

Genocide in Bangladesh

Indians and government in Peru
Indians and the World Bank and other articles

*We want the Land,
and not the People,*

EDITORIAL

This is the first, somewhat delayed issue of the Survival International annual REVIEW, which is sent to all subscribing members of the organisation. The decision to cease publication of the quarterly REVIEW and replace it with a quarterly NEWS and an annual REVIEW was taken by the International Executive in early 1983. The quarterly REVIEW had begun to absorb a disproportionate amount of staff time and, while widely appreciated by those members of Survival International professionally concerned with tribal issues, was evidently not serving as an effective draw for new members: it was also very costly to produce.

1983 thus saw the circulation of the first three issues of Survival International NEWS which has been designed to reach a broad-based membership by providing readily accessible information on recent events concerning tribal peoples and on Survival International's activities. The overall response to the NEWS has been encouraging and it continues to improve in style, layout and content. Much of the credit for its success is owed to the untiring efforts of the volunteer editor of the NEWS, Virginia Luling.

This first issue of the annual REVIEW must be considered experimental and members are encouraged to send in suggestions as to how they would like to see future issues improved. In this issue while continuing to report on the areas on which we have previously focused—Central and South America—we have concentrated attention on the plight of the tribal peoples of Bangladesh, especially those in the Chittagong Hill Tracts where the elimination of the non-Muslim minorities has taken on genocidal proportions over the last decade and a half.

This is not the first time that we have published on the tribals' situation in the Chittagong Hills. As well as reporting in the REVIEW, we circulated a first 'Information Pack' on the issue in early 1981 and this was followed by a second circulation in April 1983 updating the information and encouraging recipients to write to the Asian Development Bank and the Bangladesh government calling upon them to moderate their policies in the Chittagong Hills. Of all the letter campaigns directed by Survival International to date, these have elicited the least response. The same unconcern for the fate of the tribal peoples of the Chittagong Hills was evinced by the wholly cynical manner with

which the Bangladesh government responded last August to a statement presented by the Anti-Slavery Society to the Working Group on Indigenous Peoples at the UN. In response to the detailed and well-documented allegations of genocide in the Chittagong Hills, the first secretary of the Bangladesh Mission, Mr Alimul Haque, raised a smoke-screen of outraged dignity. The Mission denied the validity of the Anti-Slavery Society's submission on the grounds that the Bengali people are indigenous to all Bangladesh and that 'the entire population of the territory which now comprises Bangladesh has always been and still is one people—the Bangladesh nation' and moreover that 'Bangladesh is a country with a homogeneous people'. While thus effectively denying the existence of minority tribal peoples within Bangladesh, Mr Haque also claimed that the 'paradigm situation' about which the Working Group on Indigenous Peoples should be concerned 'derived from the historical experience of countries in the Western Hemisphere and Australasia where a colonising and racially distinct people coming from overseas established settlements and entered into a situation of conflict with the autochthonous population of those countries'. By this means the Bangladesh Mission was able to evade any direct comment on the Anti-Slavery Society's allegations, but apart from the fact that the Bengali settlers currently being encouraged to enter the Chittagong Hills are not from 'overseas', Mr Haque's paradigm fits nicely the situation in south-eastern Bangladesh. Genocide remains a crime against humanity whether it be committed across or within the boundaries of nation states.

Marcus Colchester
Editor

In 1947 tribal peoples accounted for 98% of the population of the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh. Today they make up barely half. They have been displaced by hydro-power projects forcibly relocated in strategic villages, driven into exile, massacred, tortured and imprisoned in a campaign of violence that in the past decade and a half has reached genocidal proportions. This wave of Government-directed violence is movingly described by one of its exiled victims whose detailed testimony forms a major part of this report. The escalating violence claimed an estimated 10,000 victims in 1981 and 800 more in just one 1983 massacre. It has one simple, though sinister purpose, as this frank admission by senior military figures reveals: 'We want only the land and not the people of the Chittagong Hill Tracts.'

This important new report from Survival International calls for international condemnation of the continuing violence, the right to tribal self-determination and the withdrawal of non-tribal settlers and the military from the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

Other articles examine the effects of World Bank funding on tribal peoples; Amazon Indians and government in Peru; missionary activity and Indians in Ecuador and Paraguay and Indian oppression and resistance in Guatemala. (Back cover)

BANGLADESH

'We want the land and not the people': Genocide in the Chittagong Hill Tracts

The following article, written by a Chakma tribal who prefers to retain anonymity, effectively summarises the extensive documentation that exists on what is one of the most serious predicaments for tribal people anywhere in the world.

Introduction

An extraordinary state of affairs is prevailing in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT). The Bangladesh Government has been carrying out a programme of systematic extermination of the indigenous nationalities of the CHT because they are ethnically, religiously and culturally different from the Muslim Bengalis. As a result, all human rights and civil liberties have been violated; tens of thousands of innocent tribal men, women and children have been murdered; 12-15 thousand tribal people have been detained without trial, tortured and some of them killed; thousands of tribal women have been kidnapped, raped and many of them forcibly converted into Islam; tens of thousands of tribal farmers have been herded into concentration camps and their farm lands have been distributed among the outsider Muslim Bengali settlers; about 85 per cent of the tribal houses have been burned; Buddhist temples have been desecrated and destroyed; Buddhist monks have been detained without trial, tortured and some of them slaughtered and hundreds of thousands of outsider Muslim Bengalis have been rehabilitated by displacing the tribal farmers. In 1947, the tribal population and the Muslim Bengalis formed 98 per cent and less than 2 per cent of the total population of the CHT respectively. By 1982, the Muslim Bengali population accounted for more than 50 per cent of the total population in the CHT. All development works have created job opportunities exclusively for the Muslim Bengalis, whereas the tribal people are not even allowed to do business. During the British period the people of the CHT enjoyed an important degree of autonomy, the rule of law and justice, police and official protection, full employment and prosperity. However, under the

Muslim Bengali rule, they have been deprived of all human rights and forced to become landless, homeless, jobless refugees. They are facing the prospect of total extinction.

