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and Protection of Minorities

GENEVA

Working Group on Indigenous Populations

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The Jumma Representative's Statement on the precarious situation of the Jumma people of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Region of Bangladesh.

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Madame Chairman, Honourable Members of the Working Group and Ladies and Gentlemen,

May I take this opportunity to introduce myself - I am Ramendu Shekhar Dewan and I am a Chakma from the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) region of Bangladesh. The Jumma people (the people of the CHT) have advised me to seek your help in their just struggle for survival from the Bangladeshi invasion.

I am offering the following for the information of the Working Group during its review of developments of the past year. I hope that this information will assist the Working Group in understanding the situation so that the standard setting function will be most effective.

Perhaps, it is worth-mentioning that the Bangladesh official Delegate presented to you many misleading information last year. For example, the Bangladesh Ambassador quoted a report from the Far Eastern Economic Review (FEER) of 23 March, 1989 to prove my statement baseless. The former Editor-in-Chief of the FEER, Mr. Derek Davies claimed in his report that Mrs. Shobha Chakma "had not been to Tripura, never" to refute a report issued by the Jana Samhati Samiti (JSS = the only political party in the CHT) that Mrs. Shobha Chakma of Naran Khiya village had sought refuge in the Tripura State of India for her life after her husband Mr. Arabindu Chakma and many of her neighbours were killed by the Bangladeshi invaders. After learning that the Bangladesh Government has been utilizing Mr. Davies's report to cover up its genocidal atrocities in the CHT, the JSS sent Mrs. Chakma's photograph, her identity/ration card as a refugee, her address at the Karbook Refugee Camp in Tripura and all the other proof of her flight to India to Mr. Davies and asked him for a correction. This journalist has neither published the JSS's letter in the FEER nor has he apologised to the JSS for publishing a false and fabricated report about Mrs. Shobha Chakma. The fact is that the Bangladesh Government, as part of its disinformation campaign, arranged a carefully military-guided tour for Mr. Davies in the CHT. It meticulously stage-managed every thing for his visit and even forced Devi Tripura to pose as Mrs. Shobha Chakma. The lady Mr. Davies interviewed was not Mrs. Shobha Chakma and the photograph he displayed in the FEER was not of her either. The Bangladesh Government completely misled him and through him it made an attempt to mislead the entire civilized world as well. ....page 2/-

as well. Needless to say, Mr. Davies's false and contrived report has outraged human rights groups as it has helped the Government of Bangladesh to conceal the genocide of Jumma people being combinedly carried out by the Bangladesh security forces and the Bangladeshi infiltrators. The Anti-Slavery Society has demanded apology from Mr. Davies and the Interim Director of the Pacific Asia Council of Indigenous Peoples, Mr. Hayden F. Burgess has also taken the matter up with Mr. Davies.

On the orders of the Bangladesh Army, the members of the Village Defence Party and the Bangladeshi infiltrators combinedly massacred the Jumma people in Longadu area murdering at least fifty men, women and children on 4 May, 1989. Under intense pressure from the international community, the Bangladeshi regime very reluctantly has set up an inquiry committee but the culprits have not yet been punished. The committee also has not yet made the report public because Maj. Gen. Abdus Salam, the GOC of the Chittagong Division of the Bangladesh Army, and several highest Authorities of Bangladesh had instructed the local military officers to carry out the Longadu massacres. In fact, the Government of Bangladesh tried to hush up the matter by suppressing news about the massacres and by preventing the Jumma people from going to Dhaka in order to demonstrate against the Longadu mass-killings. Taking the risk of the Government reprisal, the Chakma Raja Devashish Roy and 21 prominent Jumma leaders submitted a memorandum to the Government on 9 May, 1989, demanding actions against those who were responsible for the killings. Because of their protest, the Government could not cover up the Longadu massacres. So the Government took revenge against the Chakma Raja by placing him under house arrest for three days and prevented him from speaking at a Buddhist ceremony to commemorate the dead. Maj. Gen. Abdus Salam and Brig. Shafat are directly responsible for insulting the Chakma Raja. The Government has not yet taken any actions against these two insolently disrespectful officers. Perhaps, it is noteworthy that the Chakma Raja enjoys a special status. He is the Symbol of the nation, Head and Nucleus of the society and Defender of religion and culture. Even during the British rule, nobody except the Governor-General in Council could issue an order to arrest the Chakma Raja. Nothing could be more insulting to the Jumma people than the arrest of him.

