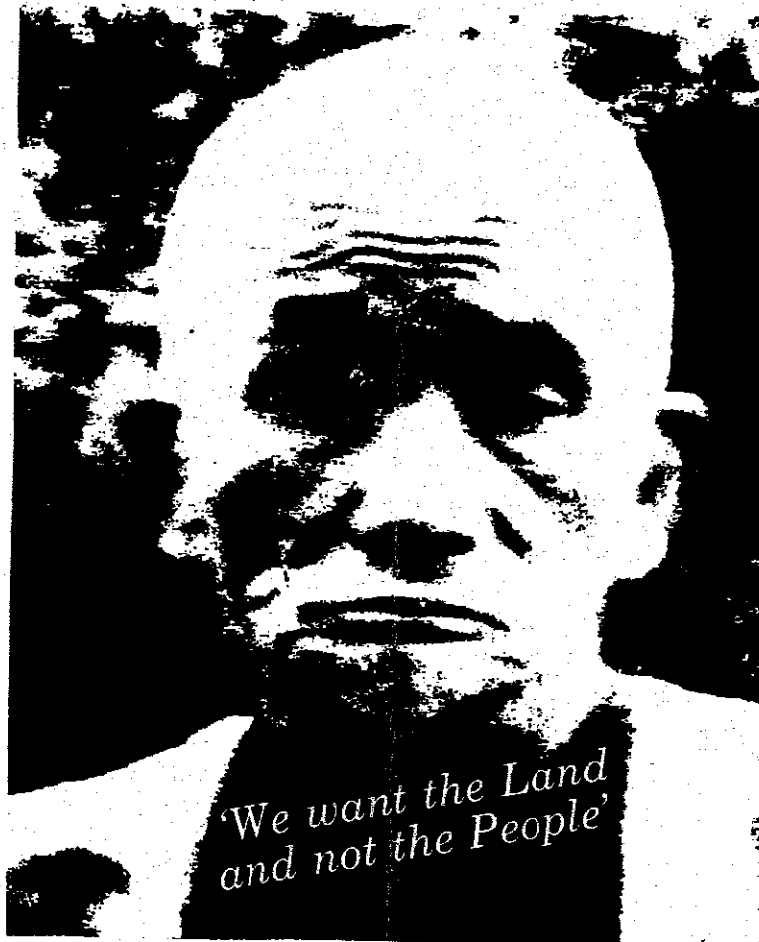


# BANGLADESH

## CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS: MORE MASSACRES



URGENT ACTION BULLETIN BAN/1b/SEPT./1984



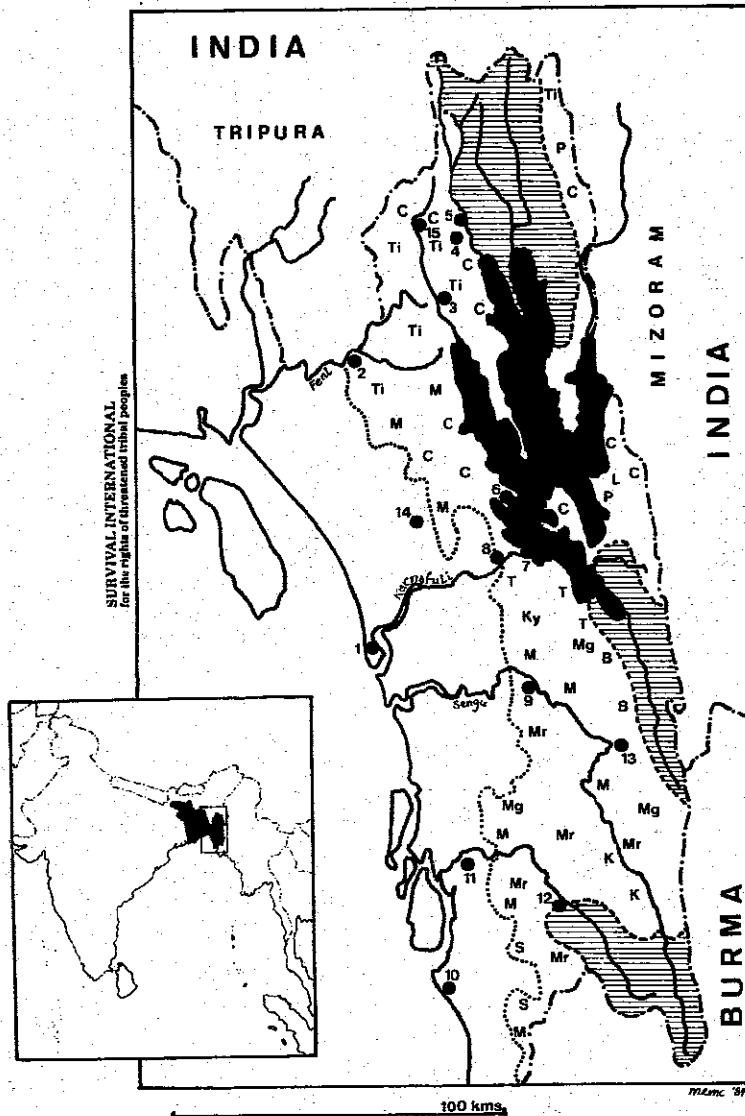
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FOR THE RIGHTS OF THREATENED TRIBAL PEOPLES

