

From Dr. R.S. Dewan,  
C/o Dr. H.D. Locksley, Dept. of Chemistry,  
Salford University, Salford M5 4WT, England.

Date: 10 Dec. 1985

Sub: An appeal to save the Chakma and other tribes of the  
Chittagong Hill Tracts from the total annihilation by  
the Bangladesh Government.

Dear Friend,

May I present to you an article entitled, "CHT - The Full Horror",  
from the Survival International News No. 10, 1985, regarding the Bangladesh  
Government-directed genocidal crimes which are filling the Chittagong Hill  
Tracts (CHT) with the blood of the indigenous population.

The article and its picture depict the actual situation in the CHT  
which is like a closed-door slaughter house. "The Chittagong Hill Tracts  
have been closed to visitors and foreign journalists for several years."  
The entire Bangladesh Air Force, one unit of the Bangladesh Navy, and over  
125,000 military and para-military personnel are operating in the area in  
order to exterminate the indigenous people because the government wants to  
seize the tribal homeland for its co-religionists. As a consequence, the  
the Bangladesh armed forces have committed many cold-blooded massacres of  
unarmed tribal communities. By 1984, more than 185,000 tribal people,  
mostly women and children, died as a result of the Bengali onslaught.

The present ruler of Bangladesh is carrying out the genocidal  
campaign more vigorously than his predecessors. He is responsible for the  
killing of tens of thousands of innocent men, women and children. For  
example, 800 tribespeople were murdered in 1983 (June, July and August)  
when his soldiers attacked Panchari area. At least 500 tribal villagers  
were slaughtered during the invasion of Banraibari-Beltali-Belchari region  
in the Feni valley in June 1981. On 19 Sept. 1981, he ordered his troops  
to seize 35 villages including Telafang, Ashalong, Gurangapara, Tabalchari  
and Barnala in the Feni valley. These massacres resulted in the loss of  
9,500 tribal lives.

The military ruler of Bangladesh has sealed off the CHT and he is  
adopting all inhuman tactics in order to get rid of the indigenous people  
as secretly and as quickly as possible before the international community  
intervenes. I shall be most grateful to you if you would kindly take all  
necessary measures against the Bangladeshi regime until it opens up the  
tribal homeland to the human rights groups and foreign journalists.

To

Mr. Rudolph C. Ryser,  
Chairman of the Center for World Indigenous Studies,  
P.O. Box 911, Snoqualmie,  
Washington 98065, U.S.A.