Origin

The CHT is a tribal area consisting of 5,093 square miles in the south-eastern corner of Bangladesh bordering India and Burma. It is the traditional home of 12 tribes numbering about 600,000. Ethnically they are mongoloid and culturally they are close to the ethnic groups of Burma and eastern India. The majority of them are Buddhists and the rest are either Hindus or Christians. Because of their different culture, religion and ethnic origin the tribal people suffered extreme hostility from the neighbouring Bengalis for centuries. (Reference 1-12.)

British Period

When the British arrived on the Indian subcontinent they recognised the difficult situation of the tribal people and created an autonomous area, called the Chittagong Hill Tracts, exclusively for the tribal people. It was governed directly by the Governor of Bengal and administered under the Chittagong Hill Tracts Regulation of 1900. This required that all government functionaries apart from the Deputy Commissioner, who was traditionally British, and a few high officials, be recruited locally. There was even a separate Police establishment called the Chittagong Hill Tracts Police which was mostly manned by the tribal people except the Superintendent of Police who was also British. Non-tribal people were not allowed to settle in the district permanently, nor could they purchase land from the tribal people. Under Rule 51 they could be expelled from the district if they were thought undesirable or found doing anything prejudicial to the interest of the tribal people. (Reference 1-2, 4-9.)

Schools, hospitals, carpentry, sewing machines, survey, road-building, post office, telegraph, courts, mechanised boats, waterworks, electricity, modern administration, rule of law and justice and so on were first introduced to the CHT during the British period. Weaving has been known to the tribal people since antiquity. The majority of them possessed flat farmlands in the valleys. They had developed the farmlands themselves, practised plough cultivation, used oxen and buffaloes to draw the ploughs, manured the farmlands with cow-dung and buffalo-dung, and had developed the crop rotation method. The Survey and Revenue Department was mostly manned by the tribal officers. The official records of the British period and also of the Pakistani period show these historical facts.

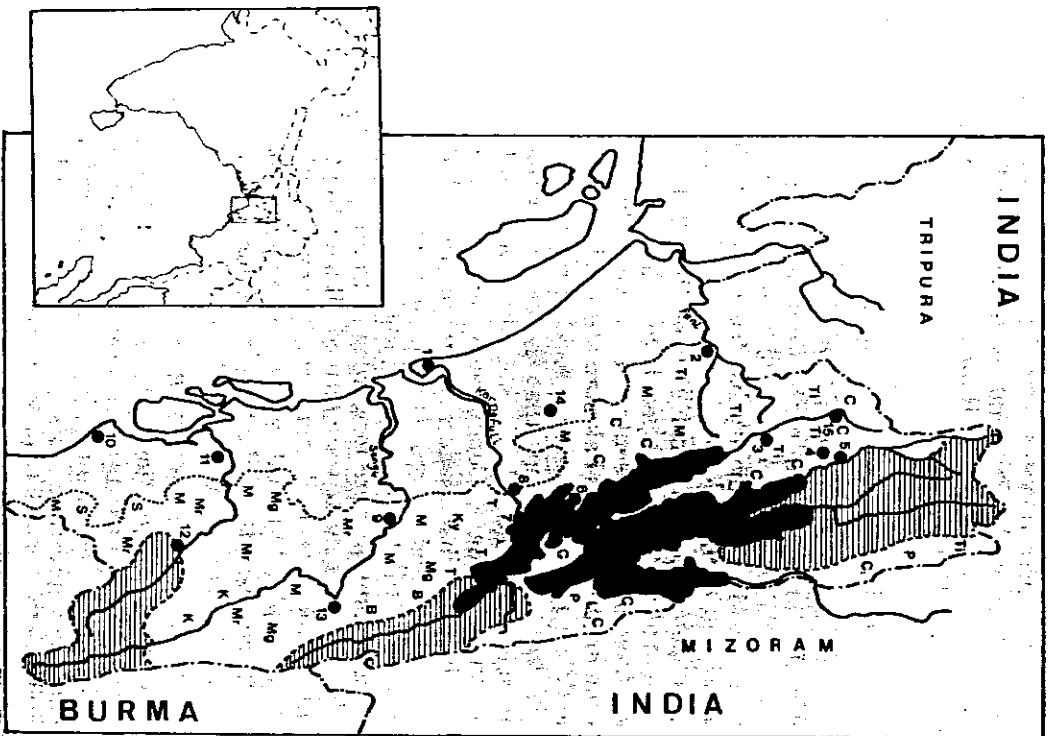
Those tribal people who did not possess flat farmlands, cultivated the hill slopes by the slash-and-burn cultivation method (*Jhum*) and also by using the 4-year rotation principle. They let the once cultivated land go fallow for a period of 3-4 years in order to recuperate, by natural process.

The British Administration encouraged the hill farmers to adopt plough cultivation and set up the Government Agricultural Farm at Rangamati and agriculture was taught in Rangamati Government High School. (Reference 1-2, 4-12.)

Pakistani Period

After Britain granted independence to India and Pakistan in 1947, Sir Cyril Radcliffe, the Chairman of the Boundary Commission, arbitrarily awarded the CHT to Pakistan in violation of the very principle of the partition, i.e. the Muslim majority districts to go to Pakistan and others to India. 98 per cent of the population of the CHT were non-Muslims at the time of independence. The inclusion of the CHT into Pakistan was bitterly resented by the tribal people and the Chittagong Hill Tracts Peoples' Association presented a memorandum to the Boundary Commission arguing that as Pakistan was the homeland for Muslims, the CHT should be made part of the secular republic of India. This was rejected on the feeble grounds that the region was not accessible from India (but see map). The CHT Peoples' Association refused to accept the terms of the Boundary Commission and convened an emergency conference of all tribal leaders including the Chakma Chief, other headmen, students and officers. They unanimously passed the resolution: 'The Chittagong Hill Tracts shall not abide by the Radcliffe Award' and copies of the resolution were forwarded to Delhi, Calcutta, Karachi and London. Resistance squads were formed all over the CHT and delegates were sent to India to seek support. However, without international support or a supply of arms they were unable to intensify their struggle and as a consequence, the Pakistani armed forces were able to suppress the popular rebellion. (Reference 1-2, 4-6.)