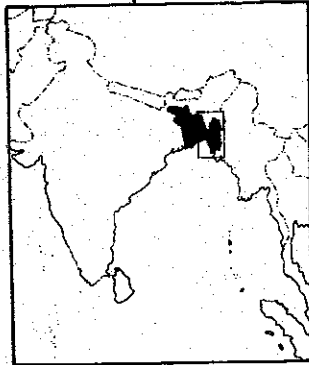
A REGISTERED CHARITY No. 267444

29 CRAVEN STREET, LONDON, WC2N 5NT, ENGLAND.

Telephone: 01-839 3267



SURVIVAL INTERNATIONAL  
for the rights of threatened tribal peoples



100 kms

M.L.Mc. '81

**KEY**

- CHT boundary
- Karnafuli Reservoir
- Forest Reserve

**ETHNIC GROUPS**

- C Chakma
- Ti Tippera
- T Taungchengya
- B Bawm
- P Pankhua
- K Khumi
- L Lushai
- S Sak
- K Khyang
- M Marma
- Mg Mrong
- Mr Mru

**PLACE NAMES**

- 1 Chittagong
- 2 Ramgarh
- 3 Khagrachari
- 4 Boalkhali
- 5 Dighinala
- 6 Rangamati
- 7 Kaptai
- 8 Chandraghona
- 9 Banderban
- 10 Cox's Bazaar
- 11 Cheringa
- 12 Alikadam
- 13 Ruma
- 14 Fatikchhari
- 15 Mahalchhari

HYDRO-POWER DEVELOPMENTS AND FOREST RESERVES DEPRIVED THE TRIBALS OF THE CHT OF MUCH OF THEIR LAND. COLONISATION PROJECTS NOW THREATEN TO DISPOSSESS THEM OF WHAT LITTLE REMAINS.



# BANGLADESH

## CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS: MORE MASSACRES

UAB/BAN/1b/SEPT/1984

ESCALATING MILITARY VIOLENCE HAS CLAIMED THE LIVES OF SEVERAL HUNDRED CHAKMA TRIBESPEOPLE IN A NUMBER OF RECENTLY REPORTED MASSACRES IN THE CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS. TRIBAL RESISTANCE TO GOVERNMENT-BACKED COLONISATION OF TRADITIONAL LANDS HAS RESULTED IN INDISCRIMINATE REPRISALS. THE 18,000 TRIBESPEOPLE FORCED TO SEEK REFUGE IN INDIA HAVE APPEALED TO THE UNITED NATIONS FOR ASSISTANCE.

### INVASION OF TRIBAL LANDS.

The full scale invasion of tribal lands in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) by Bengali settlers has been actively promoted by successive regimes in Pakistan and Bangladesh since the late 1960s. Growing tribal resistance has been met with a hardening of official policy, the closure of the entire CHT beyond Rangamati to foreigners and journalists, and an increasing militarization of the region.