Yours sincerely

*Ramendu Dewan*

# SURVIVAL INTERNATIONAL

## CHT - THE FULL HORROR

### BANGLADESH

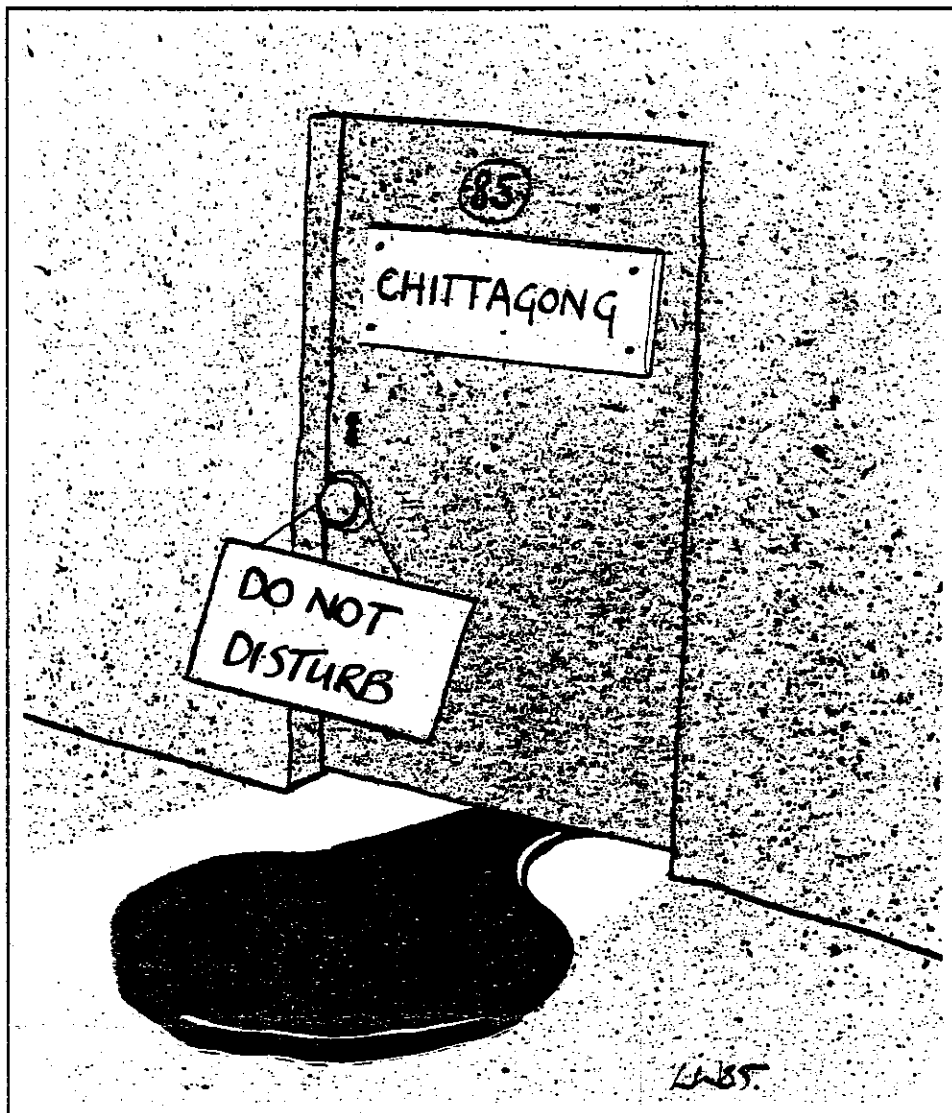
The brutal army-backed colonisation of the Chittagong Hill Tracts of southeast Bangladesh continues. A number of recent reports received by Survival International have provided truly horrifying details of the crimes being committed in this remote hilly corner of the country. Rape and other sexual atrocities have become commonplace, entire communities have been destroyed, hundreds of tribal people have been killed including women and children, people have been taken captive, tortured and held without trial. Thousands of tribals fearing for their lives have fled their lands and taken refuge in the steep jungle uplands or in neighbouring India. An entire tribal region is in the process of being destroyed, yet when the people cry out for help, the world barely listens.

#### A secret war

The Chittagong Hill Tracts have been closed to visitors and foreign journalists for several years. Yet news of the genocidal colonisation programme by which the government is forcibly settling lowlander Bengalis on the tribespeoples' lands continues to filter through to the outside world. But such are the risks of carrying information out of the hills that these reports are usually verbal accounts, fragmentary and lacking details. The most substantial information now reaching the outside world is emerging through India, where thousands of tribal refugees have provided detailed testimony of their suffering. The details summarised below are extracts from these accounts, unverifiable because of the prohibition on access to the Hill Tracts.

#### Massacres

During May and June of 1984, the



Bangladesh army carried out a number of raids on tribal villages in the Bhushanchara region, which have already been reported in SI News 7. The details of what happened during these massacres are now available from the refugees.

In one of several villages attacked by

the army that day, Suguripara in Barkal Thana, 25 tribals were killed including women and young children. Before killing the young women, the soldiers raped them, often repeatedly, finally killing them by bayoneting them through their 'bleeding private parts'.

A one-year old child was also

bayoneted to death while another, aged two, was cast into a burning house to die.

In nearby Het Bharia, one young girl of ten was repeatedly raped until she fell unconscious. She burned to death with her mother who had also been raped. In all these villages the menfolk were also killed, usually with machine guns and bayonets, but others were killed by being tortured; one by being tied upside down to a tree and beaten to death.

In all some sixty-three people were killed in the seven communities for which Survival International has received detailed accounts, while five young women aged between 15 and 26 remain untraced.

#### Scorched earth

The Bushanchara massacres were but the worst of a continuous series of raids on tribal peoples carried out over the last

year. Starting on 20 September 1984, the Bangladesh army began a month long 'scorched earth' operation in the Gabi Chari area. The army would enter villages, rape the women and then kill those who did not flee. After this they set fire to the settlements and crops.

