

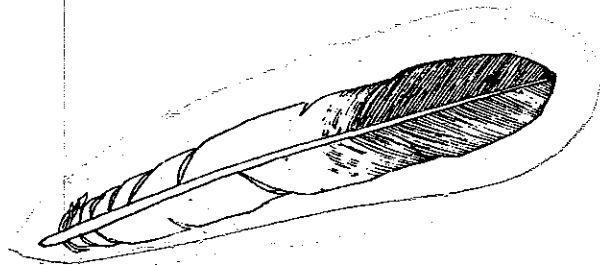
Occasional Paper #4

THE HORRORS

Of The

CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS

By
Dr. Ramendu Shekhar Dewan



A Publication of the
Center for World Indigenous Studies
August 1985

The Horrors of the Chittagong Hill Tracts
Copyright 1985 by Center for World Indigenous Studies (CWIS)

All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America. No part of this paper may be used or reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles and reviews. For information address Center for World Indigenous Studies, P.O. Box 911, Snoqualmie, Washington 98065 U.S.A.

Other Occasional Papers:

- #1 **INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE INDIAN RESISTANCE IN NICARAGUA**
By Dr. Bernard Nietschmann (April 1984)
- #2 **FOURTH WORLD WARS Indigenous Nationalism and the New
International Political Order**
By Rudolph C. Ryser (May 1984)
- #3 **An Indian Struggle for Aid and Justice in Nicaragua**
By Hank Adams (May 1985)

The Horrors of the Chittagong Hill Tracts

By Dr. Ramendu Shekhar Dewan

The Chittagong Hill Tract Region is located in the south eastern portion of the state of Bangladesh in southern Asia. The region contains the traditional homelands of thirteen indigenous nations including Chakma, Tongchongya, Chak, Marma, Khyang, Khumi, Tripura, Murung, Mro, Lushai, Bawm, Bonjugi, and Pankho. With a combined population of more than 600,000 people, the indigenous nations of the Chittagong Hill Tracts have been engaged in a defensive war of survival against the Bangladesh government since the independence of Bangladesh in 1972. Dr. Dewan has served as a lone voice to the world calling for justice for the indigenous nations of the Chittagong. In May 1985, Dr. Dewan delivered the following description of the horrors of Chittagong before the Annual Meeting of the Asian Conference on Religion and Peace in Seoul, South Korea.

On 26 May 1979, Brigadier Hannan and Lieutenant Colonel Salam declared in a public meeting at Panchari: *We want only the land, and not the people of the Chittagong Hill Tracts.* Ali Haider Khan, the Deputy Commissioner of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), and Abdul Awal, the former Commissioner of Chittagong Division, threatened the tribal leaders on many occasions by saying that they would be extinct in the next five years^{1 & 2}. These frank admissions by senior military and civilian officers of the Bangladesh government reveal clearly the sinister motive of the Bangladeshi regime.

The Chittagong Hill Tract Region has been sealed off and the government is systematically exterminating the indigenous nationalities and it is settling the outsider Bengalis in their place. As a result of the government-directed violence, tens of thousands of unarmed tribal men, women and children have been murdered. The crimes committed by the Bengali soldiers and settlers fall into a category which is beyond the capacity of condemnatory description. However, an attempt has been made to give a brief account of the prevailing extraordinary situation in the tribal homelands.

THE NATIONS OF CHITTAGONG

Situated in the south-eastern corner of Bangladesh, the Chittagong Hill Tract Region forms the largest district within the state. This hilly region has an area of 5,095 square miles and it has great abundance. It is bordered by the Tripura State of India on the north, by the Indian State of Mizoram on the east, to the east and south is Burma's Province of Arakan, and to the west is the Bangladesh district of Chittagong. Principle rivers in the region are the Feni, the Karnafuli, the Sengu, and the Matamuri. The Karnafuli River has many tributaries of which the Ichamati, the Reinkhong, the Chengi, the Subalong, the Kachalong, the Bara Harina, and the Chota Harina are navigable. The Mayuni River is the most important tributary of the Kachalong River.