The scale of the ensuing conflict, between the tribal peoples defending their territorial rights and the military-backed invasion, can be measured in thousands of lives. Some estimates place the number of tribal deaths since the late 60s as high as 100,000. Yet the total tribal population of the CHT is only some 600,000. According to some reports there may be as many as 85,000 military personnel currently in the CHT.

### TRIBAL RESISTANCE.

Faced with a continual and accelerating dispossession of their lands and finding all their attempts to achieve a political resolution of their problems denounced as "secessionist", the tribals have had little alternative but to resort to violence. The 'Shanti Bahini' (the "Peace Force"), formed in the early 1970s, has since waged a "secret war" against the Bangladeshi military. Indiscriminate and violent reprisals have been taken by the armed forces against the tribal villagers which have caused terrible loss of life and many tribals to seek refuge in the forested hills where they have suffered great privation. Strict controls on tribal movements have been imposed by the military and many have been relocated into "strategic villages". Despite the closure of the area to visitors frequent tales of bestial atrocities committed both by Bengali settlers and the military have filtered through to the outside world.

The division of the 'Shanti Bahini' into two factions has led to further turmoil. A bloody internal power struggle over the last months has led to the more militant arm gaining ascendancy. This may explain why since May the guerrillas have adopted (apparently for the first time) the tactic of directly assaulting Bengali settlements established on tribal lands by the Bangladeshi government. Reports suggest that three separate attacks were made by the guerrillas on Bengali settlements, in late May and early June, resulting in some 200 deaths.

The attacks are the direct consequence of land conflict. Government programmes to settle some 170,000 Bengalis on tribal lands near Bhushanchara have been deeply resented by the local Chakma, the most numerous tribal group in the area. After the raids some 16,000 settler families

**SURVIVAL INTERNATIONAL**  
for the rights of threatened tribal peoples



allegedly fled their new lands but were shortly re-established by the military, which began fortifying the new settlements with hard defence lines. General Ershad, President of Bangladesh, visited the area a week after the first attacks and promised more aid to the settlers.

#### Violent Reprisals

Less publicised in the Bangladeshi press have been the violent reprisals taken by the military against the local Chakma. Reports reaching Survival International indicate that several hundred tribal people have been killed in a number of separate attacks. According to one source, on 30 June Bengali settlers were prompted by the military to forcibly reap the Chakma's rice crops. When the tribals resisted, the Bangladeshi soldiers emerged from concealment and initiated an attack on several communities named as Chota Harina, Bara Harina, Chedoa, Garjangtali, Soguri Para and Maudong. More than three hundred Chakma were murdered according to this report. "The captured tribals were divided into three groups- old and young men, elderly women, and young women. Men and old women were shot dead. The young women were raped freely, some of them were killed and some were converted to Islam."

#### Tribal Refugees

Although the tribals know that once they abandon their lands they will never recover them, thousands have fled across the border into the neighbouring state of Mizoram in India. Some 5,000 were reported to have crossed the border by the end of May. Many thousands of others fled into the surrounding forests to avoid the Bangladeshi army. Apparently, another 13,000 refugees crossed into India in June. They have appealed to the United Nations Organisation for relief.

The government seems to be determined to deny the tribal peoples their land rights and continues to treat the guerrilla war as a problem of "national security" rather than as an expression of land conflict. At the same time it is official policy to play down the scale of the problem in the CHT. In response to Survival International's submission of its recent report "Genocide in Bangladesh" this July, the Bangladesh High Commission in London stated that "the question of any discrimination, relocation or decimation of any tribe or ethnic minority within Bangladesh does not arise".

SURVIVAL INTERNATIONAL has written to the President of Bangladesh, General Ershad, urging him to investigate these and other accounts of human rights violations and end the invasion of tribal peoples' lands in the CHT. (Address: General H.M. Ershad, President of Bangladesh, Banga Bawan, Dhaka, Bangladesh)

SOURCES: Survival International Review 43 "Genocide in Bangladesh", 1984/ ASS "The Chittagong Hill Tracts", 1984/ Survival International News 5 and 6, 1984/ The Guardian 5.6.1984/ Today Report, Dhaka, June 1984/ Ananda Bazar Patrika 15.8.1984/ Personal statement of Aggaransa Mahathero 16.8.1984/ Letter from Bangladesh High Commission, London, to Survival International 2.8.1984.