Many individual tribals and families have been persecuted by the army for allegedly supporting the Shanti Bahini, the tribal guerrilla force fighting in defence of their lands. Numerous accounts detail how these individuals have been taken to army camps and tortured and held without trial. Women have been taken from families to the army camps where some have been sexually so grossly abused that they have had to be taken away from the camps on stretchers. Others have miscarried owing to the violence with which they have been raped.

#### Government unconcern

Survival International has repeatedly urged the Bangladesh government to halt the settlement programme which is depriving the tribal peoples of a future and reassert legislation that will prevent them being alienated from their homelands. The Bangladeshi authorities have not, however, proved very concerned about the matter. In response to SI's submission of the Report *Genocide in Bangladesh* in July 1984, the High Commission in London replied:

The question of any discrimination, relocation or decimation of any tribe or ethnic minority within Bangladesh does not arise.

Full details of these recent atrocities are available in a new Survival International report *Chittagong Hill Tracts: The Killing continues*, available from the International office, £1.00 + 35p p&p.

## PAPUA

# LIES, IGNORANCE AND EVASION

Earlier this year Survival International launched its campaign to halt the funding of the Indonesian government's transmigration programme until it guarantees respect for tribal peoples' rights to the ownership of their traditional lands and to self-determination (see SI News 9). The campaign has elicited a variety of responses from the agencies funding the programme, ranging from bare-faced lies to hollow-sounding expressions of concern.

#### Dutch deceit

The most extraordinary response came from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs which replied to Survival International's detailed letter with the single bald statement:

With reference to your letter dated 26 February 1985 I am writing to inform you that, contrary to your information, the Netherlands Government is not involved in transmigration projects in Indonesia. And yet, according to the Indonesian Ministry for Transmigrations' own documents, the Netherlands government has supplied no less than 26,735,600 Dutch guilders to the transmigration programme since 1972.

Moreover, as Survival International pointed out in its reply to the Ministry, this sum forms only part of the Netherlands government's involvement in the scheme which is also funded multilaterally through the World Bank, the EEC, the UNDP, the FAO and the

World Food Programme. Besides this, the Netherlands government coordinates and hosts the meetings of the Inter-Governmental Group on Indonesia (IGGI) a multilateral body which decides on funding priorities to Indonesia and which has taken a close interest in transmigration. Indeed, exactly a week before the Dutch government replied to Survival International, it sent four delegates to attend a special IGGI workshop on transmigration in Jakarta. During the same week the Dutch Minister for Overseas Aid had held special meetings in the Dutch parliament, in which she made plain her support for the programme.

Is the Dutch government so ashamed of its involvement in the scheme that it prefers to hide behind untruths rather than justify its support for a programme which is undeniably responsible for dispossessing tribal peoples of their lands?

#### Responsibility denied

While the British government does not deny its involvement in transmigration, it shrugs off any responsibility for the associated human rights abuses. It claims that it 'has no locus to intervene' in these issues.

Nowhere is it made clear how the government justifies its funding of a programme which, *as legally formulated*, denies tribal peoples' land rights.

In reply to a second letter from Survival International, the Foreign Office

merely offered bland assurances that it does 'carefully examine' the projects for which it supplies funding, 'taking account of considerations such as you raise'.

#### No accountability

Just how carefully the government has examined its contribution to the World Bank's funding of transmigration can be judged from a separate letter received by Survival International from the British Overseas Development Administration (ODA). We were informed that the ODA 'does not have on file the information for which you asked'.

Where, one wonders, are the sources of information on the basis of which the British government has 'carefully examined' its funding of transmigration?

In a somewhat similar vein the World Food Programme, in an unusually frank and honest letter, admitted that it 'was not in the best position' to reply to SI's queries regarding land rights abuse and suggested that Survival International address itself to the World Bank for more detailed information.

#### Bank job

The ODA, on the other hand, wrote to the World Bank for information on the basis of which to reply to Survival International. Two months later they admitted to Survival International that they were

disappointed to find...that (they) had still not received a substantive reply from the bank.