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Sub: An appeal to save the Chakma and other tribes of the
Chittagong Hill Tracts from the total annihilation by the
Bangladesh Government.

Dear Brother,

May I present to you a report under the title, "Bangladesh - Unlawful Killings And Torture In The Chittagong Hill Tracts", published by Amnesty International in September 1986.

In this report, Amnesty International has described the Bangladesh Government's genocidal violence committed by its law enforcement personnel against the unarmed men, women and children of the Chittagong Hill Tracts. These brutal human rights abuses involved mass-killings, mass-rapings, imprisonment without charge or trial, inhuman torture, religious persecution, wholesale burning of tribal villages, and seizure of tribal farmlands and villages for the outsider Bengali settlers.

"Amnesty International believes that the Security forces of Bangladesh have systematically engaged in practices in the Chittagong Hill Tracts which violate fundamental human rights, including the right to life, the right to security of person and the right to freedom from arbitrary arrest and detention." The Bangladeshi regime is exterminating the indigenous people of the CHT on the one hand, and settling its co-religionists in their place on the other. Amnesty International has condemned the Bangladesh Government-directed terrorism against the innocent people of the CHT on the grounds that they are ethnically, religiously and culturally different from the majority community of Bangladesh. This human rights organization called upon the Government of Bangladesh to "institute an immediate and full inquiry into allegations of human rights violations" and to bring the culprits to justice. Perhaps, it is worth-mentioning that the latter did not respond. Amnesty International has accused the Government of Bangladesh of having failed to investigate or prevent gross human rights abuses in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT).

In view of the Bangladesh Government's total disregard for human rights in the CHT, "Amnesty International believes that the following measures should be adopted by the Bangladesh Government to stop the arbitrary arrest, torture and unlawful killing of tribal people living in the Chittagong Hill Tracts :

1. An impartial and independent commission of inquiry should be established to investigate all reports of unlawful killings and acts of torture committed by the security forces in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. The terms of reference, working methods, findings and recommendations of the commission should be made public in their entirety. The commission should have full access to all necessary evidence and the government should take all appropriate steps for the protection of complainants and witnesses, and should ensure that law enforcement personnel allegedly responsible for human rights abuses are required to cooperate fully with the commission.
2. Any law enforcement personnel against whom there are reasonable grounds to suspect involvement in human rights abuse should be immediately removed from any position in which they would come into contact with potential victims until such time as the allegations may prove to be unfounded. Such personnel should be prosecuted in all cases in ordinary criminal proceedings.
3. In accordance with international law, legal guarantees of the right to life and the prohibition of torture should not be suspended under

be extended to any public official. Articles 32 and 35(5) of the 1972 Constitution of Bangladesh, suspended since March 1982, which provide for the right to life and prohibition of torture respectively, should thus be restored immediately.

4. Strict control, including clear chain-of-command responsibilities should be exercised over all law enforcement personnel operating in the Chittagong Hill Tracts who are involved in the arrest, custody or interrogation of prisoners, or who are authorized to use deadly force. Procedures for arrest, interrogation and custody by military and paramilitary forces in the Chittagong Hill Tracts should be set out precisely in law or in written regulations, and kept under regular review. Procedures relating to the use of firearms by all personnel involved in law enforcement should similarly be established, according to the principles in the United Nations Code of Conduct for law enforcement officials, and the procedures should be made widely known. All detentions should be reported without delay to the appropriate judicial authority. Military, paramilitary and other law enforcement personnel acting with police powers should be required to submit reports to the appropriate civilian authorities of all arrests carried out, on a weekly or otherwise frequent basis. Reports should also be made to both superior officers and appropriate civilian authorities immediately after each occasion on which firearms are discharged during law enforcement operations. Prisoners detained by military or paramilitary forces should not be kept in conditions amounting to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. Every effort should be made to ensure that the conditions of these places of detention conform with those described in the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners.
5. The training of law enforcement personnel should include instruction on international human rights standards. It should be made clear to all law enforcement personnel that torture and the arbitrary deprivation of life are criminal acts which will be punished and that law enforcement personnel are obliged to refuse any order to commit such acts.
6. Victims of torture or the dependents of people unlawfully killed by law enforcement personnel should receive adequate financial compensation. Victims of torture should also be provided with appropriate medical care or rehabilitation.
7. The Bangladesh Government should consider granting full access to the Chittagong Hill Tracts to international observers, including journalists and representatives of international humanitarian organizations.
8. In order to help secure effective protection for human rights, not only in the Chittagong Hill Tracts but throughout Bangladesh, the Bangladesh Government should accede to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, together with its Optional Protocol, and should also sign and ratify without reservations the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment."

The Bangladeshi regime is a totally irresponsible government. It does not speak the language of justice, humanity and tolerance at all. I appeal fervently to you to compel the Government of Bangladesh to follow the above-mentioned recommendations given by Amnesty International.

With my high regards.

To
Mr. Rudolph C. Ryser,
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Yours sincerely

Ramendu