

Bangladesh: Refugees from an unknown war

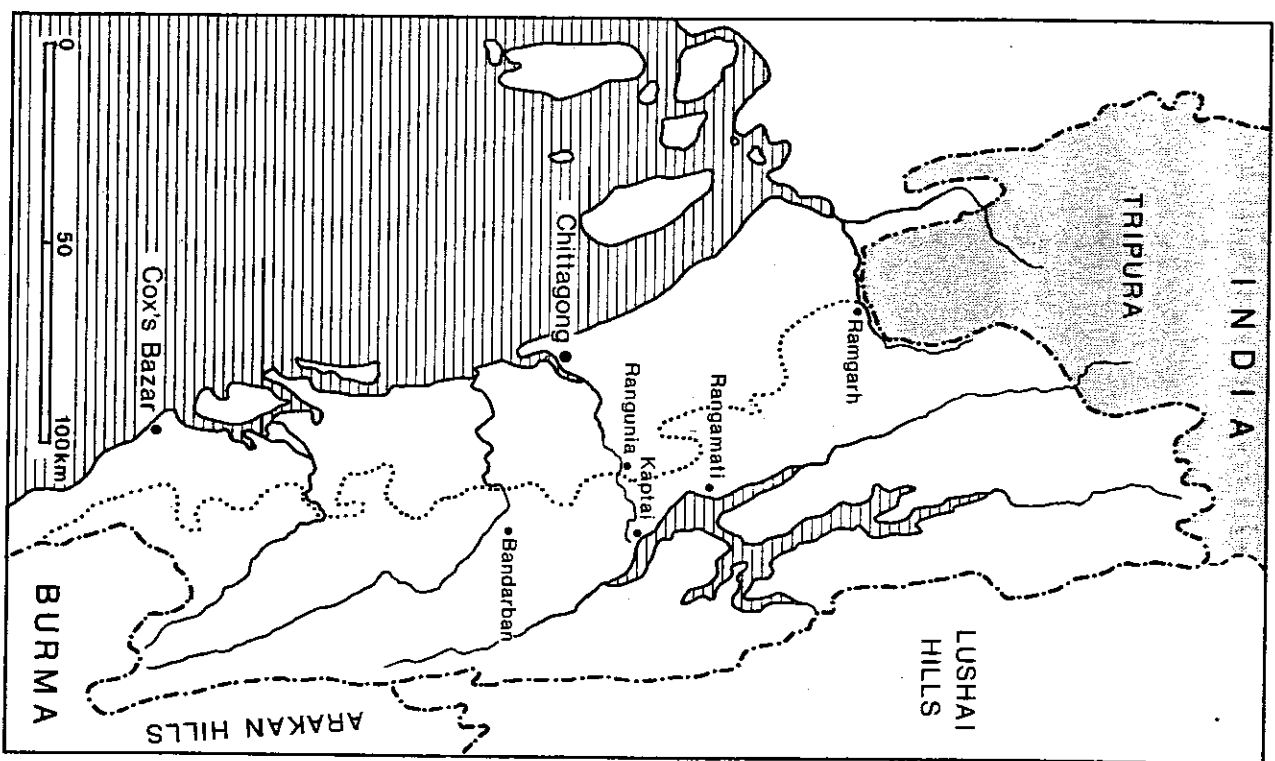
Bangladeshi Tribals in India

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This paper deals with people from the Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh who have sought refuge in the Indian state of Tripura. The Chittagong Hill Tracts are located in southeastern Bangladesh; for several years now they have seen the escalation of an "undeclared war" between the Bangladesh army and the local population, consisting of a dozen ethnic groups who differ culturally from the Bengali majority in the country. The roots of the conflict go back more than a century; these are not the topic of this paper but have been dealt with elsewhere.

(1) Here we are concerned with only one outcome of the situation of genocide in the Chittagong Hills: a large number of refugees have fled to neighbouring India but seem to have remained largely unnoticed by the world at large. This paper aims at detailing the conditions under which these people live (no comprehensive reports have been available so far) and the political configuration in which they are caught up. It is based on reports from the refugee camps, information provided by the resistance organisation of the Chittagong Hill peoples (the J.S.S. (Jana Samhati Samiti)), press coverage, and documentation published by various international organisations.

