal harmony between the tribals and 'new' Bengali settlers deteriorated further. Ten major massacres by Bengali settlers and the security forces since 1980, led to an exodus of the tribal population across the border to Tripura in India." (SAFHR, April 2000)

"... land related conflicts between the indigenous people and the newly arrived Bengalis (virtually all of whom were Muslim, unlike the indigenous population, which was largely non-Muslim) represented a source of conflict with the Government. The military solution chosen by the Government led to violence, especially after 1980, between the armed forces, associated with the new Bengali population, and the indigenous people, especially the organization Chittagram Jana Samhati Samiti (PCJSS) and its armed division, Shanti Bahini." (UN GA, August 2000, para. 69)

"Violent army operations in the Chittagong Hill Tracts began in March 1980 when it was reported that 22 soldiers were ambushed by the *Shanti Bahini* in the village of Kaukhali west of Rangamati where Bengali families were being resettled. The army retaliated by deliberately firing on two groups of unarmed tribal people killing a number of villagers after they were ordered to line up.(3) From then on, Bengali settlers began to attack the tribal people apparently at the instigation of the army or in conjunction with the operations of army personnel. The army reportedly recruited armed groups known as Village Defence Parties (VDP - also called village defence police) from the new settlers and provided them with firearms to resist the *Shanti Bahini*. Official figures indicate that more than 8,500 rebels, soldiers and civilians have been killed during two decades of insurgency. The number of civilians killed is estimated at 2,500." (AI February 2000, section 2)

Causes of displacement in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT)

Atrocities against the indigenous population leads to substantial displacement (1975-1992)

- The tribal population either fled to India or were internally displaced to other towns in the forests
- The land of the displaced population was often confiscated

The Government of Bangladesh itself claimed "failure of national integration" and "lack of socially sensitive and compensatory development policies during the most periods of post-Independence years" as reasons for the deepening conflict between Bengali settlers and the indigenous population:

"The country's otherwise remarkable homogeneity in terms of language and culture notwithstanding, there has been a growing dissent in case of ethnic minorities, especially the hill people living in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT). This was partly due to the failure of national integration, which did not allow much room for the non-Bengali people in the imagined community of the Bengali nation. But, the matter was made worse by the lack of socially sensitive and compensatory development policies during the most periods of post-Independence years. Attempts were made to deal with the issue of inter-ethnic conflict as a "law and order" problem leading to growing militarization of the conflict itself. The government had to spend a sizable share of the defence budget on peacekeeping operations in the CHT; the response of the *shantibahini* (the military wing of the dissenting ethnic groups and organizations) to counter these attempts only reinforced the overall tendency towards militarization. All these processes led to a large number of

internally displaced persons and further widened the chasm between the Bengali and the hill people." (UN May 2001, Presentation by the Government of Bangladesh)

"... more than two decades of protected [*sic*] conflict in the form of insurgency and counter-insurgency operation in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, south-eastern part of Bangladesh displaced more than 50% of hill peoples' population. During the conflicting period at least twelve massacres upon the hill peoples were committed by Bangladesh armed forces⁷. As result of this conflict a kind of centrifugal and centripetal tendency of population displacement was observed. Just to avoid the conflict and atrocities of government military some groups of hill people silently moved toward the small towns and administrative centers while others moved toward the deep forest and compel to live a kind of nomadic existence. In 1986 at the height of the conflict 60,000 of them had become refugee in Tripura state of India." (Chakma February 2000)

"People displaced between August 1975 and August 1992 are considered IDPs. Some 60,000 tribal people were internally displaced during this period. They included people whose villages were attacked, whose neighbours were massacred and whose homes were burnt during army operations. They left everything behind for safer areas moving to neighbouring villages, to relatives or started anew in the forest interior. The settlers confiscated their land and in many instances obtained official certificates of ownership. Internally displaced tribals represent a significant portion of the tribal population and their rehabilitation will continue to be a major task." (AI February 2000, para. 5.3)

A peace agreement that was signed in 1997, has not resolved the displacement issue (2000-2003)

- Important parts of the peace agreement was never implemented
- The peace agreement is opposed by the winner party of the elections in October 2001: the Bangladesh National Party, which says the accord represents a loss of Bangladesh sovereignty
- Several indigenous groups claim that the Peace Accord does not give a sufficient degree of autonomy to the region
- Key institutions like the CHT Regional Council only became operational in May 1999
- The Land Commission, essential for the economic rehabilitation of returning refugees and internally displaced, was only established on 6 April 2000 - no available information has confirmed that the Land Commission is presently active
- Restitution of land from Bengali settlers to the displaced tribal population remains at the core of the conflict
- Prior to the 2001 elections, the Awami League government passed a CHT's Land Dispute Settlement Commission Act which is strongly opposed by the Jumma population

The full text of the peace agreement is available at the Bangladesh Government internet site: http://www.bangladeshgov.org/pmo/agreement/agre_ind.htm

See the document [Background Information on the Peace Agreement](#) for more extensive information on the peace agreement -available in the list of sources below.

"Although the [Awami League] government has amended existing laws to provide for the implementation of the peace accord, the accord is facing a number of difficulties which require urgent and continued attention. The first one is the slow pace of implementation by the government. Concern over this has been

raised by the international community, by the human rights groups in and outside Bangladesh, and by the tribal people of the Chittagong Hill Tracts, at times threatening to derail the peace process altogether.

The second issue is that the accord is not recognized by the [then] main opposition party, the BNP led by Begum Khaleda Zia. Although the process of achieving peace in the Chittagong Hill Tracts began at the time of the BNP government, the BNP has distanced itself from the accord which was finalized under the Awami League government, amid fears that should a future BNP government take office, it may seek to repeal the Awami League enacted legislation that uphold the accord.

Sadly, the peace accord has like many other important issues in the country been caught in the cross confrontation of Bangladesh party politics. The government has not missed the opportunity to utilize it as a mark of its own success; and the opposition has not missed the opportunity to decry the accord as a mark of the government's failure.

The BNP has on occasions staged street protests against the peace accord which it considers to be a loss of Bangladesh sovereignty. The BNP's boycott of the parliament meant that it did not take part in the debate or the vote on the accord related legislation. A move to guarantee the accord through constitutional provisions would have gone some way to allay fears of its arbitrary derailment in the future, but the government has not moved in that direction.

A third issue is the position of the disaffected political groups in the Chittagong Hill Tracts who consider the accord to have failed to respond to their aspiration of full autonomy. These include *Pahari Gano Parishad* (PGP or Hill Peoples Council), *Pahari Chattra Parishad* (PCP or Hill Students Council) and Hill Women Federation (HWF) who argue that the accord has failed to "reflect the genuine hopes and aspirations of the peoples of the Chittagong Hill Tracts and has failed to fulfill the main demands of the Jumma people namely, constitutional recognition to the national ethnic minorities of the CHT with guarantee for Full Autonomy [sic], restoration of traditional land rights, demilitarisation of the area, and withdrawal and resettlement of the Bengali settlers in the plain land." (AI February 2000, section 5)

"A vocal section of the Jumma people, in particular the leaders of the Hill People's Council, Hill Students' Council and Hill Women's Federation, however, felt that the agreement was unacceptable given that the main demands of the JSS and the Jumma people had not been fulfilled and the accord could thus not be considered as a basis for further developments in their favour. They felt betrayed and decided to continue their struggle for 'full autonomy'. Whereas before the Jumma people had been more or less united in their struggle for their demands as formulated by the JSS and the main contradiction had been between them and the Bangladesh government and Bengali settlers, now the Jumma people stand divided among themselves.