Under the Pakistani rule the situation in the CHT changed gradually. Although the CHT Regulation of 1900 was left standing, its rules were not observed by the Pakistani Government. Outsider Muslim Bengali officers and settlers were brought in, the tribal police force was disbanded and its officers together with other tribal civilian officers were transferred to other districts of East Pakistan. During the 24 years of Pakistani rule the tribal people lost practically all political and economic rights including official and police protection. The Muslim Bengalis even interfered with the social and religious life of the people of the CHT. For example, in 1953, the Chakma Chief, Raja Tridiv Roy was mobbed by the Government-backed Muslim Bengalis while administering justice in his Royal Court in his capacity as a magistrate. In spite of the personal intervention of the then British Deputy Commissioner, Lt. Col. John Angus Hume, OBE, he was arrested and insulted by the Muslim Bengali police. The Chakma Chief fulfils a role similar to that of the British Constitutional Monarchy. He is the symbol of the nation, head and nucleus of the society, and defender of religion and culture. The Chakma Chief would have been killed without the intervention of Col.



- KEY**
- CHT boundary
 - Karnatali Reserve
 - Forest Reserve
- ETHNIC GROUPS**
- C. Chakma
 - Ti. Tripura
 - T. Tamenglong
 - B. Baimi
 - P. Panchu
 - K. Khumi
 - L. Lushai
 - S. Sak
 - K. Khyang
 - M. Maime
 - Mg. Mgong
 - Mf. Mru
- PLACE NAMES**
- 1. Chittagong
 - 2. Rangpur
 - 3. Khagrachari
 - 4. Bogkhal
 - 5. Digbhai
 - 6. Rangnati
 - 7. Kapali
 - 8. Chandraghona
 - 9. Bandarban
 - 10. Cox's Bazar
 - 11. Cheringa
 - 12. Aitadom
 - 13. Ruma
 - 14. Faltichari
 - 15. Manachari

Hume. This highly admired British officer protested against the gross injustice by resigning his post. (Reference 1-2, 4-9.)

Large-scale Muslim Bengali settlement on the farmlands of the tribal farmers resulted in the eviction of about 100,000 tribesmen. The eviction of the largest single group of 60,000 took place in 1961 when the Muslim Bengali immigrants started rioting against the innocent tribal farmers. The riot was stopped only when the Indian and other Governments lodged protest with the Pakistani regime. The evicted tribals were pushed into India and Burma and none of them was repatriated.

The construction of a US-financed hydroelectric dam on the river Karnatali submerged 350 square miles of low lands including 40 per cent of the best arable land of the CHT, and uprooted more than 100,000 tribal farmers. The Government took no effective steps to rehabilitate them. Many tribals died during the removal and many fled to the Indian States of Tripura and Mizoram. Nor were any tribesmen employed in the construction of the dam. Although the project supplies the entire half of Bangladesh with electricity, it has not employed any tribal people and has supplied them with virtually no electricity. Other economic benefits such as fish farming and fish industries have also been exclusively allotted to the outsider Muslim Bengalis. Tribal farmlands were acquired by the Government to set up a Paper Mill and a Rayon Mill at Chandraghona and also other industries in the district. Only a few tribal people have been employed there. (Reference 1-2, 4-9.)

Bengali Period

During the 1971 war for the independence of Bangladesh, 50,000 Muslim Bengalis from the neighbouring districts, Chittagong and Noakhali, settled on the tribal farmlands with the help of the Pakistani army and following independence they refused to leave. These illegal Muslim Bengali settlers attacked the tribal people, burnt their homes, raped their women, looted properties and destroyed Buddhist temples. No action was taken by the Government in this matter. During the civil war, many tribal people sided with the Bangladeshi forces in the hope that under independence their condition would improve. When the Pakistani army withdrew from the Panchari area, the Bangladesh Mukti Bahini came, killed 18 tribal people who came out to receive them, plundered the area, and slaughtered another 16 tribesmen in an adjacent place. On 14 December 1971, the Bengali soldiers burned 200 houses at Kukichara and killed 22 tribals who took shelter in trenches. Later more atrocities followed and the tribal people were indiscriminately arrested as collaborators. (Reference 1-2, 4-9.)

Soon after independence Sheikh Mujib's Government unleashed a reign of terror in the CHT. In a military campaign to search for Rajakars and Albadars (supporters of Pakistan) several hundred innocent tribal people were killed, houses were looted and burned, and a large number of women

were raped and tortured. For example, in 1972 the Bangladeshi soldiers massacred the people of the villages—Merung, Hazachara and Boalkhali. Badly shaken by these attacks, the tribal people sent a delegation under the leadership of Mr Manabendra Narayan Larma, a Member of Parliament, to Sheikh Mujibur Rahman asking for autonomy and enforcement of the CHT Regulation of 1900. Their request was answered by charges of secessionism, massive bloody reprisals and the burning of hundreds of villages. After rejection of all peaceful ways and means of resolving the CHT crisis through the Bangladesh Government, the tribal people had no alternative but to organise the *Shanti Bahini* or 'Peace Force' with a view to resisting the Government oppression. (Reference 1-2, 4-9.)

During the period of Sheikh Mujib's regime a large number of Muslim Bengalis were allowed to settle permanently by expelling the tribal farmers. The Government's policy was designed to outnumber the tribal people with the Muslim Bengalis and to force them to lose their identity and merge with the Bengali nation. In pursuit of this policy it set up the Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board in 1975 to create more jobs for the Muslim Bengalis and also to open up the interior to the Muslim Bengali immigration. Despite the name, this body has little to do with the development of the tribal people inhabiting the area. (Reference 1-2, 4-9.)