SURVIVAL INTERNATIONAL has also sent a letter (below) to the UNHCR urging them to intervene on behalf of the refugees, whose situation in neighbouring India is far from secure. Recipients of this Urgent Action Bulletin are urged to send similar letters, in their own name, to the address given.

PLEASE SEND COPIES OF ANY LETTERS TO SURVIVAL INTERNATIONAL.

If you wish to receive further Bulletins please acknowledge on the forms provided or send a separate note.

## SURVIVAL INTERNATIONAL

FOR THE RIGHTS OF THREATENED TRIBAL PEOPLES

A REGISTERED CHARITY No. 267444

29 CRAVEN STREET, LONDON, WC2N 5NT, ENGLAND.

Telephone: 01-839 3267

President: Robin Hanbury-Tenison, O.B.E.



Company Registration No. 1056317

Girobank No. 5664454

U. N. (ECOSOC) - N. G. O.

EEC-NGO

Mr. P. Hartling  
The High Commissioner  
The United Nations High Commission for Refugees  
Palais des Nations  
CH-1211  
Geneva  
Switzerland

24.9.1984

Dear Mr Hartling,

Survival International is a human rights organisation that seeks to defend the rights of tribal peoples to survival, self-determination and the use and ownership of their traditional lands.

Over the past three months we have received a number of reports indicating that the situation of the tribal peoples in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) of eastern Bangladesh has taken another turn for the worse. According to the information that we have received, it appears that several hundred tribal peoples have been massacred by the Bangladesh armed forces in the Bhushanchara area. Many other tribals, mainly Chakma, allegedly as many as 18,000, have been forced to flee their lands and have sought refuge in Mizoram State in India.

In the knowledge that the plight of the tribal peoples of the CHT was recently brought to the attention of the United Nations at the Working Group on Indigenous Populations, the refugees have appealed to the UN for assistance.

We are therefore appealing to your organisation to investigate this issue and to intervene on behalf of the refugees, whose situation in India is far from secure.

In the expectation of an early reply, I remain

yours sincerely

Robin Hanbury-Tenison  
President.

A NEW REPORT FROM  
SURVIVAL INTERNATIONAL

# Genocide in Bangladesh

Indians and government in Peru

Indians and the World Bank and other articles

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.

Published by Survival International  
ISSN 0308 2857      Illustrated with photos and maps, 140 pp  
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# WHAT IS SURVIVAL INTERNATIONAL?

Survival International, a registered charity, is an international human rights organisation that acts to help tribal peoples. It has NGO consultative status at the UN (ECOSOC) and EEC human rights commissions. Its stated objects are:

- to help tribal peoples to exercise their right to survival and self-determination.
- to ensure that the rights of tribal peoples are properly represented in all decisions affecting their future.
- to secure for tribal peoples the ownership and use of adequate land and other resources, and seek recognition of their rights to their traditional lands.

Survival International seeks to achieve these ends by:

- supporting projects with tribal peoples—in health, education and land rights.
- speaking out on tribal people's rights to governments, multinational companies, development agencies etc.
- publishing on the problems faced by tribal peoples and on the solutions they themselves propose.
- representing tribal peoples at human rights fora when they are unable to present their own cases.
- education—by providing speakers, films, slide-shows, exhibitions and book stalls at public meetings, in schools and universities.

Survival International has offices in Britain, France, Ireland and the USA and is connected to an international network of local groups and affiliated individuals.



## MEMBERSHIP

Survival International offers a two tier membership.

Full (subscribing) members pay £15 p.a. and receive the quarterly NEWS and the annual REVIEW.

Members paying £8 p.a. receive the quarterly NEWS.

Bankers' Order and Deed of Covenant forms are available from the International Secretariat.

Survival International 29, Craven St. LONDON WC2N 5NT England.

Tel: (01) 839 3267. Giro No. 5664454

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IMPORTANT - Urgent Action Bulletins are sent free of charge to anyone who requests them (whether they are members of Survival International or not). Receipt of Bulletins must, however, be acknowledged by using this form or a separate sheet. Those who fail to acknowledge receipt will not be sent further Bulletins.

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29 CRAVEN STREET  
LONDON WC2N 5NF  
ENGLAND

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