At the other end of the scale, the Bengali settlers (who came to the CHT through secret government transmigration programmes) and the mainstream opposition parties have rejected the Peace Accord, arguing that the agreement is unconstitutional, endangers the sovereignty of the country and fails to safeguard the rights of the Bengali settlers. The main national opposition parties staged a number of protest marches and demonstrations against the accord during the first few months after it was signed." (CHTC 2000, pp.12-13)

"The Peace Accord provided for establishment of a Land Commission to resolve the land disputes within three years. However, between 1997 and 2001, then Awami League government did little to set up a Land Commission. One day before handing over power to the caretaker government prior to the 2001 general elections, the Awami League government passed the CHTs Land Dispute Settlement Commission Act, 2001. The government did not even consult the CHTs Regional Council.[...] Indigenous Jumma peoples have rejected the CHTs Land Dispute Settlement Commission Act, 2001, among others, because of (i) the arbitrary powers of the Chairperson to provide final judgement in the event of lack of consensus among other members; (ii) the exclusion of Jumma refugees who returned to the CHTs under the 1992 repatriation agreement from the ambit of the Land Commission; and (iii) the exclusion of the internally displaced Jummās from the scope of the Act. These provisions undermine the CHTs Peace Accord.[...]" (AITPN, January 2003, p.4)

The situation in the Chittagong Hill Tracts remains tense and resentment against the government is growing (2000-2003)

- The post-armed-conflict situation is characterized by many uncertainties, tensions and diverging interests
- The peace agreement also activated disagreements and conflicts within or among the tribal groups
- In 1998, Jumma activists who want full autonomy of the CHT launched a new political party, the United Peoples' Democratic Front (UPDF)
- The government of Bangladesh brands the 'full autonomy' activists as 'terrorists'
- Resentment against the peace agreement grew further during year 2002 due to a lack of initiative in solving the outstanding problems of the Chittagong Hill Tracts
- PCJSS – the biggest political organization of the hill tribes - has launched an agitation programme for the full implementation of the peace agreement

"The post-armed-conflict situation is characterized by many uncertainties, tensions and diverging interests – between the national government and the regional council, between larger ethnic groups and smaller ethnic groups, between rival factions in the leadership, and between the indigenous groups and the Bengali settlers within local communities. In the Chittagong Hill Tracts there is general distrust—of the national government's strategies for developing the region, and of the continuing presence of the military. These parties are thought to be interested only in exploiting the rich resources of the region, which include timber, oil and tourism. There is a general feeling among the indigenous people that they should be consulted in the decision-making related to the peace process and to development policies." (Rawoo 2000, p.18)

"The challenge is not only to ensure harmonious development in relation to the CHT and the rest of the country, the Bengalis and the hill people but also within the complex and diverse entity called the hill people. While the Bengali versus tribal divide is often magnified, the latter is as well sharply divided not only vertically but also horizontally. The hill people of CHT, divided into thirteen tribal and three religious groups, are not at the same level of development. While some of them surpass even the Bengalis in terms of literacy rate, some others are yet to be brought to the modern way of life and modern economic activities. Due to the central conflict of the region along the Bengali-Tribal dividing line, conflicts within or among the tribal groups remained suppressed. Once the central conflict is somehow contained or in the process of resolution, the tribal people will have to compete among themselves for the scarce resources and limited opportunities, the conflicts within or among the tribal groups could surface. The process of development will also have to deal with the issue that is quite a sensitive one." (Daily Star Features, 4 August 2000 – "Peace Building in Chittagong Hill Tracts")

" On 26 December 1998, the Jumma activists who had declared they would continue the struggle for 'full autonomy' launched a new political party, the United Peoples' Democratic Front (UPDF).

[...]

The government of Bangladesh brands the 'full autonomy' activists as 'terrorists' and uses their existence to justify the continuing presence of the military in the CHT.

[...]

The situation in the CHT is far from peaceful, not only as a result of government repression of UPDF but also as a result of the conflict between the JSS and the UPDF and their allied organisations. This conflict has become highly polarised. There are reports of serious in-fights between the two Jumma groups. Ordinary Jumma villagers are often caught in the middle of these two groups. In one village, Jummas told representatives of The Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission that the situation had deteriorated for them because now they have to pay 'taxes' for taking bamboo and other products out of their area to three different groups - Government officials, the JSS and the UPDF." (CHTC 2000, pp. 30,32,34)

"[During meetings with the UN Special Rapporteur for Religious Freedom and indigenous community representatives in May 2000], all indigenous community representatives consulted by the Special Rapporteur lamented the obstacle, and the delays that had been built up. Doubts had even been expressed as to whether the Government genuinely desired to make the Accord succeed. Of primary concern in this context was the fact that the government had not transferred to the Regional Council the majority of the powers provided for under the Accord, thus rendering the Council inoperative. As a result, the government continued to administer the Chittagong Hill Tracts directly (through its local representatives, the Deputy Commissioner and the army). Mention was also made of the delay in the setting up of the Land Commission (two and a half years) and in the return of land ; the fact that a large part of the military presence had been maintained ; and the fact that rehabilitation of displaced persons and refugees was still incomplete. It was further noted that Bengalis continued to be settled in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. Although this process had not been planned by the Government, it did benefit from assistance provided by local authorities (distribution of food rations and allocation of housing) and Muslim extremists. Because of the lack of arable land in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, it was stated that apart from the Bengalis who were settled during the British period, and the few Bengalis who had settled legally, the rest of the Bengali population should return their land to the indigenous population and be resettled outside the region. It was explained that this was a precondition for any reconciliation between the authorities and the Bengalis, because the land was key to the survival and identity of the indigenous peoples in the region, and the essential and fundamental means for guaranteeing their survival and identity." (UN GA August 2000, para. 71)

"Resentment against the Chittagong Hill Tracts Treaty grew further during year 2002 due to a lack of initiative in solving the outstanding problems of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT).

The CHT Regional Council Chairman Shantu Larma accused the Government of failing to make the Council effective, to start the functioning of Land Commission, to withdraw Army camps, to assign the three hill district councils due responsibilities, and to rehabilitate the repatriated as well as internally displaced Jumma (hill people) refugees.

Intersecting clashes continued between the pro-Accord Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) and its opponent United People's Democratic Front (UPDF).

As the frustration of Chakma tribals with the Bangladesh Government continued to grow, the leader of PCJSS Shantu Larma during its seventh conference in November gave a call to Chakmas to continue with the struggle for upholding their separate *Jumma* identity. He also said that the signing of the accord was a 'mistake' and alleged that the Government was attempting to 'Islamise' Chittagong Hill Tracts.

The grievance of Chakmas became further apparent on the fifth anniversary of the Accord in the first week of December when all the major parties of the region vowed to push ahead with their conflicting programmes. This development could revive insurgency in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

Replying to a question in the Parliament on September 14, 2003, M K Anwar, Minister-in-Charge of the CHT affairs, stated that the Government was reviewing the CHT Peace Treaty of 1997 to determine if its clauses were in conformity with the Constitution. He asserted that the Government would amend any Article, which would be contrary to the features of the Constitution." (SATP 2003)

"The Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS), a political body of the indigenous people in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), as part of its agitation programme, has called for a road blockade on December 2, 2003, and a dawn-to-dusk strike on December 8. The sixth year of the CHT peace treaty ends on December 2. The PCJSS has demanded a complete implementation of the peace accord signed in 1997 and resignation of Abdul Wadud Bhuiyan, a parliamentarian from the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party, from the post of chairman of Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board (CHTDB). PCJSS chief Jyotirindra Bodhipriya Larma alias Shantu Larma has also threatened to intensify the agitation if the security camps were not withdrawn from the Hills before December 31. Meanwhile, Bhuiyan has threatened to resist the agitation programmes." (SAIR, 1 December 2003)

(See also PCJSS, urgent appeal in the list of sources)

Renewed violence has led to further displacement in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (August-November 2003)

- On 25 August 2003, nearly 1,500 tribal people were rendered homeless after their houses were torched by Bengali settlers
- Some 274 houses and three Buddhist temples were ransacked and one burned to the ground
- In September, the IDPs had not yet returned due to security fears

"Tribal leaders have alleged that the lawmakers of the ruling party are instigating violence against the indigenous people. One such incident erupted on August 25, 2003, in Mahalchhari in which two persons were killed and nearly 1500 tribesmen were rendered homeless after their houses were allegedly torched by Bengali settlers. PCJSS chief Santu Larma held the Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board (CHTDB) Chairman and Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) legislator Wadood Bhuiyan responsible for these incidents. He has also threatened to cancel certificates of permanent residence of the settlers in the CHT area." (SATP 2003)