Apart from the Longadu massacres, the Bangladesh security forces in league with the Bangladeshi infiltrators have committed over eight hundred human rights violations against the helpless Jumma people in 1989. These violations involved all sorts of genocidal atrocities starting from looting, arson, forcible eviction, rape, extortion, religious persecution to torture, detention without charge or trial and murder. Here I give a few examples just to make you aware of what is happening in the CHT.

#### A. MURDER

1. On 16 August, 1989, the Bangladeshi infiltrators in league with the 9th Engineers Corps of the Bangladesh Army from the Army Camp at Nania Char attacked the Jumma people in Nania Char area. The invaders looted valuable things, burnt houses, seriously wounded at least fifty five men, women and children, and murdered at least four people. Some are still missing. The following Jummas were murdered:
  - (i) Mr. Subhash Basu Chakma, 28 yrs old, the son of Bira Bahu Chakma, of Shikal Para village in No. 78 Bagchhari Mouza within Nania Char Upazilla (Sub-District).
  - (ii) Mr. Man Kumar Dewan, 40 yrs old, the son of Mr. Kiran Chandra Dewan, of Ramhari Para village in Choto Mahapuram Mouza within Nania Char Upazilla.
  - (iii) Mr. Pratibha Ranjan Chakma, 41 yrs old, the son of Mr. Hirsansen Chakma, of Mubhachari village within Mahalchhari Upazilla.
  - (iv) Mr. Tapan Jyoti Chakma, 25 yrs old, the son of Mr. Hriday Ranjan Chakma, of Para Chari village within Nania Char Upazilla.
2. On 19 March, 1989, five Jummas were returning home after collecting firewood from a nearby forest. Then the personnel of the 7th Battalion of the Bangla Desh Rifles (BDR) from the Gach Kaba Chara BDR camp arrested them without warrant and took them to the BDR camp. Next day they were taken outside the camp and shot. Four of them died on the spot and the other one was seriously wounded. The victims were:
  - (i) Mr. Grita Ranjan Chakma (alias Ellua), 28 yrs old, the son of Mr. Debendra Chakma, of No. 160 Toibang Mouza in Bara Harina Union within Barkal Upazilla, was shot dead.
  - (ii) Mr. Sadhan Chandra Chakma, 35 yrs old, the son of Mr. Dasarath Chakma, of the above-mentioned address, was shot dead.
  - (iii) Mr. Nanda Kumar Chakma, 24 yrs old, the son of Mr. Dabana Chakma, of the above-mentioned address, was shot dead.
  - (iv) Mr. Mani Chakma, 27 yrs old, the son of Mr. Hira Mani Chakma, of the above-mentioned address, was shot dead.
  - (v) Mr. Anil Kumar Chakma, 28 yrs old, the son of Mr. Biranga Mohan Chakma, of No. 162 Chiba Bara Harina Mouza within Barkal Upazilla, was wounded seriously.

#### B. RAPE

1. On 2 March, 1989, Lt. Col. Shaidul Islam of the 14 East Bengal Regiment of the Bangladesh Army from the Mainee Mukh Zone, planned to massacre the inhabitants of Baradam village. So he instructed the members of the local Village Defence Party and Bangladeshi infiltrators to attack the said village. The raiders looted stocks, money & ornaments, beat up men & children, and raped women & girls. Then they took some fifty seven men, women & children hostage, blind-folded them, and took them to a....page 4/-

them to a jungle. There again the Jumma men and children were tortured and the Jumma women and girls were raped by the kidnapers. Fortunately the Jummas from neighbouring villages came to their rescue. Otherwise all the hostages would have been massacred by the men of Lt. Col.