The Chittagong Hill Tract Region is the traditional homeland of some 600,000 indigenous people belonging to 13 tribes, including the Chakma, Tongchongya, Chak, Marma, Khyang, Khumi, Tripura, Murung, Mro, Lushai, Bawm, Bonjugi, and Pankho. The Tongchongyas are a sub-group of the Chakmas. The Tribal people

profess Buddhism, Hinduism, and Christianity. Ethnically and culturally they bear resemblance to the Tibeto-Burman group.^{3 & 4} Because of their different religion, culture and ethnic origin the hillmen have suffered extreme hostility from the neighbouring Bengalis.⁵

THE BRITISH PERIOD

Britain created the Chittagong Hill Tract Region as an *excluded area* for tribal people and the colonial government promulgated the *Chittagong Hill Tracts Regulation of 1900* to safeguard their rights in all spheres of life. This regulation provided for limited self-government by tribes people. They virtually administered the district although the ultimate authority resided in a deputy commissioner who was traditionally British. Almost all government functionaries, apart from a few high officials were recruited locally. The indigenous police establishment, the Chittagong Hill Tracts Frontier Police, were mostly manned by the hill people except the position of superintendent of police who was also traditionally British. Non-tribal people were not allowed to settle in the district permanently, nor could they purchase land from hill farmers. Under *Rule 51*, of the 1900 regulations they could be expelled from the district if they were thought undesirable or found doing anything prejudicial to the interest of the traditional people.

Schools, hospitals, sewing machines, survey, road-building, post office telegraph, courts, mechanised boats, water works, electricity, modern administration, rule of law and justice were first introduced to the Chittagong Hill Tract Region during the British period. Weaving has been known to the tribal people since antiquity. The majority of them possessed flat farmlands in the valleys and practiced plough cultivation. Those tribal people who did not possess flat farmlands cultivated hill slopes by the slash-and-burn cultivation method.

THE PAKISTANI PERIOD

In 1947, Sir Cyril Radcliffe, the Chairman of the British Boundary Commission, arbitrarily awarded the Chittagong Hill Tract Region to Pakistan in violation of the very principle of the partition: The Muslim majority districts were to go to Pakistan and the other districts to India - ninety-eight percent of the Chittagong Hill Tract population were non-Muslims at the time of independence. The hill peoples, under the leadership of Sneha Kumar Chakma, demanded that the Chittagong Hill Tracts should be made part of the secular Republic of India. The Pakistani government abolished the special status of the Chittagong Hill Tracts as an excluded area, brushed aside the *Chittagong Hill Tracts Regulation of 1900*, disbanded the indigenous police force, transferred the tribal police and civilian officers to other districts of East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), brought in Bengali police and civilian officers in their place, and allowed the Bengalis to settle in the tribal homelands.

The Bengalis interfered with the social and religious life of the original peoples. For example, in 1953, the Chakma Chief Raja Tridiv Roy was attacked by the government-backed Bengalis while administering justice in the Royal Court. In spite of the personal intervention of the Deputy Commissioner Lieutenant Colonel John Angus Hume, OBE, he was arrested and insulted by the Bengali police. The Chakma Chief fulfills a role similar to that of the British Constitutional Monarchy. He is the symbol of the nation, head and nucleus of the society, and defender of religion and culture. The Chakma Chief would have been killed without the intervention of Colonel Hume. This highly admired officer protested against this injustice by resigning his post.⁶

The construction of the Kaptai Hydroelectric Dam on the Karnafuli River inundated 350 square miles of low lands including 40 percent of the best agricultural land of the Chittagong Hill Tracts, and displaced 20,000 farmer families

(over 100,000 people) and Jhum cultivator families (more than 50,000 people). The Pakistani government took no effective steps to rehabilitate them and paid them compensation at a ridiculously low rate. Many tribal people died during the removal and many fled to the Indian states of Tripura and Mizoram.⁷

Large-scale Bengali settlement on the farmlands of the tribal farmers resulted in the eviction of about 100,000 tribesmen. The eviction of the largest single group of 60,000 took place in 1961 when the Bengali immigrants started a series of riots against the innocent tribal farmers. The riots were stopped only when the governments of India, Sri Lanka and other countries lodged protest with the Pakistani regime. The evicted tribal people were pushed into India and Burma and none of them was repatriated.

The Kaptai Hydroelectric Project neither employed any tribal people nor supplied them with electricity. The government set up a paper mill and a rayon mill at Chandraghona, and also many industries in the district. Only a few hill people have been employed there. During the 24 years of Pakistani rule, the Indigenous Nations of the Chittagong Hill Tract Region lost practically all political and economic rights, including official and police protection.