"According to The Daily Star today, over 1,500 indigenous people have been displaced by recent ethnic violence in the southeastern district of Khagrachhari. The IDPs (internally displaced persons) have been living in the open and in forests 7 days after Bengali settlers burned and looted 8 villages in revenge for the recent kidnapping of a Bengali businessman in the area. Army and police personnel have been reportedly deployed to the raided villages, however, the IDPs have not yet returned due to security fears. In addition, 5 villages were reportedly completely burnt down. The indigenous people claim that both Hindu and Muslim Bengali settlers torched and looted about 350 houses, killing two and raping at least 10 women. In addition, they allege that police stood by during the attacks. Police claim they could not control the attacking mobs." (COE-DMHA, 4 September 2003)

"On 26 August 2003, in the remote Upazila of Mahalchhari of Khagrachori District in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, violent clashes occurred between two groups involving indigenous tribal people and Bengali settlers over the abduction of a local businessman. As a direct consequence of this incident, one person was killed and more than 10 people wounded. More than 1,500 people (575 families) have been affected. Some 274 houses and three Buddhist temples were ransacked and one burned to the ground." (IFRC 12 September 2003)

Government expansion of 'Reserve Forests' in the Chittagong Hill Tracts displaces the tribal population (2001)

- Half of the land in the CHT has been declared as 'reserved forest' by the Bangladesh Ministry of Environment and Forests
- Thousands have been evicted since the end of the 1990s
- A declaration of additional 'reserved forests' may relocate thousands of others

"Government projects, Reserved forests and Unclassified State Forests are excluded from the Hill District Councils' control over land. The Ministry of Environment and Forests plans to declare a total area of almost

220,000 acres in the three Hill Districts as additional reserved forests under different schemes. This means that the Ministry will have exclusive control over these lands, reducing even further the limited authority of the Hill District Councils. Half of this land has already been declared as reserved forest during the last three or four years and some 2,000 people, mostly from the Khyang community, have been evicted from their land without any compensation. It should be kept in mind that the major portion of the CHT already consists of reserved forests over which the Hill District Councils have no authority. With the declaration of additional reserved forests, the central government is seeking to establish control over an even larger part of the Chittagong Hill Tracts. This means above all that another 200,000 people will be affected and their rights over land and forest resources will be denied. Most of them will have to relocate if the plans are implemented. Jumma people suspect that the government is planning to resettle Bengalis in reserved forest and unclassified state forest areas." (CHTC 2000)

- = "The GoB's expansion of 'Reserve Forest' areas in the CHT (where agricultural practices are forbidden and where even collecting fuelwood is a crime) also adds to the IDP population, and brings the land crisis to new levels of desperation. Almost the entire Khyang tribe has been evicted without compensation or assistance under this scheme, with tens of thousands of others also at risk." (Feeny October 2001)

POPULATION PROFILE AND FIGURES

Global Figures

Estimates of internally displaced due to post-election violence

- An unknown number of Hindus, perhaps as many as 200,000, became internally displaced due to post-election violence
- Refugees International estimate that up to 20,000 Hindus remain internally displaced

"Following the October 2001 election, an estimated 5,000 to 20,000 Bangladeshi Hindus and other minorities fled to India to escape violence against the minorities. An unknown number of Hindus, perhaps as many as 200,000, became internally displaced.

[...]

At the end of 2002, however, reliable estimates—even a range—of Bangladeshi Hindus who were internally displaced or who were asylum seekers in India were unavailable." (USCR 2003)

"Communal violence and discrimination have displaced up to 20,000 Hindus in recent years, with the most serious violations occurring in 2001" (RI, 8 August 2003)

"The Hindu-dominated areas in Barisal, Bhola, Pirojpur, Satkhira, Jessore, Khulna, Kushtia, Jhenidah, Bagerhat, Feni, Tangail, Noakhali, Natore, Bogra, Sirajganj, Munshiganj, Narayanganj, Narsingdi, Brahmanbaria, Gazipur and Chittagong were the worst hit.

Many Hindu families have reportedly fled their homes and sought refuge in areas considered 'safe.' The Bangladesh Observer reported that at least 10,000 people of the minority community from Barisal district had left their homes following attacks by activists of the fundamentalist Jamaat-i-Islami party and had taken shelter in neighbouring Gopalganj district, the electorate of the former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Many others fled to the Indian states of Tripura and West Bengal." (HRF 2002)

Estimates of internally displaced in the Chittagong Hill Tracts vary between 60,000 to 500,000 (2000-2003)

- The 1997 peace agreement paved the way for return of refugees in India, but many became internally displaced upon return to the CHT
- The government CHT Task Force finalized figures for internally displaced at the end of 1999 at 90,208 tribal and 38,156 non-tribal internally displaced families
- It should be noted that the figure of 128,364 is used somewhat arbitrarily both for families and individuals. It has not been possible to verify whether this figure actually refers to individuals or families
- The Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission says about 500,000 people are internally displaced
- IDPs are too scattered to be contacted easily and thus to be named in the list
- Tribal groups and the Government disagree on the definition of internally displaced in the CHT
- The Government CHT Task Force figure included Bengali settlers who had to leave the land upon return by the indigenous population:

- Tribal representatives members opposed this stance and held that it went against the terms and spirit of the peace agreement

USCR and Amnesty International estimate more than 60,000 internally displaced, but these figures do not include Bangladesh settlers :

"In the mid-1980s, Muslim settlers' appropriation of land belonging to ethnic minorities in Bangladesh's Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) region caused some 64,000 members of those groups, the vast majority of them Chakma, to flee to India and more than 60,000 others to become internally displaced.

In December 1997, the government of Bangladesh signed a peace accord that ended a 25-year conflict with the Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS)—a CHT solidarity movement—and its now-defunct armed insurgent wing, the Shanti Bahini, composed primarily of ethnic Chakma. The accord allowed limited regional autonomy in the CHT.

Subsequently, the entire refugee population returned from India. However, the situation of the more than 60,000 internally displaced Chakma remained unresolved at the end of 2002, despite provisions in the accord for the "rehabilitation" of both the refugees and the internally displaced." (USCR 2003)

"People displaced between August 1975 and August 1992 are considered IDPs. Some 60,000 tribal people were internally displaced during this period. They included people whose villages were attacked, whose neighbours were massacred and whose homes were burnt during army operations. They left everything behind for safer areas moving to neighbouring villages, to relatives or started anew in the forest interior. The settlers confiscated their land and in many instances obtained official certificates of ownership. Internally displaced tribals represent a significant portion of the tribal population and their rehabilitation will continue to be a major task." (AI February 2000, section 5.3)

"About 43,000 Jumma refugees returned to CHTs from Tripura State of India after the signing of the Peace Accord. In addition, about 60,000 [...] indigenous peoples were internally displaced between 1992 and 1997. They include people whose neighbours were massacred and whose homes were burnt down during military operations." (AITPN, September 2003)

There was considerable controversy over a decision to consider Bengali settlers who had to move due to repatriation of Jumma refugees as internally displaced persons:

"Article 1 of section D of the Accord provides "The internal refugees of the three hill districts will be rehabilitated through their proper identification by a task force".