At present the largest group of refugees lives in Tripura, an Indian state that borders on the war zone. At various times in recent years tribal people from the Chittagong Hill Tracts have also fled to another Indian state, Mizoram, which adjoins their territory. Here two refugee camps (Tagolok Bak and Tripura Ghat) came into existence in 1984, when at least 7,000 refugees crossed over to the Demagiri subdivision of Mizoram after the Barkal massacre. (2) These refugees "were almost forcibly pushed back despite their unwillingness to return" in February 1986. (3) The two camps appear to have been closed and we know little of the fate of remaining refugees in Mizoram since then. According to one source, there are 60,000 Chakmas who have settled in Mizoram, and most of them are refugees; this source also stresses the unfriendly attitude of successive Mizoram governments and contrasts it with the more sympathetic attitude of the Tripura government. (4)



Map of the Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh showing Tripura

1. The Number of Refugees

The exact number of refugees in five camps in the Indian state of Tripura is disputed. The Bangladesh Government maintains that there are fewer than 30,000 "bonafide" refugees in these camps: in April 1987 the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs stated that the Bangladesh Government estimated the number of refugees at 26,200 (5), a figure that was updated to 29,920 by the Foreign Secretary in May 1987. (6) Indian officials disagree and speak of 50,000 refugees. (7) The Bangladesh authorities explain this difference by suggesting that the Indian figures include many who are not "bonafide" (or "genuine") (8) refugees because they are Chakmas who live in Tripura and are Indian citizens. Why these people would elect to live in refugee camps remains unexplained.

According to the one detailed statistical report that has become available the number of refugees in the Tripura camps in April 1987 was as follows:

Table 1

Number of Refugees, April 1987

NAME OF CAMP	NO. OF REFUGEES			NO. OF FAMILIES
	Total	Female	Male	
Karbook	7,001	3,429	3,572	1,640
Silachari	5,021	2,450	2,571	1,045
Takumbhari	15,997	8,024	7,973	3,478
Pancharam Para	9,699	4,939	4,760	1,951 *)
Kathalhari	10,630	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
TOTAL	48,348			

(Source: Statistical Data of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Refugees now camped at Karbook, Silachari, Takumbhari, Pancharam Para, Kathalhari in the Tripura State of India till 30 April 1987.

*) - plus 227 individuals whose family connections have not been recorded. Pancharam Para camp was opened in February 1987)

If we take 48,000 as the number of refugees in Tripura (9), this would amount to no less than eight percent of the total tribal population of the Chittagong Hill Tracts. (10) As almost all refugees appear to originate from the northern half of the Tracts (where warfare is concentrated), they represent an even higher proportion of the population of that half.

2. Demographic Characteristics of Refugees

According to this source almost as many women as men have fled the Chittagong Hill Tracts, and this near-equality holds good for the three age groups ('adults', 'minors' and 'children') distinguished in the report. Of the total refugee population in four camps (sex and age breakdowns are not available for Kathalhari camp), 79 percent was 'adult', 17 percent 'minor' and 4 percent 'child'. (11) Figures on births and deaths in the camps (excluding Kathalhari) are available for the period between 30 April 1986 and 30 April 1987. Mortality stood at 2.5 percent and exceeded natality, which stood at 1.7 percent. Apart from arrivals in the camps, there was therefore a natural population decrease of 0.8 percent. Sixty-five percent of the deaths (or 605 cases) were children or minors which implied a mortality among minors and children of 7.9 percent as against 1.1 percent among adults. Details are presented in Table 2. If press reports to be believed, the death rate in the camps could be even higher. (12)

Table 2

Births and Deaths in Four Refugee Camps, April 1986 - April 1987

	Female	Male	Total
Total Population	18,842	17,876	36,718
Adults	15,010	14,086	29,096
Minors	3,034	4,024	6,058
Children	798	766	1,564
Births	345	290	635
Deaths	381	544	925
Adults	140	180	320
Minors and children	241	364	605

(Source: see Table 1)

3. Ethnic Composition of Refugee Population

In most official statements and press reports on the refugees from the Chittagong Hill Tracts it is assumed that they are Chakmas. In reality Chakmas make up 71 percent of the refugee population, Marmas 15 percent, Tripuras 14 percent and Santals less than 1 percent. While this distribution is reflected fairly in four of the camps, in Kathalhari camp Chakmas constitute only 10 per

and Marmas dominate with 60 percent. The distribution of these ethnic groups corresponds roughly with their distribution in the northern Chittagong Hill Tracts, indicating that all ethnic groups suffer equally from the war situation.

Table 3

Ethnic Composition of Refugee Population, April 1987

REFUGEE CAMPS	CHAKMA		TRIPURA		MARMA		TOTAL	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Karbook	5511	79	1163	17	293	4	7001a	100*
Sitachari	4195	84	470	9	356	7	5021	100
Takumbari	14235	89	1570	10	192	1	15997	100
Pancharam P.	9245	95	227	2	227	2	9699	99
Kathalehari	1100	10	3155	30	6375	60	19630	100
TOTAL	34286	71	6585	14	7443	15	48348	100

(Source: see Table 1
*) - including 34 Santal refugees)

4. Getting to the Camps

The movement of refugees across the Bangladesh-Indian border is usually closely in tune with conditions of oppression on the Bangladesh side. Thus one of the largest influxes of recent years occurred in the days immediately after the Bangladesh army swooped down on the tribal population of the northern Chittagong Hill Tracts in retaliation to an attack by the Shanti Bahini on April 29, 1986. (13) Tens of thousands of people were forced to leave their villages. They hid in forests to escape the wrath of the army, and many of them decided that the only way to save their skins was to leave their country. This meant that they had to walk long distances, often five or six days, without food. They converged upon the nearest border, that between the Chittagong Hill Tracts and the Indian State of Tripura.