After the overthrow of Sheikh Mujib, a tribal delegation submitted a memorandum to the then President of Bangladesh, Justice A. S. Sayem on 19 November 1975 demanding regional autonomy. The result was similar repression. Again in 1976, a further proposal was presented to President Ziaur Rahman. In response the soldier-president intensified repression and the Bangladesh armed forces massacred the innocent tribal villagers. The manner in which they tortured and slaughtered the unarmed tribal men, women and children should put even the Pakistani army tyrants to shame. For instance, on 5 March 1979, three young men of village Gargaichhari, (1) Samiran Talukder, 16 year old student of Khagrachari College, (2) Alomoy Talukder, 17 year old student of Khagrachari College, and (3) Hallwa Chakma, 16 year old farmer, were taken to the Khagrachari military camp where 'The Army made meat of them by cutting them to pieces with their own tagals (broad knife), first separating the muscles from the bones in peculiar joy'. (Reference 1-2, 4-9.)

On 25 March 1980, a local commander of the Bangladesh army forces called a meeting at Kalampati Union to discuss the problems of the locality and also the restoration of Buddhist temples. A large number of tribal people assembled on the Kaulhali Bazaar ground. The military commander arrived, addressed the assembled people, and then left. As soon as he had gone some hundred Muslim Bengalis armed with knives and spears attacked the tribal people. Behind them came the Bengali soldiers. More than 300 tribals were butchered on the spot. Then the

Bengali rioters under the protection of the Bengali soldiers burned about two dozen tribal villages in the Union, killed more innocent tribal people, kidnapped many tribal women, destroyed many Buddhist temples and murdered many Buddhist monks. (Reference 15-19.)

The Government has greatly increased the number of army and police personnel in the CHT. The number of police stations has been increased from 12 to 28. There are three cantonments at Dighinala, Runa and Aikadam. In addition to this, military, para-military and police camps have been set up in all important places, and checkpoints have been opened on all roads and waterways. An anti-guerrilla training centre has been established at Mahalchhari and there is one Naval base at Dhulyachari. Additionally the entire Bangladesh Air Force is active in the CHT. With one armed representative of the Bangladesh Government for every five tribesmen, the CHT now resembles a vast military camp. A breakdown of the total strength of the infantry and other auxiliary forces in the CHT is shown below:

Bangladesh Army	24th Inf. Div.	80,000 men
Bangladesh Rifles Sector	6 Bns	25,000 men
Ansars	2 Bns	5,000 men
Armed Police	5 Bns	10,000 men
Training Centre	—	800 men

The Bangladesh Government has built all-weather roads from Bandarban to Runa, Cheringa (on the Chittagong-Cox's Bazar Road) to Aikadam, Rangarh to Dighinala via Khagrachari, and Chittagong to Khagrachari via Fatikchhari in order to facilitate military campaigns and also to open up the interior to the Muslim Bengali settlers (Reference 1-2, 4-12.)

Uncontrolled military operations have resulted in all forms of human rights violations such as mass killings, imprisonment without trial, rape, harassment, restriction on the movement of essential commodities, persecution of the tribal people for their religious beliefs, desecration and destruction of Buddhist temples, and wholesale destruction of tribal villages. Normally the soldiers surround a village, round up all men, women and children, and then subject them to different forms of torture. The men and the boys are either shot dead or crippled by having their fingers and legs broken. Many of the victims succumb to the injuries and those who survive become invalided for life. They are not provided with any kind of medical treatment. Evidently the men and the boys are often crippled to prevent them from holding weapons. The girls and the housewives are raped. (Reference 1-2, 4-11.)

Prisoners have reported the repeated and consistent use of inhuman tactics to obtain information or to force confessions. Methods reportedly used include: severe beatings, electric shocks, uninterrupted interrogation, withholding of food and water, inadequate medical care,

standing in the sun until collapse, living and sleeping in pits exposed to the elements, and half-drownings. It is estimated that 12,000 to 15,000 tribal civilians have been jailed without charges or trial. Many of these prisoners have been shifted to prisons outside of the CHT. Inquiring family members elicit no response and no legal recourse is available to either the prisoner or their families. Thousands of tribal people have been arrested and have then disappeared. It is feared that many of them died during torture and their bodies were buried secretly outside of the CHT. For example, one Monotosh Chakma, s/o Mr Bimalananda Chakma, was arrested at Khagrachari and then taken to the Dighinala military cantonment where he was beaten to death. His body was flown to Chittagong to be disposed of secretly. The return of his mutilated body was made possible only by the intervention of Mr Ali Haider Khan, the then Deputy Commissioner of the CHT. (Reference 1-2, 4-112.)

The Bangladesh army troops detain and torture the relatives of the resistance fighters in order to force them to surrender. On 9 April 1979 at 0200 hours, the army raided the civilian quarters of Rangamati and arrested without warrant or charges more than 70 tribal civilians including young girls, old men, old women and boys. The detainees were subjected to repeated harassment, physical abuse and interrogation. Abuses included forced exposure to sun all day with eyes focused on the sun, sleeping in self-dug ditches, and beatings. The women and the girls were raped. On 16 March 1979, all men, women and children of two villages—Khabang Paria and Khagrachari were rounded up, hung from trees and beaten mercilessly. (Reference 6, 14.)

The army has forcibly moved the tribal farmers into forced resettlement camps or concentration camps. The Government describes them as 'Model villages' or 'Strategic villages' or 'Co-operative farming projects' in order to hoodwink the civilised world. The first aim of this project is to clear out vast areas of the CHT; all tribal people found in these areas are considered to belong to the resistance. Secondly, these shifts are intended to remove food and other sources of support to the resistance. Thirdly, this is designed to clear the tribal farmlands and villages of the tribesmen and then to settle the land with the outsider Muslim Bengalis. Intimidation, physical abuse and wholesale burning of village homes have been employed to force the tribal people to leave their ancestral homes and farmlands. No compensation has been paid to them. Concentration camps have been established in Bilaichari Union, Moghban Union, Balukhali Union and some in the Ramgarh and Bandarban sub-divisions. Rape, beating, starvation, lack of medical care and so on in the concentration camps have been frequently reported by the tribal people. Life in the concentration camps under the Bangladesh armed forces is so horrifying that when the Government decided to set up another camp at Ghaagra the tribal people deserted their ancestral homes and farmlands and fled to other areas. (Reference 1-2, 4-9.)