However, the accord does not provide any definition of the IDPs. It remained silent about the modalities of their rehabilitation and the terms of reference of the Task Force." (HWHRF, 29 November 2003)

"Of the 64,609 refugees who returned, nearly 50% of them have been unable to return to their own homesteads and native villages because they are still "occupied" by Bengali settlers. Complicating the problem is the reality that the Bengali settlers have no where to go." (SAFHR, April 2000)

"The non-tribal internal refugees were scrutinised from among those living in CHT between the period of 1975 to 1992, [...]" (Daily Star 16 May 2000)

"[...] as a part of the rehabilitation work of the repatriated *Jumma* refugees and the internally displaced people of CHT, a nine-member Task Force Committee was formed by Representatives from JSS, RJRWA, Members of the three Hill District Councils, Member of the Parliament from the CHT region, representative of the twenty-fourth Infantry Division of the Bangladesh Army and Divisional Commissioner of Chittagong Division. There were reports of serious controversy over the identification of internally displaced persons among the members of the Task Force Committee. Ironically, it was reported

that the ruling party members of parliament from CHT and some other members of the committee wanted to include the non-indigenous people of the settlers' families in the internally displaced people's list as they were also displaced because of prevailing disturbed situations. The logic behind this could be that due to repatriation of Chakma refugees in CHT, the Bengali Muslim settlers were also displaced. But, the JSS and RJRWA members opposed this stance and held that it went against the terms and spirit of the accord. The committee could not reach any decision on the issue even after several meetings being held, which ultimately led to a stalemate situation with regard to rehabilitation activities of the repatriated refugees and the internally displaced people. The government unilaterally made a list of the internally displaced people that shows now that there are at least 1,28,364 internally displaced families in the CHT of which 90,208 families are 'tribal' and 38,156 are 'non-tribal'." (Kharat, February 2003)

"According to the Peace Accord, the internally displaced refugees will be rehabilitated by the Task Force. One of the most contentious issues in connection with the rehabilitation of these internally displaced refugees is over the role of the Task Force. Not only is their rehabilitation still pending, but a major conflict erupted between the government and the JSS leadership over the mandate of the Task Force, or more concretely: over the question whether Bengali settlers should also be considered internally displaced people. The Task Force has sent to the Ministry a list of 128,364 families (or approximately 500,000 individuals) of internally displaced persons to be rehabilitated, comprising 90,208 Jumma families and 38,156 non-permanent settler families. Task Force chairman Dipankar Talukdar (Jumma MP for Rangamati district) has given instruction to include Bengali settlers, but the JSS vehemently opposes this, fearing that this may lead to the legal recognition of settlers as residents of the CHT and thereby as legal owners of the land." (CHTC 2000, p.48)

Statistics of Refugees in the greater Chittagong Hill Tracts

It should be noted that the figure of 128,364 is used somewhat arbitrarily both for families and individuals. It has not been possible to verify the figures:

"The Task Force has sent to the Ministry a list of 128,364 families (or approximately 500,000 individuals) of internally displaced persons to be rehabilitated, comprising 90,208 Jumma families and 38,156 non-permanent settler families.

[...]

The number of internally displaced refugees identified by the Task Force is huge if one takes into consideration the total population of roughly 600,000 Jummas and 500,000 Bengalis in the CHT. This means that about half of the population of the CHT has been designated as displaced by the 25 year-long conflict." (CHTC 2000)

"Statistics of Refugees in the greater Chittagong Hill Tracts

District	Tribal Families	Non-tribal Families	Total
Khagrachari Hill District	8,126	876	9,102
	11,189	3,858	15,047
	3,541	2,755	6,296
	8,096	1,800	9,896
	1,925	3,122	5,047
	6,249	7,802	14,051
	4,659	1,036	5,695
	2,085	121	2,206
	700	1,001	1,701

	46,570	22,371	68,941
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Tribal Families	=	46,570
Non-tribal Families	=	22,371
Total Families	=	68,941

District	Tribal Families	Non-tribal Families	Total
Bandarban Hill District	1,906	0	1,906
	1,648	2	1,650
	1,800	10	1,810
	90	0	90
	591	176	767
	1,153	81	1,234
	378	0	378
	477	0	477
	8,043	269	8,312

Tribal Families	=	8,043
Non-tribal Families	=	269
Total Families	=	8,312

District	Tribal Families	Non-tribal Families	Total
Rangamati Hill District	304	0	304
	3,723	0	3,723
	297	12	309
	4,553	0	4,553
	2,598	2,568	5,166
	6,439	1,281	7,720
	165	59	224
	7,253	7,463	14,716
	1,659	203	1,862
	2,895	1,636	4,531
	5,709	2,294	8,003
	35,595	15,516	51,111

Tribal Families	=	35,595
Non-tribal Families	=	15,516
Total Families	=	51,111

Total number of Refugees in the three Hill Districts

(Khagrachari+Bandarban+Rangamati)

Tribal Family (46,570+8,043+35,595) = 90,208

(Khagrachari+Bandarban+Rangamati)

Non tribal Family (22,371+269+15,516) = 38,156

(Khagrachari+Bandarban+Rangamati)

Total Tribal and Non-tribal Families =1,28,364" (GoB-Task Force on the Hill Tracts Region)

PATTERNS OF DISPLACEMENT

General

The indigenous population sought refuge in towns or hid in the forest (2000)

"... more than two decades of protected conflict in the form of insurgency and counter-insurgency operation in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, south-eastern part of Bangladesh displaced more than 50% of hill peoples' population. During the conflicting period at least twelve massacres upon the hill peoples were committed by Bangladesh armed forces. As result of this conflict a kind of centrifugal and centripetal tendency of population displacement was observed. Just to avoid the conflict and atrocities of government military some groups of hill people silently moved toward the small towns and administrative centers while others moved toward the deep forest and compel to live a kind of nomadic existence. In 1986 at the height of the conflict 60,000 of them had become refugee in Tripura state of India." (Chakma, February 2000)

PHYSICAL SECURITY & FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

Physical Security

Kadiani families fear for their life- a number of people have fled their homes (November 2003)

"At least 70 members of Kadiani families at Uttarbhabanipur are languishing holed up in their at houses as village leaders have called for death to all Kadianis on the Eid-day if they do not embrace Islam by then.

"We feel totally insecure, " they said when a group of journalists with former justice KM Sobhan and writer Sharier Kabir Sunday visited the village under Mirpur upazila, 35 kilometers from Kushtia district headquarters.

Earlier on October 24, at a meeting at Dharampur bazar, Union BNP leader Jalal Uddin urged the villagers to sever all contacts with the Kadianis on the basis of a Fatwa that any connection with the Kadianis was against Islam. Since then the ostracised families remained confined to their homes. All Kadiani children have stopped going to schools.

A local leader of Jaamat-e-Islami of the area, Moulana Abdur Razzak reportedly issued the Fatwa.

A number of Kadianis have fled homes in fear of persecution by the fundamentalists early this month.

Kushtia Police Superintendent Abdus Salam visited the area and held talks with the locals on November 4. He later said that the situation was under control and asked the Kadianis who fled homes to return to their dwellings.

"Many of the families have been forced to sign an undertaking that they would embrace Islam after returning home," [...] (The Daily Star, 18 Novemeber 2003)

The continued presence of military in the Chittagong Hill Tracts is perceived as threatening by the tribal population (2003)

"According to the accord, the implementation of withdrawal of Army camps from the CHT is yet to begin in a true sense, because according to the government report, only 62 out of 500 camps have been withdrawn till May 2000. The existence of more than 100 Bangladesh Rifles paramilitary camps in CHT provides a feeling of constant threat and sense of insecurity among the returnee IDPs. Moreover, the accord is silent about the time frame of withdrawal of the military camps and perhaps that is yet another flaw in the accord. But one cannot ignore the fact that in the event of crisis the direct or indirect involvement of military forces can hamper the establishment of a democratic process not only in CHT but also over all in Bangladesh." (Kharat, February 2003)

SUBSISTENCE NEEDS (HEALTH NUTRITION AND SHELTER)

Food and Health

Anecdotal information suggests that the internally displaced tribal population suffers from starvation and has little access to medical services (2000-2003)

- No information has been found on the present situation of the internally displaced in the CHT
- Food provision has become a serious problem for the tribal population while the Bengali settlers living in cluster villages reportedly still receive free rations
- Available information indicates that the Bengali settler population receives more assistance than the tribal population
- Information from 1998-1999 indicated that displaced people in Chittagong Hill Tracts were in bad shape due to food and medicine shortage

"Failing to qualify for government rehabilitation ration packages, the majority of Internally Displaced Persons continue to suffer starvation conditions, with little or no access to any kind of service." (AITPN, June 2003)

"Many families remain in Refugee Transit Camps, where three years have passed without any progress in their cases. Food provision has become a serious problem, and GoB assistance will soon finish. This is in sharp contrast to Bengali settlers living in cluster villages, who have been receiving food rations ever since they arrived. In Khagrachari district alone, where the majority of refugee transit camps are located, there are 80 Bengali villages holding 26,262 families, all of whom continue to receive free rations.