Here the danger was high. There are many reports of groups of refugees being attacked by Bengali settlers just before they could cross the border. These attacks were often co-ordinated by the Bangladesh military, especially units of the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR). (14) To take but one example, more than 150 refugees, "mostly old people, women and children, were rounded up by the units of the 31st Bangladesh battalion and taken to nearby Taidong and Comilla.

They were subsequently driven to a low land between two high hillocks a made targets of indiscriminate firing from shot-guns. Some of them were mercilessly killed with sharp weapons by settlers, reports said." (15)

Those refugees who escaped being caught were then faced with another risk: detection by the Indian Border Security Force (BSF). "They had the expectation of being welcomed by the BSF, but in reality they were pushed back". (16) In order to curb 'infiltration' from Bangladesh, the distance between border outposts in the area was reduced to four km "for effective vigilance and mob patrolling". (17) This meant forcing those who tried to cross over into India return to the extremely dangerous situation from which they sought to escape. (18) Between late April and late August 1986 about 20,000 people were pushed back by the Indian border guards. (19)



Refugees from the Chittagong Hill Tracts in Tripura

It is unknown how many perished while attempting to reach safety, but many managed to elude their adversaries and walk into the haven that Tripura represented for them that the Tripura authorities were forced to take action. was then that the refugee camps in their present shape came into existence. Although the Bangladesh press has reported regularly on the return of sum

groups of refugees to their homeland (20), the number of people who have left Bangladesh since the exodus of May 1986 has been much larger. (21) Most of these appear to have ended up in the refugee camps, although it is likely that others are living with acquaintances, relatives, or elsewhere.

5. Living Conditions in the Camps

Life in the Tripura camps is far from easy. The camps, described as "squalid" (22), were established in the Amarpur and Sabrum subdivisions of South Tripura district of Tripura state when the refugees came in their thousands from May 1986. At first the inhabitants of this area, mostly tribals themselves, had "organised relief themselves, then asked better relief services from the government" (23)

The camps are collections of makeshift bamboo structures, built by the refugees themselves, situated on open fields. They are not fenced off, and "a few hundred Chakmas have left the refugee camps and infiltrated into the interior, taken up jobs and show every sign of settling down permanently". (24) Although attempts have been made to register all inhabitants of the camps, some remain unregistered. (25)

The most urgent problems that confront the refugees in the camps are lack of accommodation, scarcity of drinking water, insufficiency of medical care, lack of cooking utensils, poor supply of food and clothing, and paucity of educational facilities. "Sheds" are provided in each camp, and each individual is allowed about 2 m.sq. (12'x1'). But this accommodation is not sufficient, and about 5,000 people have to sleep outdoors, which is especially unhealthy during the cold winter nights, and impossible during the rains. (26)

In four camps (excluding Kathalchari) drinking water is supplied by 91 tubewells and 23 seepage pits of which 47 tubewells and 20 pits are out of order. This means that there are 47 distribution points for a population of 37,718, or only one point for every 800 people (27), a state of affairs that is lamented in many reports.

Medical services are especially insufficient in the camps. Two camps (Silachari and Pancharam Para, with 14,720 inhabitants) are without any medical staff or care; people who require treatment are asked to attend the nearest regular hospitals. The other camps are slightly better off. Karbook camp (7,001 refugees) has two doctors, two nurses, three midwives, some medicines and a 20-bed hospital; Takumbari camp (15,997 refugees) has two doctors, three nurses, an adequate supply of medicines and four beds for patients, while the average number of people requiring treatment is 300 daily (28); and in Kathalchari camp (10,630 refugees) "treatment and medicines are inadequate". (29)

Another problem is the dearth of cooking utensils. In October 1986 the situation was as follows:

"The utensils made of clay are not of a good quality. When the women s to cook with these utensils they burst on the cooker. Cooking is the great prob for the refugees in their camps. They have to share utensils even in the ea time with other families. The family members cannot eat together due to shortage of utensils". (30)

Since then, cooking pots and other basic commodities have been supplied to the refugees. A total of 6,854 plates, 4,607 cooking vessels (patila), 4,488 b etc, 3,917 mugs, 1,314 sauce pans and 1,216 pieces of soap were distributed in t camps up to May 1987. (31) This works out to 0.2 plates, 0.1 cooking vess 0.1 buckets, 0.1 mugs, 0.03 sauce pans and 0.03 bars of soap per refugee, ha a sufficient supply.