The Chakma, like many of the peoples of the CHT, are Buddhists.



Anti-Slavery Society

The tribal people are being persecuted for their religious beliefs. The Buddhist temples are looted and destroyed, the Buddhist monks are tortured and killed, and the statues of the Buddha are desecrated and destroyed. For instance, on 25 March 1980, the army and the Muslim Bengalis attacked the Buddhist temples in the Kalamapati Union. Eight temples were looted and destroyed, and many monks were tortured and murdered. The Maischhari Buddhist temple, some 40 miles north of Rangamati, was desecrated and occupied for eight months by the Bangladesh armed police on the ground that the Government forces had nowhere to live. A petition about the matter to the Deputy Commissioner and the Superintendent of Police had no effect. A number of tribal people have been forcibly converted to Islam. Thousands of tribal women have been kidnapped and many of them have also been forced to embrace Islam. The army prevents tribal people from practising their own religion. Chittamarang, some 20 miles south of Rangamati, is the holiest of all places for the Buddhists of the CHT, and the Buddhists from every corner of the district have gone there on pilgrimage. The army has set up a checkpoint on the way to the Buddhist temple. People going there are asked for their identity cards (special cards are required only of the tribal people) and thoroughly searched. Harassment has increased to such an extent that few people dare go to the temple. Many Buddhist monks have been imprisoned without trial. There have been numerous further instances of such abuses, which have been amply documented elsewhere. (Reference 4-7, 15-19, 1-2, 4-74.)

The Bangladesh Government has been trying to cover up all the monstrous crimes it has committed against the defenceless tribal people. The CHT has been sealed off and foreign journalists are not allowed to visit the places of alleged atrocities and massacres on the grounds that the presence of large numbers of 'wild boars and elephants' makes free movement hazardous and that a journey might be dangerous because, the Bangladesh Authorities claim, 'today we are afraid of going into the interior because of malaria'. On 25 March 1980, the Bangladesh army carried out the Kalamapati Massacre in which over 300 tribals were murdered and two dozens of tribal villages were destroyed. Under pressure from the press, from the Humanitarian organisations and from Members of Parliament the Government reluctantly ordered a Committee of Inquiry but it never reported. Perhaps it is noteworthy that the Bangladesh Government has denied all accusations of genocide committed by the Bangladesh armed forces against innocent tribal people. However, a confidant of Ziaur Rahman is reported to have said: 'We are doing something wrong there. We are being unfair to the tribes. It is a political problem that is being dealt with by police and army action, yet it can be settled politically very easily. We have no basis for taking over these lands and pushing the tribes into a corner. We should at least call a meeting of these tribal leaders and ask them their demands'. (Reference 24-25, 15-19.)

In December 1980, the Government introduced a new Bill, the **Disturbed Areas Act of 1980**, in Parliament with a view to creating a legal basis for genocide in the CHT. This would authorise junior uniformed personnel as low-ranking as Sub-Inspector of police or NCO in the army to make arbitrary arrest and open fire on any person 'engaged in any unlawful activity' in areas declared to be 'disturbed'. Unlawful activities were defined as 'any action prejudicial to the sovereignty or territorial integrity... or security of Bangladesh or the maintenance of public order'. Among other sweeping powers, the application of which would be immune from challenges in any courts, were that police and defence forces could enter any premises to conduct a search, destroy a house believed to be used as an ammunition or explosive dump, and confiscate property. The Bill met strong opposition from MPs of various parties. The Government admitted that the Bill was 'tailored to curb insurgency in the south-eastern district of the Chittagong Hill Tracts'. A Member of Parliament from the CHT, Mr Upendra Lal Chakma commented 'That really let the cat out of the bag. The Government is looking for a genocidal solution of the problems of the ethnic minorities up there'. (Reference 26-29.)

As a result of military campaigns thousands of tribal families have taken shelter in the forest and have been living on roots and leaves. They could not return to their homes because their villages had already been occupied by the outsider Muslim Bengali settlers. Many tribals and all young children died of starvation. The Government does not allow anybody to carry essential commodities such as rice, salt, kerosene, cloth and medicine beyond the district capital, Rangamati. The tribal people are not permitted to buy more than 2 kilograms of rice per family per week. A family has normally six members and this amount of food is totally inadequate for six people. There is serious shortage of these articles in the CHT and most of the tribal people suffer from lack of food. A special permit is required to carry medicine. To get such a permit a tribal must go to government centres which are usually miles away from the villages. On the way there are military and police checkpoints where the tribal people are often harassed, tortured and detained in pits without food and water. Some of them die during torture. Raping of tribal women is a commonplace and so they dare not go out of their villages. In effect, the tribal people are being forcibly deprived of medicine and other daily necessities. As a consequence, malaria has broken out on an epidemic scale in the CHT. Currently, large numbers of tribal people are dying of malaria and of other diseases. The Bangladeshi regime is adopting every inhuman method to get rid of the indigenous nationalities of the CHT. (Reference 30-34, 22, 10, 5, 6.)

Large-scale Muslim Bengali settlement in the CHT came hard on the heels of the military campaigns. Although the Government denies having settled any outsider Muslim Bengalis in the CHT, 25,000 families (25,000 x 6 members per family = 150,000) had been rehabilitated by the middle

of 1980 (FIRST PHASE). Official 'secret' documents smuggled out of Bangladesh show that another batch of 100,000 families (5,000 families from each district x 20 districts, ie over half a million Muslim Bengalis) had been settled by 1981 (SECOND PHASE). In 1947, the tribal population accounted for 98 per cent and the Bengali (both Hindus and Muslims) population formed 2 per cent of the total population of the CHT. The Muslim Bengali population had risen to 9 per cent in 1951, to 11.6 per cent in 1974, and to 39 per cent by the middle of 1981. The THIRD PHASE of Muslim Bengali rehabilitation programme would bring another batch of 250,000 Muslim Bengalis and its work is almost finished. It is estimated that the Muslim Bengali population forms well over 50 per cent of the total population of the CHT at the time of writing this report (November 1983). The Government has provided the Muslim settlers with free transport, food and protection. Each family has been given five acres of hilly land, four acres of mixed land, and two and a half acres of paddy land.