[...]

Failing to qualify for government rehabilitation ration packages, the majority of IDPs continue to suffer starvation conditions, with little or no access to any kind of service. In 1998, a Jumma NGO, Taungya, reported on the IDP populations in Langadu thana and Baghaichhari thana in Rangamati district, where they investigated the deaths of 40 people from malnutrition and lack of medical facilities." (Feeny, October 2001)

Information from 1998-1999 indicated that displaced people in Chittagong Hill Tracts were in bad shape due to food and medicine shortage (1999):

"Many of the internally displaced Jumma refugees are still living in starvation conditions. As already mentioned, they have never received any food rations from the government. In 1998, a Jumma NGO, Taungya, reported on malnutrition and starvation conditions in Langadu thana and Baghaichhari thana in Rangamati district. Workers from Taungya went to investigate reports on the deaths of five people in Langadu and 35 in Baghaichhari because of malnutrition and lack of medical facilities. In both areas, people had been internally displaced in the late 70s and 80s and they had returned to their original areas after the signing of the Peace Accord. However, they had found their lands occupied by settlers and many had been living off wild potatoes and bananas for weeks, waiting for the harvest of some *jhum* cultivation which they had taken up, compelled by necessity. After Taungya brought out its shocking report, the returnees to this area received some food aid through the World Food Programme Taungya Newsletter Issue 1, Year 1, January 1999. Odhikar, a Bangladeshi human rights organisation, also reported the death of 23 internally displaced refugees in the CHT through lack of food and medicines in 1999." (CHTC 2000, p.48)

"A Doctors Without Borders exploratory mission last week visited the Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh, an area which until recently was closed to all aid organizations. As the result of a peace agreement, some 60,000 tribal people have returned there since last December after spending 30 years in exile in India. The displaced populations have yet to receive land allocations and monthly food rations promised in the peace accord. Doctors Without Borders has visited all the area healthcare institutions and evaluated current healthcare needs. The clinics appear to be suffering from a shortage of medical personnel and drugs. Malaria in its most serious form poses the greatest health risk to the tribal population. Doctors Without Borders is launching a program at a regional health clinic that is visited by both tribal and Bengali patients." (DWB 23 August 1998)

The first ever conference on internal displacement in Bangladesh in 1999, brought further evidence of the need for food aid to the internally displaced tribal population :

"At least 30 internally displaced persons (IDPs) died in the April-May period last year in Chittagong Hill Tracts due to food and medicine shortage, a conference in the city was told yesterday.

[...]

Presenting a paper at the conference on IDPs, an expert called for immediate attention to internally displaced persons living in the hill districts, especially those in difficult terrain, as they are highly vulnerable to food shortage.

"The most immediate problem at present is making sure that the IDPs of Sajek do not suffer again from the food shortage in 1999, as they did in 1998. Priority needs to be given to the IDPs, as they are already the weakest and most vulnerable of all the hill communities", said Ina Hume, CHT Planning Advisor of CIDA. Sajek Valley in Baghaichhari thana of Rangamati district is home to 7,500 out of a total of 100,000 IDPs in CHT.

Presenting her case study on Sajek Valley, Ina Hume said, people in the locality had reported that they were having live off wild jungle potatoes due to lack of proper food or adequate. She added that the Baghaichhari thana health complex had been without a doctor for eight years." (Daily Star, 16 Feb 1999)

ACCESS TO EDUCATION

General

No information available

ISSUES OF SELF-RELIANCE AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

General

No information available

DOCUMENTATION NEEDS AND CITIZENSHIP

General

No information available

ISSUES OF FAMILY UNITY, IDENTITY AND CULTURE

General

No information available

No information available

PROPERTY ISSUES

Restitution

The ownership of tribal land remains at the core of the conflict (1999-2003)

- A major problem is to determine the ownership of tribal land. Among the tribal population many did not possess any documentation of land ownership, while Bengali settlers taking over their land obtained official certificates
- A substantial number of returning refugees have not regained possession of their land and are therefore internally displaced
- Today, 3,055 repatriated families (25%) are still unable to reclaim their land, with 40 entire villages occupied by Bengali settlers
- The Land Commission, which was supposed to resolve land disputes, has not been functioning for two years, but a new chair person has recently been appointed

"Land for permanent agriculture has always been a scarce resource in this hill area. Only about 3 percent of the land in the CHT is suitable for agriculture and about 19 percent for horticulture. The rest of the land is government-owned. With the inundation of 40 percent of the arable land after the construction of the Kaptai Dam and the transmigration of more than 400,000 Bengali settlers, which almost doubled the population within a single decade, land scarcity has reached crisis levels. Land scarcity in the CHT has a direct impact on the economic and health situation of the Jumma people, who find it increasingly difficult to make a living on ever smaller plots of land." (CHTC 2000, p.54)

"The [Peace] Accord provides for the rehabilitation of tribal refugees and internally displaced tribals, a land survey in consultation with the Regional Council to "finally determine land ownership of the tribal people through settling the land-disputes on proper verification and shall record their lands and ensure their rights thereto" (Article D.2). Disputes will be settled by a Land Commission with a minimum tenure of three years to "resolve the disputes in consonance with the law, custom and practice in force in the Chittagong Hill Tracts". " (AI, 2000)

"Prior to the conflict, tribal communities owned land on a communal basis, and very little documentation was deemed necessary. The new Bengali settlers introduced a new framework of land demarcation whereby written proof was required, which then led to widespread illegal 'land grabbing'. Many settlers used the conflict to 'negotiate' false contracts in the real owner's absence, while the minimal official documentation that did exist was destroyed in the looting and burning. Today, 3,055 repatriated families (25%) are still unable to reclaim their land, with 40 entire villages occupied by Bengali settlers refusing to leave." (Feeny, October 2001)

"The settlers confiscated their lands and in many instances obtained false official certificates of ownership. In addition to returning the land under the CHTs Peace Accord, the government further agreed to "ensure leasing two acres of land in the respective locality subject to availability of land of the landless tribals or the tribals having less than two acres of land per family. However, groveland can be allotted in case of non-availability of necessary lands."

The government took no initiatives to provide cultivable land or groveland. About 40 villages of returnee refugees are still under the occupation of the plain settlers. Over 3,000 families did not get back their own land.[...] Rather than rehabilitating the returnee Jumma refugees and Jumma IDPs, then Awami League

government identified the illegal settlers – who had displaced indigenous Jumma peoples from their homes in the first place – as “internally displaced persons”. As a result, the Government CHTs Task Force on IDPs estimated the number of IDPs as of July 2000 at 1,28,000.[...] The present Bangladesh National Party government has also failed to appoint a Chairman of the Task Force. It however provides free rations only to the illegal settlers.” (AITPN, September 2003)

On withdrawal of Bengali settlers:

“Before signing the accord the National Committee on behalf of the government of Bangladesh gave a commitment to JSS that Bengali settlers would be withdrawn from CHT to other plains districts. Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina reaffirmed that commitment in a meeting with the JSS delegation on Dec 2, 1997 that Bengali settlers would be transferred to other districts. As part of that process, the government would stop providing rations to the Bengali settlers and dismantle their cluster villages. But till today the government has taken no such steps, on the contrary, the government authorities are formulating projects and providing more facilities for their rehabilitation in CHT.” (SAFHR April 2000)

On Land Allocation :

“On the issue of canceling the lease for lands allocated to non tribals and non local persons who have not utilised the lands for rubber and other plantations in the last 10 years, the government has made no move to implement this provision in the accord. On the contrary the Deputy Commissioners of the three Hill Districts have allocated more lands to non tribals and non local persons in the last two years.”