Finally, food and clothing are major problems for the refugees. The following rations are given to them daily:

Table 4

Daily Rations for Refugees in the Five Tripura Camps, April, 1987 (tributed every tenth day)

FOOD	ADULT	MINOR	CHIL
Rice (g)	400	200	
Pulses (g)	50	25	
Edible oil (ml)	5	2	
Flaked rice (chira) (g)	25	25	
Crude sugar (gur) (g)	10	10	
Powdered milk in liquid form (ml)			200
Salt (g)	15	7	
Chillies (paise)	16		
Dry fish (paise)	15		
Firewood (paise)	30		
Cash (paise)	20		

(Source: see Table 1)

This supply is spartan in the extreme. Moreover, the quality of the ration food is not always up to scratch: "According to the doctor, the dry fish are of fungus, causing dysentery among the refugees". (32)

The distribution of clothes and blankets has depended largely on private charity, as Table 5 reveals.

Table 5

Clothes and Blankets Donated to Refugees in Four Camps in Tripura up to 30th April 1987

	by Tripura government	by private charities *)	TOTAL
Clothes (pieces)	19,010	64,242	83,252
Blankets (pieces)	7,944	7,235	15,179
Clothes per refugee	0.5	1.7	2.3
Blankets per refugee	0.2	0.2	0.4

(Source: See Table 1)

The charities involved were the Rankrishna Mission (15,976 pieces of clothing; 4,554 blankets); the Viswa Hindu Parishad (48,025; 2,181); the Shishu Kalyan Samiti (250; -) and the Bhikshu Samiti (-; 50).

*) - Clothing consisted of pants, shirts, vests, lungis, saris, blouses, pachtas for women and frocks. N.B. The four camps had a population of 36,718 (see Table 2).

Clearly the supply of textiles, and particularly blankets, has been insufficient, and the frequent reports on refugees suffering from the winter cold become comprehensible.

Educational facilities are very poor in the camps. Many of the refugees are well educated, and both teachers and monks are eager to provide schooling for the children. But two camps, Kathalchari and Pancharan Para (population: 20,329) had no facilities whatsoever by April 1987. Karbook (population: 7,001) did have a primary school with 14 teachers and 903 pupils, but it had to close in December 1986 for lack of funds. Silachari (population: 5,021) had two primary schools with 13 teachers and 828 pupils (but only 3 blackboards and 505 school textbooks). Takumbari (population: 15,997) set up three primary schools (12 teachers; 960 pupils; 4 blackboards; 12 books), and one high school (9 teachers; 450 students; hardly any books), but two of the primary schools had to close down and were turned into living quarters. The high school, organised by the refugees, is extremely short of teaching material. (33) The main problem with education in the camps is lack of funds and facilities, not local initiatives. A final aspect of living conditions in the camps that should receive some at-

ention is the degree to which the refugees have been able to organise themselves already in September 1986 it was reported that in all camps:

"there are organisations which have been set up by the refugees themselves to express their needs and demands. They provide advice to the co-operating government officers. Most of these organisations do not express their political affiliations, but they all oppose the Bangladesh government. Some people privately admitted that they support the Shanti Bahini, since this is the only possibility for them. These camp committees co-operate in the distribution of government food and put forward suggestions whenever they think fit." (

Self-organisation is also expressed in the number of religious buildings established by the refugees. In each of the five camps a Buddhist Vihara has been organised, in Karbook there is also a Buddhist Asrama, and in both Karbook and Takumbari there is a Hindu temple. (35)

6. Support Given to the Refugees

So far most material aid to the refugees has been given by the government of Tripura and local charities. From June 1986 to March 1987 the Tripura government is reported to have spent Rs. 22 million on the refugees (36), an amount monthly expenditure on the two camps at Karbook and Takumbari was estimated by another source at Rs. 4 million. (37) From the beginning of the present influx of refugees, the Tripura government has appealed for assistance to the central authorities in New Delhi.

"Unfortunately, New Delhi seems to be dragging its feet in meeting the situation... So far New Delhi has chosen to view the problem of influx of refugees strictly legalistic point of view, namely that the Chakmas of Chittagong are foreigners had no right to enter Indian territory. Left on its own, the Bangladesh Security Force would perhaps have pushed back the entire lot but for the intervention of the state government...Strangely enough, at one point of time, central agencies in Tripura were even questioning the statistics given out by the government as they were suggesting that the figure of arrivals had been inflated to get more central assistance. The suggestions were, however, dropped when it was found that Dhaka was also questioning the figures". (38)

Although help from the central authorities has been forthcoming since it has been insufficient to raise the living standard in the refugee camps to a bearable level.

