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UN told of 'virtual genocide' in Bangladesh

From Alan McGregor
Geneva

Detailed allegations of increasing violence by Bangladeshi soldiers and police in the Chittagong hill region have been made in the UN human rights sub-commission working group on indigenous peoples by a representative of the Chakma tribe. The tribesman, who asked that his name should not be published for fear of reprisals against his relatives, cited many instances of young women being raped and then abducted or bayoneted to death.

He claimed that the majority of tribal people, who are Buddhists, were facing virtual genocide unless they converted to Islam.

Foreign aid intended to further the economic and social development of the area was being used for the benefit of the military and the settlers. Outrages were being committed for the ostensible purpose of hunting down Shanti Bahini guerrillas.

An accompanying submission by the British Anti-Slavery Society for the protection of human rights details 325 instances of individuals being attacked by the security forces.

Examples include: "May 31, 1984, in Barkal Thana, Miss Samarbi Chakma, 14, daughter of Mr. Ajotya Chakma, of Bhusan, was raped by three army men and killed with bayonet stabs in the abdomen.