Land is not an abundant resource in the CHT. The region is hilly and one third of the area is set aside as Reserved Forest. Level land suitable for plough cultivation has never been abundant: only a small proportion of the valleys are flat, the greater part being highly dissected terrain of steep-sided hillocks. The construction of the *Kaptai Hydroelectric Project* flooded 40 per cent of the CHT's arable land and the land shortage in the area became just as acute as in the plains districts of central Bangladesh. It was for this reason that the then Government of Pakistan could not rehabilitate even 16,000 of the total 100,000 tribal farmers displaced by the flooding. The CHT was not thinly populated and the Government's *Master Plan* clearly stated 'as far as its developed resources are concerned, the Hill Tracts is as constrained as the most thickly populated District (of Bangladesh) ... the emptiness of the Hill Tracts, therefore, is a myth'.

Where then has the Government been settling the Muslim Bengalis? The answer is quite obvious. The army cleared the remaining ploughland areas of the tribal farmers by either forcible eviction or herding them into concentration camps. 'The primary task of the armed forces is to seize land for, and ensure the security of, new Muslim settlements.' According to a Bangladesh political source, 'The local authorities usually go to a tribal area which is to be allocated to the Muslim settlers, and mark it out sometimes by putting in pegs. Then a small army patrol sets up tents and the settlers start coming in. The settlers abuse the local tribesmen. They take their stock. They have been reported to have burned down their houses. They certainly treat the tribals very badly. When the tribals complain to the police and the army, nothing is done. Eventually the tribals just move out.' (Reference 1-9, 29, 24.)

During the British period a tribal family could hold 25 acres of land. The Pakistani regime reduced this quota to 10 acres and the Bangladeshi military junta has reduced it further to five acres. This law has never

been applied to any parts of Bangladesh except the CHT. On the other hand, the Muslim Bengalis can hold unlimited land. Even the present 'Land Reforms Committee' has recommended fixing of land holding ceiling for each Bengali family at 25-33 acres. Now the army is compelling the tribal farmers to surrender all their lands in order to accommodate the Muslim Bengalis. For example, Mr Gogendra Lal Dewan and Mr Probodh Chandra Dewan (relatives of the Chakma Chief) had to give up their lands to rehabilitate the outsiders of the Chakma Chief. Similarly, thousands of others are being driven out of their ancestral lands. Those who try to protest are summarily driven out or taken to army camps where they are detained into the pits ...' (Reference 41-42.)

Almost the entire valleys of the Feni, the Ichamati, the Karnafuli, the Sengu and the Matamuri rivers have been forcibly occupied by the outsider Muslim Bengali settlers. The massive Muslim Bengali rehabilitation programme has recently been accelerated and very soon the same thing will happen to the fertile valleys of the Chengi, the Mayuni and the Kachalong rivers. The indigenous people of the CHT are facing the prospect of extinction. This desperate situation has prompted the tribal people to appeal to the donor countries for complete withdrawal of their aid to Bangladesh. They also appealed to the civilised world to protect them and also their homeland from the violent Muslim Bengalis invasion. Sweden responded to their appeal by winding down their *Forest Development Programme* after failing to win sufficient reassurances from the Bangladeshi Government that the tribal people would be the ones to benefit. Australia also pulled out of the *Chengi Valley Road Project* after recognising the fact that the road had been used to facilitate military access to the area and to open up the hinterland to the Muslim Bengali immigrants. (Reference 43-45, 12.)

Since April 1981, the Bangladeshi regime had done away with the tribal social and administrative systems including the *Chieftainship* and the *Headship* which Britain recognised by enacting the *Chittagong Hill Tracts Regulation of 1900*. This Regulation is a civilised law and it guarantees the social, economic and political rights of the indigenous people of the CHT. The abolition of the Regulation means to deprive the tribal people of their rights: for this reason they will continue to abide by it in letter and in spirit. Three new districts, *Bandarban*, *Rangamati* and *Khagrachari* have already been carved out of the CHT and the present military junta has a plan to rename the CHT as, merely the *Hill Tracts*. The policy of the Bangladeshi Government is designed to destroy the identity of the tribal people and to disintegrate the CHT. (Reference 41, 1-2, 4-7.)

All successive governments of Bangladesh have carried out the programme of systematic annihilation of the people of the CHT. The Sattar Government relentlessly pursued this anti-tribal policy and the present military regime of Lt.-Gen. Hossain Mohammad Ershad is vigorously continuing the genocidal policy with the usual Islamic

zealotry and brutality. For example, on 26 June 1981, the Muslim Bengali settlers started a riot 'under the protective umbrella of the Government' in a vast tribal area which extends for a radius of about 11 miles. The three-day carnage along with looting and arson in the vicinity of **Banraibari, Belkali and Belchari** resulted in the killing of 500 innocent tribal men, women and children. Thousands of tribal people had been forced to seek refuge in the Indian state of Tripura and many more fled into the forest. The outsider Muslim Bengali settlers grabbed the tribal villages and farmlands. (Reference 46-51.)