Local charities that have been active in assisting the refugees have also been mentioned in the footnote to Table 5. Foreign organisations have also sought help (e.g. a highly-publicised campaign in France to adopt over seven

phaned children from the Tripura camps (39)), but have so far received very little encouragement from Indian authorities.

7. Return and Rehabilitation

Talks between Bangladesh and India resulted in an agreement for wholesale repatriation of the refugees in Tripura in late 1986. As had happened with earlier repatriations from Mizoram (see above), the Bangladesh government promised



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to rehabilitate the refugees once they had returned to Bangladesh. On their return from Tripura,

"the refugees were to receive all possible help from the district administration to go back to their respective homes. The repatriation programme included

cash grants and food rations for six months so that the refugees could restart their life." (40)

The refugees were, however, only too well aware of the value of such promises. The case of one refugee in Takumbari camp may illustrate the predicament:

"He fled to India for the first time in 1981, and returned to Bangladesh, but was promised two years of free rations and a cash amount. Of these only a minor part was fulfilled. Moreover, in his original village he found three quarters of the land taken over by a Bengali settler. Attempts to regain this land through a court procedure were of no avail. In 1985 he was accused of being an agent of the Shanti Bahini and taken to an army camp where pressure was put on him to act as a guide who would pinpoint Shanti Bahini hide-outs. (He) was tortured with electric shocks, covering his whole body. (His) conclusion after having become a refugee in India for the second time: 'I will refuse to return this time -- in 1986 I lost my land, this time I will be killed!'" (41)

The date of repatriation, originally set for 12 December 1986, was later postponed to 15 January 1987. But the refugees refused to be repatriated:

"The Bangladesh Government had agreed to take back 24,000 refugees beginning from January 15, but the Chakmas refused to leave. When Indian security forces tried to collect them together to send them back to Bangladesh, many of them fled into the nearby forests while others flatly refused to budge from the relief camps. Their argument was simple and spoke volumes for what they had undergone -- that if they crossed over to the hill tracts, they would be killed. A Bhagat Singh, CRPF commandant: 'We were helpless. The Chakmas just tight saying that we could shoot them but they would not go back' ". (42)

The Bangladesh government expressed its anger at the failure of India to live up to its promise (43), and sought to effect the return of the refugees at a later date (44). But so far this attempt has been unsuccessful, and appeared to have been indefinitely deferred" (45), but in April 1987 an agreement was reached to repatriate the refugees if their safety at home could be guaranteed (46). Up to October 1987, however, no steps were taken to put this agreement into effect (47). It is likely that the Indian decision not to send the refugees back against their will was also influenced by much international pressure. (48)

8. People Between Two States: The Effect on Relations Between Bangladesh and India

The influx of Bangladeshi refugees into the Indian state of Tripura during 1986 and 1987 has led to an intensification of friction between the two countries. Ban-

er disagreements on water control, territorial claims (e.g. the Tinbigha enclave), rail and water transport, and so on, were now joined by the humanitarian and political problems posed by tens of thousands of refugees.

The Bangladesh government was especially embarrassed by the spate of international publicity. So far, the war on the tribal population in the Chittagong Hills had received amazingly little attention both inside Bangladesh and abroad. Now the Human rights violations that were the cause of both Shanti Bahini resistance and the flight of thousands became widely known. This information clashed sharply with the image that Dhaka had been projecting of Bangladesh: that of a victim on the international scene, not of a victimiser of minorities. The role of the army in controlling Bangladeshi society, and the Chittagong Hill Tracts in particular, was exposed and condemned in many publications worldwide, and a first international conference on human rights in the Chittagong Hills was organised in October 1986. (49)



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The Indian Government was at first as eager as its Bangladesh counterpart to play down the events in its highly sensitive northeastern corner. But pleas from the Tripura government, publicity and international pressure mounted so quickly that New Delhi was forced to take a stand. High-level talks were initiated as the political ramifications for India became clearer.

The Chittagong Hill Tracts have long been the hide-out of insurgents in India. Especially fighters belonging to the Mizo National Front (MNF) and Tripura Tribal National Volunteers (TNV) have been given sanctuary there. recent conflagration and exodus in the Tripura-Chittagong Hill Tracts region however, has brought new alliances and new international presences to the region. There are fears, for example, that the refugees will make common cause with the TNV fighters, and there have been suggestions that Pakistani intelligence become active in the region, striking up an anti-Delhi association with both Bangladesh army and Sikh separatists. (50) This development has for the time brought the Chittagong Hill Tracts war in direct relation with other important guerrilla groups in northeast India (Nagas, Manipuris, Assamese), leading to increasing co-ordination of activities.



