

INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIP OF RECONCILIATION

Hof van Sonoy 15-17

1811 LD Alkmaar Holland

Phone 072-123014

20 February 1981

President Ziaur Rahman
President's Secretariat
Bongo Bhaban
Dacca
Bangladesh

Dear President Rahman,

It is only a month before the people of Bangladesh celebrate the years of independence, which is not so long a time that people in the rest of the world have forgotten the torture and cruelty suffered in Bangladesh in the struggle for independence.

Because of world attention to that suffering, and horror with the methods used by the opposing military forces, Bangladesh was founded with the world's applause and a great reservoir of good will. One expression of this support was the substantial aid from other countries for reconstruction and development.

Unfortunately, policies of the government of Bangladesh in regard to the Chittagong Hill Tracts are increasingly coming to world attention and are deeply shaking the foundations of respect and support for Bangladesh.

The tribal peoples in the Chittagong Hill Tracts region form a small minority among the Bengali people. Even should many of them turn from the peaceableness for which they are renowned and seek in violence a way to protect their lands and culture, ultimately they are quite defenseless against the military forces which can be raised against them.

Adding to the dismay and alarm felt by many longtime supporters of Bangladesh is the government's recent introduction to the Parliament of the proposed Disturbed Area Bill, which would allow police and military personnel to shoot and kill any person within a "disturbed area", to arrest without warrant, to search homes without judicial permit, to destroy homes merely on the suspicion

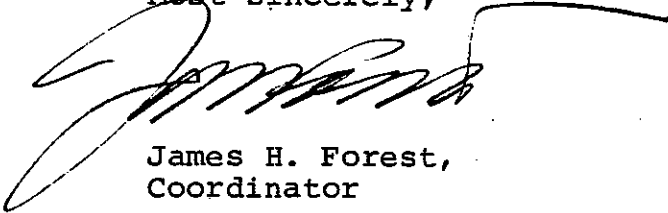
that they were used for the storage of weapons or explosives, and to confiscate personal property.

In seeking such appalling legislation, the government really confesses to the most shocking charges that are being lodged against it by the people of the Chittagong Hill Tracts, who testify to summary killings, torture, arrest and detainment without charges, harrassment, and the widescale destruction not only of homes but of entire villages.

How disturbing it is should we learn that minority rights were better guarded there in the imperialist period than under self rule.

Mister President, we appeal as a non-aligned movement with members throughout the world that the Disturbed Area Act be withdrawn and that the government take urgent steps to assure the human rights of the minority peoples, including land tenure as well as political and cultural rights.

Most sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'James H. Forest', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

James H. Forest,
Coordinator

ROYAL MINISTRY

FOR

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Office for international
development co-operation
Bilateral division

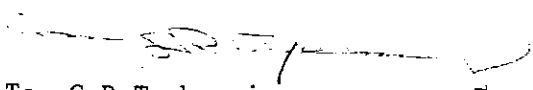
1981-02-27

Mr. Ramendu Shekar Dewan
c/o Dr. H D Locksley, Dept of Chemistry
Salford University
Salford M5 4 WT
ENGLAND

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your letters of November 28 and December 18, 1980 which were directed to the Prime Minister and passed on to the Ministry for attention. In response to your enquiry regarding the Forest Development Project of Chittagong Hill Tracts I wish to confirm that the Swedish Government has decided not to prolong the project after the expiration of the present agreement. This decision was based on the assessment that the situation in the area concerned has made the implementation of the project difficult. The authorities of Bangladesh have been informed of the decision by the Swedish Government.

Yours faithfully,


Tom G R Tscherning
Director

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SECRET

Commissioner
Chittagong Division

Memo No. 665-C

To : Mr.

It has been decided that landless/river erosion affected people from your district will be settled in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHTs). The settlement will be done in selected Zones and each family will be given Khas land free of cost according to the following scale:-

Plain land 2½ acres.
Plain and bumpy mixed 4 acres
Hilly land 5 acres

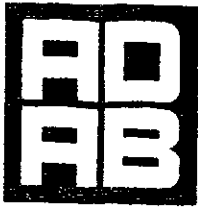
It has been decided that you will send 5,000 families.

You are requested to collect particulars of intending and suitable families from the Chairman of the concerned Union Parishads sought them out and furnish list to the Deputy Commissioner, CHTs through special messenger by the 30th of Sept./80 at the latest. To keep paper record of the selected settlers, group leaders and issue of Identity card in all the districts in an uniform manner, detail guidelines have been prepared (copy enclosed) so that you can ensure strict compliance of the concerned Union Parishad Chairman.

It is the desire of the Govt. that the concerned Deputy Commissioner will give top priority to this work and make the programme a success. You are requested to immediately call a meeting of the concerned Chairman, Union Parishads and give them detailed instructions in the matter.

I would like to have a report about the action taken by you in the matter by 15.9.80 positively for information of the Govt.

Sd/ Saifuddin ahamed,
5-9-80
Commissioner
Chittagong Division



AUSTRALIAN
DEVELOPMENT
ASSISTANCE
BUREAU

DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS



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10 DEC 1980

ACTION OFFICER

REFERENCE 80/2556

Mr Ramendu Shekhar Dewan,
c/- Dr H.D. Locksley,
Department of Chemistry,
Salford University,
SALFORD M5 4WT, ENGLAND

Dear Mr Dewan,

The Minister has asked me to reply to your letters of 14th and 20th November 1980 about the tribal people of the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

The Australian Government has decided not to renew the Memorandum of Understanding on the Chengi Valley Road project beyond its expiry date of 11 February 1981. Participation is now being phased down and the aid personnel who had been working there are being redeployed.

Yours sincerely,

(R.G. Spratt)
Assistant Secretary
Pacific Asia Africa Programs
Branch