Shaidul Islam. The raped girls and women are:

- (i) Miss Ripana Chakma, 14 yrs old, the daughter of Mr. Nakul Chandra Chakma.
- (ii) Miss Jyotsna Chakma, 17 yrs old, the daughter of Mr. Sudarshan Chakma.
- (iii) Miss Parabina Chakma, 13 yrs old, the daughter of Mr. Birendra Chakma.
- (iv) Mrs. Shrabani Chakma, 25 yrs old, the wife of Mr. Bhagirath Chakma.
- (v) Mrs. Arpana Devi Chakma, 21 yrs old, the wife of Mr. Natun Chandra Chakma. And so on.....

2. On 19 July, 1989, Major Rafique and soldiers of the 32 East Bengal Regiment of the Bangladesh Army from the Army Camp at Bodong Para village in Ramgarh Upazilla shot dead (i) Mr. Maung Kue Marma, 60 yrs old, the son of Mr. Khoiyong Marma, of Danglong Para village in Barthali within Ramgarh Upazilla, and gang-raped his 16 yr old daughter (ii) Miss Aboi Marma. On the same day, these Army personnel also gang-raped (iii) Mrs. Patpadima Chakma, 33 yrs old, the wife of Mr. Nilarath Chakma, of Kamajya Para village in Guimara within Ramgarh Upazilla, and beat up her 11 yr old daughter, (iv) Miss Chandra Bala Chakma.

#### C. TORTURE

1. On 11 January, 1989, Capt. Aleem of the 31 East Bengal Regiment of the Bangladesh Army from the Kukichara Army Camp in Khagrachari Upazilla ordered 3 Jummas to report to the Army Camp. In compliance with his order, they went to the Army Camp where the Army officer accused them of having link with the Shanti Bahini and of having supplied food to the members of the Shanti Bahini although they were totally innocent. Still Capt. Aleem subjected them to inhuman torture. The victimised Jummas are:
  - (i) Mr. Rajendra Lal Tripura, 65 yrs old, the son of the late Purba Dhan Tripura, of No. 4 Forest Joutha Khamar in No. 259 Jur Maram Mouza within Khagrachari Upazilla.
  - (ii) Mr. Chandra Bikash Roaza, 45 yrs old, the son of the late Kumar Dhan Roaza, of the above-mentioned address.
  - (iii) Mr. Amarendra Lal Roaza, 55 yrs old, a Member of the Union Parishad, the son of the late Kumar Dhan Roaza, of the above-mentioned address.
2. On 20 February, 1989, Major Salim and Subedar Bashir of 2 East Bengal Regiment of the Bangladesh Army from the Laxmi Chari Army camp raided Dewan Para village in Laxmi Chari Upazilla and tortured the villagers for supporting the 5-point demands of the JSS. The oppressors beat up them, forced water through their noses, and threw them into pits for days without food and water. Among the many victims were:

Mr. Shukla...page 5/-

- (i) Mr. Shukla Kumar Chakma, 40 yrs old, the son of Mr. Areiya Chakma.
- (ii) Mr. Mana Kumar Dewan, 18 yrs old, the son of Mr. Kalendra Dewan.
- (iii) Mr. Rohini Chakma, 35 yrs old, the son of Mr. Jugal Chandra Chakma.
- (iv) Mr. Laxmi Kumar Chakma, 30 yrs old, the son of Mr. Hengotya Chakma.

#### D. RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION

1. On 24 June, 1989, Major Shafat and soldiers of the Bangladesh Army Camp at Karikhyong in Rangamati Upazilla launched military operations against the inhabitants of Karikhyong village. The raiders stole stocks & valuable things, destroyed houses, subjected the villagers to severe beating & torture, and desecrated the local Buddhist temple, Mangal Uday Baudha Vihar. The Bangladeshi soldiers slaughtered a cow in front of an image of Lord Buddha and then broke the image into pieces.
2. On 21 February, 1989, Lt. Col. Anwar Hossain and soldiers of the 31 East Bengal Regiment of the Bangladesh Army from the Ghagra Zone raided Jognatuli village in Naniachar Upazilla. They looted stocks, money & valuable things, destroyed houses, tortured the villagers and desecrated the local Buddhist temple. When Mr. Kanak Baran Chakma protested against their forcible entry into the temple, the tyrants broke his two teeth by hitting him in the face with rifle butts.