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"Highly-placed officials in the Indian army do not rule out the possibility of Pakistan-sponsored flare-ups in the region...With Pakistan making a dramatic comeback to its erstwhile eastern territory it has to be seen whether Bangladesh will be allowed to iron out the CHT problems with India. As China had a secured a toe-hold in the region through Maoist rebel groups, Pakistan's presence to intrude into regions where they have no right to, is obvious. The

the north-eastern cauldron of rebel groups, guerrillas and foreign army men continues to boil, the greater the danger to India's security." (51)

The refugees in the Tripura camps are therefore caught up in a political game with very high geo-political stakes. Their safety, which is guaranteed at a bare subsistence level as long as the Tripura government keeps the camps open, will continue to depend vitally on international vigilance. They will not be able to return to their homes unless the Bangladesh military government reverses its policies in the Chittagong Hill Tracts completely. Despite growing international as well as national pressure to do so, there are pitifully few indications that Dhaka is seriously seeking a solution that will provide a decent future for the tribal peoples of the Chittagong Hill Tracts. It is clear that in these circumstances the problem can only continue to grow, amid untold human suffering.

Notes:

- 1) For background information on the war and its antecedents, see especially Wolfgang Mey (ed.), *Genocide in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh: ...They Are Now Burning Village After Village* (Copenhagen: International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, 1984); *The Chittagong Hill Tracts: Militarisation, Oppression and the Hill Tribes* (London: Anti-Slavery Society, 1984); *Genocide in Bangladesh* (London: Survival International, 1984 (and follow-ups)); Bernard Nietschmann, "Indonesia, Bangladesh: Disguised Invasions of Indigenous Nations - Third World Colonial Expansion", *Fourth World Journal*, 1:2 (1984): 89-126; *The Charge of Genocide: Human Rights in the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh*; Papers for the Conference on the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Amsterdam, October 11, 1986 (Amsterdam: Organising Committee, Chittagong Hill Tracts Campaign, 1986); and *Bangladesh: Unlawful Killings and Torture in the Chittagong Hill Tracts* (London: Amnesty International, 1986).
- 2) Amnesty International, 1986: 13-15.
- 3) See "Resentment over Chakma repatriation from Mizoram", *The Sentinel* (India) (22 March 1986). In this report as well as in the following the number of refugees was put at about 4,000. (Jana Samhati Samiti, *Plight of Chakma Refugees of Bhusan Chara, Choto Harina of Chittagong Hill Tracts, now in Mizoram of India* (n.p.: 23 January 1986): 1). On 13 March 1987, however, the Indian Minister of State for Home Affairs, Mr Chintamani Panigrahi, informed the Lok Sabha that "about 6,967 Chakmas, who had come from the Chittagong

Hill Tracts to Mizoram had been sent back". ("Ten million refugees", *The Telegraph* 14 March 1987).

4) *Report on the Situation of Refugees from the Chittagong Hill Tracts Tripura, India* (n.p.: October 1986, typescript): 3. In "Plight of the Chakmas" *The Statesman* (24 January 1987), it is said:

"The Chakmas seem to prefer Tripura because they are unwanted Mizoram where Mr. Laldenga wants to abolish the Autonomous District Council for Indian Chakmas. Nor are they anxious to join earlier migrants Arunachal Pradesh."

See also "Steps urged to curb Chakmas' inflow", *The Times of India* (January 1987).

5) Mr. Waheed Ali Khan Panni, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, stated that this estimate was based on 'on the ground physical verification' by checking the names and addresses of refugees that they had received from India by local officers, 'and it is through such grumbling exercises that we have worked out the tally'. His statement was reported in the Bangladeshi press (see e.g. "Indian report on Chakmas exaggerated", says Panni", *The New Nation* (8 April 1987): 1, 8). A slightly lower figure (26,042) was mentioned by the Information Secretary, Mr. Nurunabi Chowdhury, at a press conference in Dhaka (see "Interested quarters support Chakma miscreants", *The Bangladesh Times* (2 April 1987: 1, 8)).

6) Foreign Secretary Nazrul Islam mentioned this figure at a press conference in Dhaka on 24 May 1987 (See "1000 more tribals return home", *The New Nation* (25 May 1987): 1, 8; cf. "Only 29,920 tribal refugees: Bangla", *The Times of India* (June 7, 1987): 15). The figure remains the total of refugees that Bangladesh is prepared to 'take back' (See "Rao's Thriller", *Holiday* (Dhaka) August 1987: 1, 8)).