Under the accord no land can be leased or sold out or transferred in any way without the permission of the Hill District Council concerned. ” (SAFHR April 2000)

“The Land Commission, thrown up under the landmark CHT Peace Agreement five years ago, is yet to start business, while about 35,000 cases of dispute grew as the real millstone around the region's neck.

The cases, most of which pit Bangalee settlers against the tribal people in Rangamati, Bandarban and Khagrachhari hill districts, still hold the potential for igniting a fresh spate of violence, locals said.

[...]

“Most problems of the CHT would stand resolved, if the government settled disputes over hilly lands,” said Gautom Chakma, a prominent PCJSS leader.

The contour of land conflict is even greater. Over 35,000 cases are pending before law courts, but many more go unreported as tribal people generally tend to skirt litigation, locals said.

And the land disputes are snowballing every day. As the hills people do not preserve their documents, a section of Bangalee settlers occupy their lands craftily.

Most of the 64,000 tribal refugees who returned home from India on the heels of the peace pact are yet to get back their lands. And some Bangalee settlers were still moving ahead throwing up houses on the forest fringe, pushing tribal people deeper into the jungles.” (The Daily Star 21 May 2003)

“A taskforce crucial for the rehabilitation of internal refugees in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) is yet to launch its operation because of a controversy over the status of its newly appointed chairman. After lying vacant for over two years now, the post of the Taskforce for Chittagong Hill Tracts Refugee Rehabilitation Affairs (TCHTRRA) chairman was filled recently.

The prime minister on October 13 approved Samiran Dewan as the chairman of the taskforce, headed earlier by then AL lawmaker Dipankar Talukdar, who stepped down in August 2001 to contest the October 1 ballot. Samiran is a former chairman of Khagrachhari district council. Jafar Ahmed, a local Bangladesh Nationalist Party leader, was also named a member of the nine-member taskforce, the rest of which are ex officio members. But indecision on the chairman's official status, which used to be equivalent to a state minister, has left the taskforce in limbo.

[...]

As yet, the new committee has not held a meeting and no financial allocation for running the committee operation has been made. No one of the 10 employees of its office at Khagrachhari district headquarters has received salary since the coalition government took power in October 2001.

The then AL government, in line with the peace agreement, formed the nine-member taskforce headed by Dipankar to address the rehabilitation issue. Accordingly, the office of the taskforce was set up at Khagrachhari district headquarters in late 1998. " (The Daily Star, 22 November 2003)

Overview of the announced reintegration package for refugees and internally displaced people in the Chittagong Hill Tracts

"Refugee and IDP Rehabilitation

All the 12,222 CHT Jumma refugee families numbering 64,609 persons have returned to CHT from Tripura, India. The state of Bangladesh constitutionally guarantees the safety of life and property of all the returnees and their family members.

The following facilities are being given to the returnees:

1. Every family will be paid a cash grant of Taka 15,000.00 (US \$ 335)
2. Every family will be provided free ration at the following rates of entitlement: Adult member/5 kilogram of soybean oil, 4 kg. of lentils, 2kg. of salt
3. Corrugated sheets worth 2 bundles/per family
4. Taka 8,000.00 per family of cash transfers for those families owning arable land and a pair of bullock for tilling the land
5. The landless will be provided with land grant and a cash transfer to Taka 3,000.00 per family
6. Debt forgiveness of up to Taka 5,000.00 per family in respect of agricultural loans
7. Similar loan forgiveness would be considered, on a case by case basis, for non-agricultural loans
8. Loans taken in the past from the Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board Would be written off
9. General Amnesty for the insurgents announced earlier shall remain in force. This amnesty shall be applicable in respect of cases registered during the state of emergency (when insurgency was on)
10. Land will be returned to their original owners and they will not be rehabilitated in the cluster villages
11. Reinstatement in government service for those who were employed there prior to becoming internal and external refugees would be considered most sympathetically
12. Arrangements would be made for holding special examinations for High School and College Diplomas for those who had studied in neighboring countries
13. Create opportunities for the returnee students in schools in order that they could complete their courses of studies
14. According priority to the tribal youth in recruitment's for vacant positions in different offices of the districts and elsewhere
15. A general amnesty for those convicted in different criminal cases during insurgency All returnee 'Headmen' (of village councils) to be reinstated in their previous positions " (SAFHR April 2000)

The Government has yet to deliver the announced compensation package for the internally displaced (2000)

- More than 3,000 families returning refugee families have not gotten back their property and it is estimated that 80,000 internally displaced Jumma refugees have not yet been compensated
- The government has not yet started process of rehabilitation of the internally displaced tribal population
- Nearly 25% of the returning refugees have been unable to return to their own homesteads and native villages
- The rehabilitation of internally displaced remains problematic – not least because it has not been decided whether Bengali settlers who lost land should be defined as internally displaced

- The authorities claim that it needs some time as a huge financial involvement is required for the rehabilitation of the internally displaced
- Claims of discriminatory practices in Government assistance to Bengali settlers versus the internally displaced tribal population

"IDPs reportedly continue to have little access to farming lands, non-farm dwellings, safe drinking water and sanitation facilities, healthcare and education. The economic rehabilitation of the IDPs has not yet begun in earnest." (AI February 2000, section 5.3)

"[...] the government has not taken up the process of rehabilitation for Internally Displaced Jumma People. [...] A Committee has been formed to facilitate their rehabilitation but no measures have been taken in this regard. In violation of this provision the government is making attempt to rehabilitate the Bengali settlers in CHT.

Under the accord, the rehabilitation of the tribal and internally displaced was to commence, as soon as possible, in consultation with the Regional Council, the land survey of the CHT and finally determine the land ownership of the tribal peoples and settle land disputes on proper verification. Land survey would record their land rights and thus ensure their rights. This programme has yet to be taken up for implementation.

Moreover, the government has yet to take up the programme for settling two acres of land per tribal family having no land or less than 2 acres. Where no land was available in the locality, government lands were to be tapped. No progress has been made on this front." (SAFHR, April 2000)

"[In February 1999] the CHT Returnee Jumma Refugee Welfare Association, headed by Upendra Lal Chakma, conducted a survey among all the repatriated refugees concerning their rehabilitation [...]. According to the survey, 3,055 families (or 25 percent of all repatriated families) have not yet received their lands back as promised, while 40 entire villages have not been returned to the refugees at all because they are still completely occupied by settlers. Complaints have been lodged with the authorities concerning all these cases.

Findings of the survey on implementation of the agreement with the refugees:

1,339 repatriated families have not been returned their homesteads.
 942 families have not been returned their paddy lands.
 774 families have not been returned their horticultural gardens.
 40 villages have not been returned to the refugees at all.
 All families have been provided with Tk.15,000 and two bundles of CI-sheets.
 All families have been provided with food rations for 9 months.
 890 landed families have not been given a pair of bullocks or Tk.10,000.
 All landless families have received Tk.3,000 for a dairy cow.
 Seven Buddhist and Hindu temples are still occupied by settlers, two by security forces.
 One orphanage is still occupied by settlers, all 72 boys from this orphanage are in France where they have been adopted.
 642 families had bank loans, but no one has been exempted.
 It is not specified as to whether and how many Jummas were reinstated in their jobs." (CHTC 2000, pp.45-46)

"Secretary of the Ministry of CHT Affairs informed the session that according to the Peace Accord, the Task Force has successfully identified members of 1,28,364 families as internally displaced persons (IDPs) and has sent the proposed plan of action for their rehabilitation to the concerned ministry. Some speakers expressed their dissatisfaction over the slow progress in this field, but according to the Secretary, it needs some time as a huge financial involvement is required for the rehabilitation of such a large number of IDPs. Similarly Maj. Gen. (retd.) Ibrahim thought it would be difficult to rehabilitate the IDPs from the CHT to

other parts of Bangladesh as the IDPs are living there for about 20 years and already a second generation is there who were born and brought up there with a lot of emotional attachments. Rather, he suggested that all persons who had lived in the CHT prior to signing of the Peace Accord as the inhabitants of the CHT, and then freezing the number and conducting development initiatives for all of them. Prof. Imtiaz also found it very complex to identify the settlers or the original inhabitants from his appearance or dialect as there have been a lot of inter-marriages and then relatives migrating at later points. He suggested the need for extensive research in this complex area on part of the researchers." (Daily Star 4 August 2000)

PATTERNS OF RETURN AND RESETTLEMENT

General

Tribal groups protest against the repatriation of non-tribal people to the Chittagong Hill Tracts (2000)

- Representatives of the tribal population boycott the Task Force on Internal Displacement in the CHT because of plans to repatriate non-tribal people to the CHT
- The chairman of the Government Task Force states that the peace accord provides for equal treatment of tribal and non-tribal refugees

"Parbattya Chhattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) and Tribal Refugee Welfare Association (TRWA) for the third time boycotted the meeting of the Task Force on Refugees in CHT held here at Chittagong circuit house today.