TOTAL BENGALI INVASION, OPPRESSION AND GENOCIDE

During the 1971 war for independence of Bangladesh, thousands of hill people, including Manabendra Narayan Lama, fought with the Bengali forces against the Pakistan army in the hope that their condition would improve in independent Bangladesh. When the Pakistan army withdrew from Panchari, the *Bangladesh Mukti Bahini* (Bangladesh Liberation Force) came, killed 18 hillmen who came out to receive them, plundered the area, and murdered another sixteen tribesmen in an adjacent place. On 14 December 1971, the Bengali soldiers killed 22 tribal people and burned 200 houses at Kukichara. During the civil war, 50,000 Bengalis settled on the farmlands of the tribal farmers with the help of the Pakistan army and following independence they refused to vacate. These illegal settlers attacked the tribal villages, killed many villagers, burned their homes, looted their properties, raped their women, and destroyed Buddhist temples.⁸

Soon after independence, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, unleashed a reign of terror in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. In a military campaign to search for *Rajakars* and *Albadars* (supporters of Pakistan), several hundred innocent tribesmen were killed, hundreds of houses were looted and burned, a large number of women were raped, and thousands of innocent hillmen were indiscriminately arrested and tortured. Later, more atrocities followed. In 1972, the Bangladesh army massacred the people in the villages of Merung, Hazachara and Boalkhali. The Bangladesh Constitution, which was adopted in 1972, did not mention either the special status of the Chittagong Hill Tracts or the Chittagong Hill Tracts Regulation of 1900 to safeguard the interests of the Indigenous Nations. In protest, Member of Parliament M. N. Lama refused to endorse the Constitution. Badly shaken by these attacks on their people, on their lands and on their rights, the peoples of the Chittagong Hill Tracts sent a delegation, led by Mr. Lama, to meet with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on 15 February 1972 to ask for autonomy and enforcement of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Regulation of 1900. He rejected their demands, charged them of secessionism, and said, *Do away with your ethnic identity, go home, and become Bengalis*. After the rejection of the deputation's demands, the government stepped up persecution and the Indigenous Nations had no alternative but to organise the *Shanti Bahini* or Peace Force with a view to resisting the government oppression. Sheikh Mujib's regime encouraged more Bengali immigration. The Bangladesh government's policy was designed to outnumber the Indigenous Nations with the Bengalis, and to force them to lose their identity and merge with the Bengali state. In pursuit of this policy the *Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board* was set up in 1975 to create more jobs for the Bengalis and also to open up the interior to Bengali immigrants.

After the assassination of Sheikh Mujib, a tribal delegation, under the leadership of Mr. Larma, submitted a memorandum to the then President of Bangladesh, A. S. Sayem on 19 November 1975. The result was more government-sponsored violence. Again in 1976, Ashok Kumar Dewan, on behalf of the people of the Chittagong Hill Tract Region, presented a further proposal to President Siqur Rahman. In response, this soldier-president launched a full-scale invasion of the tribal homelands. He deployed some 125,000 military and paramilitary personnel, one unit of the Bangladesh Navy, and the entire Air Force of Bangladesh to seize tribal farmlands for over half a million Bengali settlers. This government-organized genocidal programme involved countless mass-killings, wholesale burning of tribal villages, torture, rape, forcible conversion to Islam, destruction of Buddhist temples, looting and chicanery. The Bangladeshi armed forces launched campaigns in the upper reaches of the Sengu River from November 1976 to January 1977 and destroyed many villages in the areas of **Madhu** and **Thanchi**. Over 1,000 hill people were killed, hundreds of women were raped, and their villages and farmlands were distributed to the Bengalis. About 15,000 tribal people took refuge in Burma and in the neighbouring forests.

He rejected their demands, charged them of secessionism, and said, *Do away with your ethnic identity, go home, and become Bengalis!*

On 15 October 1979, the Bangladesh army attacked the **Mubhachari** area (near Mahalchhari), burned all villages within an area of sixteen square miles, murdered several thousand men, women and children, and took away thousands of tribal men and women. Their fate is still unknown. It is feared that all men died during torture in military camps and that all women were raped and forcibly converted to Islam.

On 25 March 1980, a local commander of the Bangladesh army called a meeting at **Kalampati Union** to discuss the problems of the locality and also the restoration of Buddhist temples. A large number of tribal people assembled on the **Kaukhali Bazar** ground. The military commander arrived, addressed the assembled people, and then left. As soon as he had gone, some hundred Bengali settlers armed with knives and spears attacked the tribal people. Behind them came the Bengali soldiers. More than 300 tribesmen were butchered on the spot. Then the Bengali rioters, under the protection of the Bengali soldiers, burned two dozen tribal villages, killed more tribal people, kidnapped many women, destroyed many Buddhist temples, murdered many Buddhist monks, and grabbed tribal villages and farmlands. Under pressure from Members of Parliament, the government reluctantly ordered a *Committee of Inquiry*, but it never produced a report.^{9,10,11,12}

Similar innumerable government-directed massacres had taken place in many areas during the rule of General Ziaur Rahman.