7) See e.g. "About 50,000 Chakma refugees in India", *The Statesman* (9 November 1987), which quotes Mr. I.S. Chaudha, Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh, or "Bangla figures on Chakmas wrong", *The Times of India* (8 July 1987): 5, which quotes a spokesman for the Tripura Government. The figure of 49,195 refugees is mentioned without source in "The Chakmas are here to stay" *The Times of India* (25 May 1987: 7). See also quotation in section 6 below. 8) See e.g. "Dhaka ready to welcome back genuine Chakmas", *The Bangladesh Observer* (3 April 1987); "Dhaka ready to take back 'some' Chakmas", *The Times of India* (20 February 1987: 15); and "Stalemate over Chakma issue", *The Times of India* (7 March 1987: 9).

9) According to a publication by the Jana Samhati Samiti, the number of refugees in four camps (Karbook, Silachari, Takunbari and Katalchhari) on February 1987 was 39,631 (*An Account of Genocide and Atrocities committed*

by Bangladesh Forces and Illegal Bengalee Muslim Infiltrators in Chitragong Hill Tracts since November 1986-19th January 1987 (n.p.: Information Department, Parbatya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samiti, 1987).

10) Correct population figures are not available. This calculation is based on the high estimate of 600,000 tribal inhabitants in the Chitragong Hill Tracts. Lower estimates hover about 400,000 (which would bring the proportion of refugees to 12 percent). See for a discussion of various population estimates, Wolfgang Mey, "The Tune of the Hills: History and Tradition in the Chitragong Hill Tracts", in Wolfgang Mey (ed.), 1984: 63-72.

11) These categories are not defined in the source.

12) See e.g. Sunanta Sen, "Ordeal of Chakma refugees", *The Times of India* (29 November 1986): 16; and Ashis Chakrabarti, "Humans can't take it any more", *The Statesman Weekly* (13 December 1986): 5. In *An account of Genocide...* 1987, the death and birth rates in four camps up to late February 1987 is given as 2.5% and 1.4%, respectively.

13) See Amnesty International, 1986: 15-23; and "Flight from Persecution", *The Telegraph* (8 June 1986).

14) *Ibid.*: 23-25.

15) See "Over 150 Chitragong refugees massacred", *The Times of India* (24 May 1986: 7). Cf. Amnesty International, 1986: 23-25. For a similar massacre, see Sekhar Datta, "Bangla troops kill 100 fleeing tribals", *The Telegraph* (9 March 1987).

16) *Report on the Situation of Refugees from the Chitragong Hill Tracts in Tripura, India* (October 1986, typescript: 1).

17) "BSF outposts in Tripura alerted", *The Telegraph* (Calcutta) (22 June 1987).

18) *Ibid.*

19) "Tripura's plea for talks on Chakma issue", *The Statesman* (23 August 1986): 9. Many of them were successful in later attempts (see "Tribal influx into Tripura worst since '64", *The Statesman* (2 August 1986)).

20) E.g. "500 tribal families return home", *The New Nation* (19 February 1987: 1, 8); "India obstructs return of Chakmas", Letter to the Editor, by Kamaluddin Ahmed, *Holiday* (15 May 1987: 2); "Cross-border insurgency in CHT", *Holiday* (Dhaka) (3 August 1987).

21) See e.g. Datta, 1987 (see above); "Chitragong exodus continues", *The Times of India* (21 March 1987: 16); "200 Chakmas slip through BSF net", *The Times of India* (9 February 1987: 14); "BSF struggles with 2,500 refugees", *The Times of India* (2 February 1987: 14); "2500 refugees waiting at border", *Amrita Bazar* (2 February 1987); and "India's protest against Chakma influx", *Amrita Bazar* (3 February 1987).

22) Tooshar Pandit, "Staying On: The Chakma tribal refugees refuse to be repatriated", *Sunday* (25-31 January 1987): 39.

23) *Report on the Situation of Refugees...*, 1986: 3.

24) Ramesh Menon, "Chakmas: Shattered Lives", *India Today* (15 March 1987 79). Sunanta Sen (1986: 16) states, however: "[T]hough none of the camps are cut off with any fencing, there are very rare instances of the refugees stirring up to seek jobs which could have brought them into conflict with the locals".

25) See *Statement of Ven. Rajguru Aggravansa Mahathero, General Secretary of Buddhist Mission on his Tour to Sitchari, Kharbak, Takumbari and Natunbazer Refugee Camps in South Tripura from 1-7-86 to 2-7-86* (n.p.: July, 1986 1).

26) *Statistical Data of the Chitragong Hill Tracts Refugees...*, 1987: 1-9.

"The living condition in September was determined by it being the height of the monsoon season. To protect themselves against flooding, the refugees constructed bamboo platforms to cover the floors of the huts. Because of the dampness many people suffer from cold, fever, etc. Lack of sanitation causes more gastro-intestinal diseases". (*Report on the Situation of Refugees...*, 1986:2).

The poor housing conditions are also stressed in *A Report on Chakma Refugees* (Gwahathi: North-Eastern States' Co-ordination Council, Bharatiya Janata Party, 1986:2).