The two representatives - Sudasindu Khisa of PCJSS and Bakul Chakma of TRWA - boycotted the meeting protesting the Task Force move to repatriate internal non-tribal refugees in CHT, sources said.

The meeting over today Task Force chairman Dipankar Talukder, MP, told the newsmen that a list of 1,28,364 families of internal refugees was finalised for repatriation.

The list included 90,208 families of tribal and 38,156 families of non-tribals, Talukder said. The rehabilitation would start on receipt of order from the ministries concerned, he added. The non-tribal internal refugees were scrutinised from among those living in CHT between the period of 1975 to 1992, Talukder said.

Replying to a question he said it was nowhere written in the peace accord that non-tribal refugees should not be rehabilitated in CHT.

Both tribal and non-tribal should get equal treatment in the CHT to establish peace, chairman of the Task Force said. The internal refugees would be provided with Tk 15,000 per family in cash in addition to other supports, he said." (Daily Star 16 May 2000)

HUMANITARIAN ACCESS

General

The Peace Accord created a more favourable environment for assistance activities in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (1999-2003)

- The armed conflict in the region hindered access for all humanitarian and development organizations
- Donor-aided development programmes were suspended for security reasons following abduction of two Danish aid workers and a British engineer in February 2001
- UNDP assessment during spring 2003 concluded that the area was safe for starting development activities

"The political turbulence which lasted for a little more than two decades (1974-1996) in CHT have barred development organizations from taking any significant initiative directed towards the poor in the region. The signing of the Peace Agreement in 1997 created an environment for such ventures in the region." (BRAC 1999)

"MSF is the first aid organization to have permission to work in the region, where unkept promises of autonomy for the tribal people have resulted in off-and-on low-level conflict. Access to health care, especially for the non-Bengali population, is limited." (MSF 2000)

"Because of the ongoing conflicts very few development organizations were working in the CHT area before the accord of 1997. However, in the postaccord era many big national NGOs have expanded their activities and services in the region.

[...]

Unlike all other regions of Bangladesh, the armed conflicts of the past decades have severely restricted the activities of NGOs in the CHT. As a result, while there are a good number of NGOs with divergent interests working in the region, most of them are just evolving and gaining experience." (Aarens and Chakma, 2002)

"Donor-aided development programmes were suspended for security reasons following abduction of two Danish and a British engineers from Kalapahar area under Naniarchar upazila in Rangamati district on February 16, 2001.

Development activities resumed after a joint assessment by the government and the UNDP reported that the CHT is safe for development workers to return and that it is important to provide facilities in the tension-torn CHT." (The Daily Star, June 17 2003)

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL RESPONSES

National response

NGOs have expanded their activities and services in the Chittagong Hill Tracts after the signing of the peace agreement (2002)

- The bulk of NGOs are bigger national ones with focus on health, education, water, and sanitation, as well as microcredit activities
- Often, there is little or no participation by the local indigenous NGOs
- Due to the long standing armed conflict, most indigenous NGOs are just evolving and gaining experience
- It is not known to what extent local or national NGOs benefit internally displaced

"From the early 1980s onward, several international NGOs, such as the Anti-Slavery Society, Survival International, the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, the Minority Rights Group, and Amnesty International, have brought out reports on the human-rights violations in the CHT. In 1990 the international Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission carried out an independent investigation in the refugee camps in Tripura and also managed to get into the CHT. The commission reported extensively on the background and development of the conflict and the massive human-rights violations. International aid agencies and donor governments, alarmed by the reports, started questioning the Bangladesh government and gradually international pressure was put on Bangladesh to come to a political solution of the conflict. Because of the ongoing conflicts very few development organizations were working in the CHT area before the accord of 1997. However, in the postaccord era many big national NGOs⁵ have expanded their activities and services in the region. Further, a number of locally inspired NGOs have come into being—founded mostly by the local indigenous inhabitants. At the moment, there are fifty-two registered NGOs at work in the CHT. If nonregistered NGOs are considered, the number may be as high as three hundred, as estimated by the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

The bulk of these NGOs focus on health, education, water, and sanitation, with microcredit activities mostly done by the big national NGOs with little or no participation by the local indigenous NGOs. Apart from this, NGOs are intervening in diverse areas such as agriculture, horticulture, afforestation, fisheries, poultry farms, microcredit, education, women in development, income generation, the environment, and training and development in general.

[...]

Unlike all other regions of Bangladesh, the armed conflicts of the past decades have severely restricted the activities of NGOs in the CHT. As a result, while there are a good number of NGOs with divergent interests working in the region, most of them are just evolving and gaining experience. This is particularly true of the local indigenous NGOs who have been able to start their activities only during the last couple of years. This fact is all the more important given the need for gigantic reconstruction and other developmental work in the region. The involvement of the NGOs—particularly the local indigenous NGOs—will be crucial if development projects are to meaningfully address the frustrations and aspirations of the indigenous peoples. Moreover, many of the indigenous peoples feel that their frustrations, problems, and aspirations cannot be truly addressed by organizations from the outside because of the particularity of the problems—ethnic, social, cultural, geographic, religious, etc. Such worries have already been raised on several occasions.⁶ It has also been indicated that the bureaucratic and administrative rigidity of the large national NGOs⁷ may not be appropriate to the particularity of the CHT peoples. So, unless the genuine participation of the indigenous peoples and their representative organizations can be ensured in any

development process, their aspirations are likely to remain unfulfilled. The local indigenous NGOs are thought to be representative—specifically for the developmental activities." (Aarens and Chakma, 2002)

Local assistance during unrest in the Chittagong Hill Tracts in August 2003:

"Army and police personnel were rapidly deployed in the raided villages of Babupara, Lemuchhara, Basantapara, Keranginal, Durpajanal, Pahartali, Sawmill Para and Ramessu Kabari Para, in order to stabilize the situation and reduce tensions. A ban on movement of foreigners and the civilians in the region was enforced. Although the ban was lifted on 5 September, the army and police have continued their vigilance and routine patrols in the highly sensitive areas to ensure peace and security for the population. The army provided emergency food assistance consisting of cooked food and dry rations for several days, distribution of clothing, financial assistance of Tk 2,000 per family (approximately CHF 47) and supply of tents for temporary shelter. In their efforts to further assist the affected population, the army is helping the local population to rebuild the Buddhist temple by providing supplies and building materials. The Khagrachori district authorities have also provided limited assistance to 177 families with 5 kg of rice, matches and candles." (IFRC 12 September 2003)

The Global IDP Project has not found any further documentation on aid targeting internally displaced persons. It is unknown whether ongoing or planned activities by local or national NGOs benefit the internally displaced.