On 19 September 1981, the Bangladesh army, the Bangladesh Rifles and the Muslim Bengali settlers made co-ordinated attacks on the tribal people of 35 villages including **Telafang, Ashalong, Gurangapara, Tabalchari, Barnala** etc. in the Feni valley of **Ramgarh** and **Khagrachari** Sub-divisions. Thousands of unarmed tribals were murdered, tribal villages were plundered and burned and thousands of tribal people were compelled to flee into the neighbouring Indian territory of Tripura. Thousands of tribals including most of the young children died on their way to Tripura. Some were drowned while swimming the Feni river into Tripura. Hundreds of children died in the refugee camps in Tripura of measles and gastric disorders. In all about 10,000 tribals died as a result of the massacres of 26 June and 19 September 1981. Perhaps it is noteworthy that the Bangladeshi regime had denied the influx of tribal refugees from the CHT to Tripura. However, under tremendous pressure from the press, humanitarian organisations, conscientious people and many humane countries, the Bangladesh Government was forced to repatriate some 18,000 tribal refugees. These tribal people were met at the border by hostile Bangladeshi officials and were given the equivalent of \$8 and were left to their fate. Return to their native villages is, of course, impossible for these refugees because their homes and possessions have been appropriated by Bengali "settlers", so they join the tens of thousands of homeless now in the Hill Tracts. Harassed by government authorities, unable to flee the country and without any means of support, they live in limbo in a land where the quality of tribal life approaches the infernal. It is believed that they have been moved to a concentration camp. Their fate is still unknown. (Reference 52-72, 22, 31.)

The Bangladesh military junta has made a secret plan to force the tribal people to become Muslims. With this end in view, it has established an **Islamic Preaching Centre at Rangamati**, the capital of the CHT. **Saudi Arabia** is financing the construction of a big Mosque and also an **Islamic Cultural Centre at Rangamati**. The Bangladesh Government has built hundreds of Mosques throughout the CHT as part of its plan to Islamise the tribal homeland. Recently the **Marital Law Government** secretly circulated a letter to all army officers now stationed in the CHT, encouraging them to marry tribal girls with a view to assimilating the tribal people. (Reference 41,2,4,6.)

The Bangladesh Government's genocidal policy against the innocent

tribal people continues unabated. For example, on 26 June, 11, 26, 27 July and 9, 10, and 11 August 1983, the Bangladesh armed forces and the Muslim Bengali settlers massacred the tribal people of the villages within **Panchari Thana** (police station) including, amongst others, **Golakpatimachara, Machayachara, Tarabanchari Logang, Tarabanya, Maramachyachara, Jedamachyachara** etc. Hundreds of tribal houses were looted and burned and 800 innocent tribal men, women and children were butchered. Most of the victims were old people, women and children. The old people and the women were either shot dead or hacked to death. Young children were lifted up bodily by their limbs and smashed to the ground. **Venerable Bodhipal Bhikku**, the Head Monk of the **Banavihar Buddhist Temple of Jedamachyachara** village was severely beaten on 11 August 1983 and had no alternative but to flee to Tripura. During their co-ordinated attacks, the Bangladesh Air Force commences by bombing the villages; helicopter gunships are also frequently used. Then the army and the para-military forces swiftly move in, followed by the Muslim Bengali settlers armed with knives, spears and light weapons. After clearing the area of the tribal people, the Government brings in the Muslim Bengali families to settle them on the farmlands of the tribal farmers. (Reference 73-74.)

The Bangladeshi regime is fundamentally hostile to the indigenous nationalities of the CHT. On 26 May 1979, **Brigadier Hannan** and **Lt-Col. Salam** declared in a public meeting at **Panchari**: 'We want only the land, and not the people of the Chittagong Hill Tracts'. **Mr Ali Haider Khan**, the Deputy Commissioner of the CHT and **Mr Abdul Awal**, the former Commissioner of Chittagong Division, warned the tribal leaders several times by saying that they could be extinct in the next five years. (Reference 6.)

The tribal people are helpless in the face of this invasion. They desperately need the protection of the rest of the world since the Bangladeshi regime does not speak the language of justice, humanity and tolerance. Moreover Islamic fundamentalism is growing rapidly in Bangladesh; in these hostile circumstances the tribal people will not survive unless the international community protects them. In view of the extreme hostility of the Bangladeshi regime the following measures are deemed absolutely necessary in order to ensure their survival:

- 1 Immediate release of all tribal people imprisoned in jails and detention centres in different parts of Bangladesh.
- 2 Immediate withdrawal of all non-tribal settlers from the CHT.
- 3 Immediate withdrawal of all Bangladesh armed forces including the non-tribal police force from the CHT.
- 4 Retention of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Regulation of 1900 and constitutional provision restricting the amendment of the Regulation.
- 5 Autonomy for the Chittagong Hill Tracts with its own legislature and recognition of the tribal people's right to self-determination.
- 6 Deployment of the United Nations peace keeping force in the CHT and

supervision of the said operations under the auspices of the UNO.

Bangladesh is heavily dependent on foreign aid. She cannot ignore world opinion. If all humane countries stand unitedly on the Human Rights issue and bring pressure to bear on the Government of Bangladesh then it will be compelled to change its genocidal policy against the indigenous nationalities of the CHT. The Bangladeshi regime cannot go against the wishes of the civilised world. The donor countries are well placed to bring pressure against the Bangladesh Government. The indigenous people of the CHT need your help in their just struggle for survival from the violent Muslim Bengali invasion.

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Militarisation of the Bandarban District

In May, 1981, the Government of Bangladesh carved a new District out of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) with a total area of 1,127,035 acres and named it the Bandarban District. So far, 6,700 acres of this land have been allotted to settlers, mainly Bengalis, but also to some tribal peoples. A further 175,000 acres are currently designated as Reserved Forest. The remaining 78 per cent is *Khas Tila* land (Government Trust Land, originally so classified to protect tribals from expropriation). The *Khas Tila* land is now administered by the Department for Unclassified State Forest (USF).

Survival International has learnt that the tribal peoples are losing control of their land in the new Bandarban district at an alarming rate. Three processes are apparently at work:

- 1 Land is acquired by government authorities.
- 2 Land is acquired through false deeds and documents.
- 3 Land is forcibly occupied by Bengali invaders.