27) *Statistical Data of the Chitragong Hill Tracts Refugees...*, 1987:1-9.

28) *Report on the Situation of Refugees...*, 1986:1.

29) *Statistical Data on the Chitragong Hill Tracts Refugees...*, 1987:1-9.

30) *Statement of Ven. Rajguru Aggravansa Mahathero...*, 1986:2.

31) *Statistical Data on the Chitragong Hill Tracts Refugees...*, 1987:1-9.

32) *Report on the Situation of Refugees...*, 1986:2. See also *A Report on Chakma Refugees*, 1986: 3; and *An Account of Genocide...*, 1987.

33) *Statistical Data on the Chitragong Hill Tracts Refugees...*, 1987: 1-9.

34) *Report on the Situation of Refugees...*, 1986: 2.

35) *Statistical Data of the Chitragong Hill Tracts Refugees...*, 1987: 1-9.

36) Menon, 1987: 79.

37) Sen, 1986: 16.

38) "Delhi apathetic to Chakma issue", *The Times of India* (15 January 1987: 16). See also H.S.Sethi, "Road to Nowhere", *Frontline* (4-17 April 1987: 45-48).

39) See e.g. "L'attente de 72 orphelins acceptés par la France", *Le Monde* (2 April 1987); full-page advertisement "La Houle...", *Le Monde* (22 avril 1987) Christophe Graizon, "Orphelins du Bangladesh réfugiés en Inde: Ces 72 familles francaises attendent ces 72 enfants qui ont fui le Bangladesh...", *Actuel* (April 1987). On Graizon's detention in Tripura while investigating the situation in the camps, see "Frenchman held in Tripura", *The Telegraph* (3 February

- 1987); "Frenchman's arrest criticized", *The Statesman* (4 February 1987).
- 40) Shehab Ahmed, "How tribals' return was postponed", *The New Nation* (19 January 1987: 8). See also Syed Muraza Ali, "Hill Tracts solution in sight?", *Holiday* (12 September 1986: 5, 7).
- 41) *Report on the Situation of Refugees...*, 1986: 1-2.
- 42) Menon, 1987: 77. See also "Chakma Families Refuse To Go Back", *The Times of India* (23 January 1987: 16); "Chakma repatriation put off", *Indian Express* (18 January 1987); A border struggle between India and Bangladesh", *Newsweek* (13 April 1987: 17); Pandit, 1987: 39.
- 43) See e.g. "Bangla query on Chakma impasse", *The Times of India* (19 January 1987: 9); "Bangla puzzled over delay in repatriation", *The Telegraph* (19 January 1987); "Bangla ready to take back Chakmas", *The Telegraph* (25 January 1987); Sayed Kamaluddin, "Bangla concerned over repatriation", *The Telegraph* (31 January 1987: 6); "India must decide on Chakmas' return: FM", *The New Nation* (1 February 1987: 1, 8).
- 44) E.g. Kamal Bhattacharya and Matiur Rahman Choudhury, "Ershad seeks Basu's help for return of Chakma refugees", *Amrita Bazar Patrika* (1 February 1987); "Chakma want to return: Bangla", *The Telegraph* (23 March 1987).
- 45) Amnesty International, *Bangladesh: The Chitragong Hill Tracts; Recent Reports of Torture and Other Human Rights Violations, June 1986 - January 1987* (London, March 1987): 6. See also "Indo-Bangla talks on Chakmas fail", *The Times of India* (9 April 1987: 16); "Indian hopes on Chakmas' safety", *The Times of India* (10 April 1987: 16).
- 46) "Chakmas' return on earliest date", *The Times of India* (27 April 1987: 1); "India serious about Chakma's return", *The Statesman* (2 May 1987); "Repatriation of Chakmas", *Hindustan Times* (April 1987).
- 47) See "It's a no-action plan", *Holiday* (18 September 1987: 1, 8).
- 48) Among the organisations that were active in the campaign were the Anti-Slavery Society, Survival International, the Buddhist Peace Fellowship, Partage avec les enfants du Tiers-Monde, the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, the Organising Committee of the Chitragong Hill Tracts Campaign and Amnesty International.
- 49) *The Charge of Genocide: Human Rights in the Chitragong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh*. Papers for the Conference on the Chitragong Hill Tracts, Amsterdam, October 11, 1986 (Amsterdam: Organising Committee, Chitragong Hill Tracts Campaign, P.O.Box 11699, 1001 GR Amsterdam; 2nd. printing 1987).
- 50) See especially Subir Bhaumik, "Terrorists in the hills", *Sunday* (1-7 March 1987: 26-28).
- 51) *Ibid.*: 28.

IWGIA NEWSLETTER
 NO. 53/54
 MAY / AUGUST 1988.
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