The government is accused of discriminatory food distribution in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (September 2003)

- Until June 2003, rice was distributed to around 65,000 people of 12,222 indigenous families displaced in the Chittagong Hill Tracts
- The indigenous population protest against a decision to stop rice ration for the indigenous internally displaced, while continuing supplies to 26,000 Bangalee settlers
- Authorities claim that lack of funds and not discrimination is behind this decision
- The Prime Minister Khaleda Zia directed the concerned authorities to restart the distribution of rations for indigenous refugees from her contingency fund on 14 October 2003

"The government is not providing rice ration for 65,000 indigenous refugees, but giving the free supply to 26,000 Bangalee settlers in different cluster villages in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT).

The move drew fire from rival regional political organisations -- Parbatya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samity (PCJSS) and United People's Democratic Front (UPDF), who said the action was discriminatory and would bring further sufferings to the refugees.

Last week, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) directed the CHT affairs ministry to stop ration to the refugees and rehabilitate them with fund from the annual development programme. It, however, asked the ministry to keep the Bangalees on rations.

The PMO's directive came when the ministry asked for rations for the first quarter of the current fiscal year. The government has yet to take any rehabilitation programme for the indigenous people.

The government provided rations for the indigenous people who returned from the Indian state of Tripura after the signing of the CHT peace agreement in 1997 that ended decades of bush war in the hilly terrain.

About 65,000 people of 12,222 families enjoyed the rations -- five kilograms of rice for an adult and two and a half kilograms for a child a week -- upto June this year.

CHT Affairs Secretary Syed Mushtak admitted a break with rations for the refugees this year.

"Actually, we have not stopped the ration, but could not provide as the finance ministry did not make the allocation. Now we are considering whether the rations could be provided from the emergency fund or not," he said.

He, however, mentioned that under the peace agreement, the government was to offer the rations for only a year and the period had expired long ago." (Daily Star, 2 September 2003)

From July this year, the government ceased the provision of rice rations to 65,000 indigenous refugees, while continuing supplies to 26,000 Bengali settlers in villages near the Indian border.

[...]

Upto June this year, the rations – five kilograms of rice for an adult, and two and a half kilograms for a child a week – were distributed to around 65,000 people of 12,222 families.

Secretary of the CHT Affairs Ministry, Syed Mushtak claims the rations were halted due to lack of funds, not discrimination.

The move was slammed by regional political organizations of the hills people, like the Parbatya Chattogram Jana Samhati Samity and United People's Democratic Front (UPDF), who termed it discriminatory, spearheading protests in various hill towns.

[...]

Thanks to [...] protests, on October 14, Bangladesh Prime Minister Khaleda Zia directed the concerned authorities to restart the distribution of rations for indigenous refugees from her contingency fund.

But although a week has passed, the rations have not been resumed.

Explains member of the parliamentary standing committee on CHT Affairs, Zulfiquer Ali, "Against an annual demand of 15000 metric tons, the government has decided to allocate 7500 metric tons of rice to refugees from the existing stocks. We are trying to decide how to provide the rest." (OneWorld, 20 October 2003)

International Response

Several agencies and governments envisage starting development activities in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (2003)

- The donor community has waited for the implementation of the peace agreement before starting development activities
- After a UNDP assessment mission concluded that security was improving, several organizations consider the start-up of activities from 2003
- Interest organizations of the indigenous population warn against starting development activities in the current political climate of fear for discrimination of the indigenous population

"To date no activities have been projected for the Chittagong Hill Tracts, since the donor community (including the EC) has so far maintained always considered that the 1997 Peace Agreement should first be fully implemented. However, some donors (including the EC) are now considering to start conceptualising and eventually to implement development activities in the CHT region, seeing therein, a positive impact on the peace process." (EU, Country Strategy 2002-2006)

"On 16 January 2002, European Commission approved an indicative sum of Euro € 411.5 million under the National Indicative Programme for Bangladesh for the period 2003-

2005. This includes €7.5 million for financing projects in areas such as peace building measures, community development activities as well as small projects in local communities and a longer term plan of action in the area of water and natural resources in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHTs).² Earlier, Asian Development Bank signed an agreement with the government of Bangladesh to provide US\$ 61 million to carry out development activities in the CHTs in the next seven years.[...] Although international donors resume major development activities in the CHTs from 2003, peace in the region is on a razor's edge. The Joint Risk Assessment Mission of the Government of Bangladesh, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Asian Development Bank (ADB) and other donor agencies reported an improvement

in the security situation in the CHTs in August 2002. But, the failure to implement the CHTs Peace Accord of 2 December 1997, the failure to rehabilitate the returnee Jumma refugees and internally displaced Jummas, the persistence of discriminatory policies such as provision of free rations only to the illegal Bengali settlers and the violent suppression of political formations of indigenous Jumma peoples by the Jana Samhati Samiti (JSS) in its efforts to claim as the sole representative of indigenous Jummas and the consequent violent conflicts the United Peoples Democratic Front (UPDF) – all have served to keep peace at bay.

Unless the donors address the root causes of the conflict within the framework of the Peace Accord and adopt rights-based approaches to development along with effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, development aid will fail to benefit the CHTs' indigenous peoples. Peace will remain ever elusive." (AITPN, January 2003)

The Global IDP Project has not found documentation on aid targeting internally displaced persons. Below are some links to current or planned development activities by international organizations:

EU: Country Strategy Paper

http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/bangladesh/sp/index.htm

Asian Development Bank, The Chittagong Hill Tracts Rural Development Project

<http://www.adb.org/Documents/News/2000/nr2000111.asp>

Asian Development Bank Internet Page on Bangladesh:

<http://www.adb.org/Bangladesh/default.asp>

UNDP, 14 June 2003, CHT surging into the development mainstream – people first

<http://www.un-bd.org/undp/media%20releases/CHT%20ceremony%20final.pdf>

UNDP Bangladesh Internet page:

<http://www.un-bd.org/undp/>

The UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination expressed concern about the human rights situation of the tribal population in Bangladesh (2001)

- Concerns about reports of human rights violations by security forces present in the Chittagong Hill Tracts affecting the tribal population
- Concerns about the slow progress in implementing the Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord

"[...]

4. The Committee welcomes affirmative action programmes undertaken to ensure the enjoyment of the rights contained in article 5(e) of the Convention, by the socially and economically disadvantaged groups, in particular the tribal population of the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

5. The Committee appreciates the signing of the 1997 Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord and the implementation of certain of its provisions, such as: i) the creation of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Ministry ii) the establishment of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Regional Council, and; iii) the establishment of a Land Commission for settlement of land issues.

[...]

C. Concerns and recommendations

[...]

9. The Committee is concerned about reports of human rights violations by security forces present in the Chittagong Hill Tracts affecting the tribal population, including reports of arbitrary arrests and detentions,

and ill-treatment. The Committee recommends the State party to implement effective measures to guarantee to all Bangladeshis, without distinction based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin, the right to security of person and protection by the State against violence or bodily harm.

10. Notwithstanding certain positive developments, the Committee is concerned about the slow progress in implementing the Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord. The Committee urges the State party to intensify its efforts in this regard and recommends the State party to provide in its next report details regarding, *inter alia*, the work of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Regional Council; the effective results of the work of the established Land Commission; the repatriation and rehabilitation of refugees and internally displaced persons in the Chittagong Hill Tracts; the work of the Special Task Force on Internally Displaced persons; the resettlement of Bengali settlers outside the Chittagong Hill Tracts pursuant to deliberations of the Land Commission, and the process of withdrawal of security forces from the Chittagong Hill Tracts." (UN CERD, 2001)

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Reference to the Guiding Principles in the national legislation

None

Other references to the Guiding Principles

None

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AI	Amnesty International
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
BDRCS	Bangladesh Red Crescent Society
CHT	Chittagong Hill Tracts
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
BDT	Bangladesh currency
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
MT	Metric Tons
PCJSS	Parbatya Chattaram Jana Sanghati Samiti (the organization of the tribal people of the Chittagong Hill Tracts)
RAWOO	Netherlands Development Assistance Research Council
SATP	South Asia Terrorism Portal
SAHRDC	South Asia Human Rights Documentation Centre
UN GA	United Nations General Assembly
UNPO	Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organisation
USCR	US Committee for Refugees
U.S. DOS	U.S. Department of State

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