A legal process exists by which Government can acquire control over lands, both *Khas* and *Jhum* (slash and burn) cultivated lands, according to a set scale of rates of compensation by a number of means. The first and to perhaps the most common, is to remove land from its set category and to falsely reclassify it as lower value land. Furthermore, since the tribal people do not understand the procedure for getting compensation for their lands, they are obliged to negotiate through Bengali middlemen who fill up the forms for them and then submit them to the USF office. 'The unscrupulous middlemen take the lion's share of their money. Sometimes they even disappear with all the money. The tribal people return home with empty hands.'

Land thus acquired is then available for settlement. However, very discriminatory procedures ensure that tribal peoples regain a very small proportion of their territory. The procedure officially admits for each tribal family to acquire up to 5 acres of cultivable land and a fund of Tk 6,000/= in cash for cultivation, and is supposedly restricted to tribal people. In fact the Government uses the procedure to settle Bengali farmers on the land and, in addition to the 5 acres and the Tk 6,000/=, provides Tk 15,000/= for house construction; a fund not mentioned at all in rehabilitating the tribals.

The Bengali settlers are given the best cultivable land. More than one person from a Bengali family (a father as well as his adult son) can get land allotted in their names separately. But in the case of a tribal family, only the father of the family can get a land allotment. A Bengali family is given Tk 6,000/= at a time. But a tribal family is never given Tk 6,000/= at a time. The tribals are given money on a daily basis at the rate of Tk 20/= per day. Most of the tribals live 20 to 30 miles away and some of them more

than 60 miles away. Because of the hilly terrain, it may take one week or more to cover this distance. They have to come either on foot or by boat. Therefore it is very difficult for them to collect money daily from the USF office. They have either to stay at Bandarban for a long time or to leave with only a small amount of money. The chairman of Balpara UP reported that four given all of their money. The chairman of Balpara UP reported that four families from his locality were collecting money daily, as they were able to stay in their relatives' house at Bandarban, but the money was stopped after three months and the officers said that the full amount had already been given. It was not possible for the illiterate tribals to prove the officers wrong, because they cannot count.

There is a prescribed form to apply for allotment of cultivable land. The tribals have to submit it to the SDO's or DC's office after getting it signed by the Tribal Headman. The Headman's Paskar (clerk) refuses to get the application signed by the Headman until he is paid at least Tk 100/= as a bribe. In the case of Bengali settlers no such signature is required. The tribal people are so poor that it is quite impossible for them to give Tk 100/= at a time to the Paskar. Therefore, their applications remain unsigned and the application form is never even returned to them.

As a consequence of this highly discriminatory procedure the majority of families being resettled in the Bandarban District are Bengalis. Partial data collected between 1980 and 1982 indicate that while 5,850 Bengali families were rehabilitated, only 130 tribal families were resettled in the same period. The disproportion in term of acreage is even greater.

Tribal land is also directly expropriated by the Military authorities, who have secretly declared the whole CHT as an operational area. They have divided the Bandarban District into three zones: a Green Region is opened to peoples favouring the Government, ie. Bengalis; a White Region, inhabited by both tribals and Bengalis, is defined as a two-mile swathe surrounding the 'Zonal Martial Law Authorities'; the Red Region, where only tribals live, is the area where the Bangladeshi army is facing severe resistance from the *Shanti Bahini* (an organised militia of tribal people). Entry into the Red Region is strictly prohibited.

Military authorities can do whatever they like in the Bandarban District. They acquire vast areas for their camps, residences, playgrounds, etc, without paying compensation for the acquired land. They help the Bengali settlers to build their houses and help them with the aid of modern weapons to occupy tribal land. In fact, the military authorities are the real administrators of Bandarban. All administrations are run through them. The local authorities are there only for signing papers, because no development work can be done without clearance from the military authorities.

Reports indicate that entire village clusters (*mouzas*) have been taken over from the tribals. For example, in January 1983 the army drove away the inhabitants from Uttar Hangor, Daklun Hangor and Tonkaboti. No compensation was paid to the tribespeople.

The normal livelihood of the tribals has been disturbed in various ways.

They are prohibited from cutting wood in the forest and from carrying on their traditional practice of slash and burn cultivation, so they are facing near starvation.

Not having any other alternatives, they get money from Bengalis by mortgaging their land for a certain period. On their failing to return the money at the end of the period, the land is permanently taken over by the Bengalis. Sometimes the Bengalis with the collaboration of dishonest officers produce false deeds and occupy the tribals' land by showing these false deeds. The tribals cannot get any legal assistance from the court, because all these personnel are Bengalis.

Some outsider Bengalis are so brutal and aggressive that they attack the tribals with lathis kodals and knives and even with modern weapons. The tribal houses are burnt and their properties are looted by these unscrupulous outsiders. It was reported that the army as well as other law enforcing authorities back the Bengalis for carrying out their illegal activities. The tribals flee away from their homes in fear and their land is then occupied by the Bengalis.

Fears have been expressed that the tribals of the area may become extinct in a few years. As it is, deprived of their land and livelihood, their ethnic identity is under immediate threat.

(This report is based on an anonymous communication from Bangladesh. *Ed.*)

Survival International Annual Review (1983): No 43
29, Craven St, London WC2N 5NT. Tel: 01-839 3267

© Survival International 1984

ISSN 0308 2857

Designed, typeset and printed by Calvert's Press (TV), 55 Mount Pleasant,
London WC1. 01-278 7177
Cover: Chittagong tribal Photo: Anti-Slavery Society



SURVIVAL INTERNATIONAL
for the rights of threatened tribal peoples

THE GENOCIDE CONVENTION

ARTICLE I

The Contracting Parties confirm that genocide whether committed in time of peace or in time of war, is a crime under international law which they undertake to prevent and to punish.

ARTICLE II

In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- (a) Killing members of the group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

ARTICLE III

The following acts shall be punishable:

- (a) Genocide;
- (b) Conspiracy to commit genocide;
- (c) Direct and public incitement to commit genocide;
- (d) Attempt to commit genocide;
- (e) Complicity in genocide.

ARTICLE IV

Persons committing genocide or any other acts enumerated in article III shall be punished, whether they are constitutionally responsible rulers, public officials or private individuals.