#### E. DETENTION

1. On 20 December, 1989, Lt. Harun and soldiers of the 31 East Bengal Regiment of the Bangladesh Army from the Army Camp at Mile Post (on the Khagrachari-Dighinala Road) in the Khagrachari Army Zone arrested two innocent Jummas on suspicion of being members of the Shanti Bahini. These arrested Jummas are being tortured and detained under Army custody without charge and trial. The victims are -
  - (i) Mr. Pang Kumar Tripura, 65 yrs old, the son of Mr. Pukur Chan Tripura, of Pang Kumar Para village in No. 266 Perachara Mouza within Khagrachari Upazilla, and his 30 yr old son,
  - (ii) Mr. Gajendra Mohan Tripura.
2. On 26 December, 1989, Lt. Maisuddin and soldiers of the 31 East Bengal Regiment of the Bangladesh Army from the Army Camp at Kukichara in Khagrachari Upazilla arrested two innocent Jummas, tortured them and then sent them for interrogation to the Zonal Headquarters at Khagrachari where they are being tortured and detained without charge or trial. The detained Jummas are -
  - (i) Mr. Binode Jyoti Tripura, 28 yrs old, the son of Mr. Sashi Ranjan Tripura, of Beltali village in No. 265 Bangal Kati Mouza within Khagrachari Upazilla.
  - (ii) Mr. Purna Kishore Tripura, 60 yrs old, the Karbari (village Head) of the above-mentioned village.

#### F. THE SITUATION OF JUMMA REFUGEES

Since 1986, some 70,000 Jumma refugees have sought refuge in the Tripura State of India for their lives as a result of the State terrorism. Under tremendous pressure from the international community, the Bangladesh Government had to send a delegation to Tripura on May 10 & 11, 1990 to talk with the refugees about their repatriation. The refugee leaders made 11 demands to ensure their safe return to their homeland, the restoration of their villages & farmlands to them, and their proper rehabilitation. Of the 11 demands the main demands were -

1. A meaningful talk between the Bangladesh Government, the Indian Government and the JSS to find a solution to the crisis in the CHT.
2. The withdrawal of the Bangladesh security forces from the CHT to stop State violence in the area.
3. The removal of the Bangladeshi infiltrators from the CHT to restore the Jumma villages and farmlands to the rightful owners.
4. Adequate financial help for the proper rehabilitation of Jumma refugees.
5. The implementation of all demands under the supervision of the U.N.O., international human rights groups, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and so on.

The Bangladesh delegation rejected all the demands of Jumma refugees and thus it has proved beyond doubt that the Bangladesh Government has no genuine intention to repatriate Jumma refugees. On the four previous occasions, the Government did not rehabilitate Jumma refugees after their repatriation nor had it allowed them to go to their native villages. The refugees were simply abandoned, tortured and the women were raped even in front of the Indian officers for coming back to Bangladesh.

#### G. DISTRICT COUNCIL LAW

The Government has imposed the so-called District Council Law in the CHT against the will of the Jumma people in order to legitimize the re-settlement of the Bangladeshi infiltrators in the CHT and to repeal the CHT Regulation of 1900 which protected the political, economic and social rights of the Jumma people in their traditional homeland. The Jumma people boycotted the District Council Elections and this is the reason why the so-called District Councils are not functioning.

#### H. CONCLUSION

The systematic extermination of the Jumma people is continuing unabated. I fervently appeal to you to send a Special Rapporteur to the CHT. Thank you very much for giving me this opportunity to submit my statement. Thank you Ladies & Gentlemen for listening to my appeal for help.

Date            31 July, 1990

Sd/- (R.S. Dewan)