The army forcibly moved the tribal farmers into *Forced Resettlement Camps* or *Concentration Camps*. The government describes them as *Model Villages* or *Joint Co-operative Farming Projects* in order to mislead the world. Such camps have been established at **Maghban**, **Balukhali**, **Ijachari**, **Kangrachari**, **Bilaichari**, **Sakrachari**, **Taktanala**, **Dhupsil**, **Pharoa**, **Kandyaduar**, **Basanta Hemanta**, **Tinkunia**, **Pengchhari**, **Kacchaptali**, **Bagmara**, **Reisa**, **Murunghuk**, **Thanchi**, **Balipara**, and **Alkadam**. Murder, beating, rape, starvation, and lack of medical care are

commonplace in the concentration camps. Life in these camps under the Bangladesh army is so horrifying that when the government decided to set up another camp at Ghagra, the tribal people deserted their ancestral homes and farmlands, and fled to other areas.

Twelve to fifteen thousand tribal people have been imprisoned without charge or trial, and subjected to routine torture. Inquiring family members elicit no response and no legal recourse is available to either the prisoners or their families. The government does not allow anybody to carry essential commodities such as rice, salt, kerosene, cloth and medicine beyond the district capital, Rangamati. The local people are not permitted to buy more than two kilograms of rice per family per week. A family has normally six members and this amount of food is totally inadequate for six people. There is serious shortage of these articles in the district and most of the hill people suffer from lack of food. A special permit is required to carry medicine. To get such a permit tribal people must go to government centres which are usually miles away from the villages. On the way, there are military and police checkpoints where the tribal people are often harassed, tortured and detained without food and water. Some of them die during torture. Raping of tribal women is commonplace, and so they dare not go out of their villages. In effect, the tribal people are being forcibly deprived of medicine and other daily necessities. As a consequence, large numbers of tribal people are dying of malaria and of other disease. The Bangladeshi regime is adopting every inhuman method to get rid of the Indigenous Nations of the Chittagong Hill Tract Region.
13,14,15,16,17,18,19

THE GOVERNMENT OF HOSSAIN MOHAMMAD ERSHAD

After the assassination of General Ziqur Rahman, the government of President Abdus Sattar pursued the anti-tribal policy relentlessly, and the present military regime of Lieutenant-General Hossain Mohammad Ershad is continuing the genocidal policy more vigorously than his predecessors. On 26 June 1981, the Bengali settlers, under the protection of the Bangladesh army, invaded the tribal area in the vicinity of Banrai Bari, Beltali and Belchari, murdered 500 tribal men, women and children, and occupied their villages and farmlands. Thousands of tribal people fled to the nearby forests and 5,000 of them managed to seek refuge in the Indian state of Tripura.
20,21,22,23,24,25

Hundreds of houses were looted and burned, and 800 people were murdered ... old men, women and children.

On 19 September 1981, the Bangladesh army, and the Bengali settlers, made coordinated attacks on 35 tribal villages including Telafang, Ashalong, Gurangapara, Tablchari, and Barnala in the Feni Valley. They plundered and burned the villages, and killed many thousands of men, women and children. The surviving villagers fled to the Indian state of Tripura and to the adjacent forests. About 9,500 tribal people died as a result of these attacks.
26,27,28,29,30,31,32,33,34,35,36,37,38,39,40,41,42,43,44,45,46

Although the Bangladeshi regime denied that these refugees were from the Chittagong Hill Tract Region, it was forced by international opinion to repatriate them. *These tribal people were met at the border by hostile Bangladeshi officials and were given the equivalent of \$8.00, and were left to their fate. Return to their native villages, is of course, impossible for these refugees because their homes and possessions have been appropriated by Bengali settlers. It is feared that many of them died of starvation and of diseases. Their fate is still not known.*

On 26 June, 11,26,27 July and 9,10,11 August 1983, the Bangladesh armed forces and the Bengali immigrants massacred the tribal people of the villages within Panchari police station, including amongst others, Golakpatimachara, Machyachara, Tarabanchari, Logang, Tarabanya, Maramachyachara, and Jedamachyachara. Hundreds of houses were looted and burned, and 800 people were murdered. Most of the victims were old men, women and children. After clearing the area of the tribal peoples, the government settled Bengali families there. ^{47,48}

In May 1984, the Bengali settlers in complicity with the Bangladesh army carried out the massacre of the tribal people of Bhushanchara because they wanted to grab the tribal farmlands. Hundreds of unarmed people were murdered, 5,000 tribal people sought refuge in the Indian state of Mizoram, and 10,000 fled to the neighboring forests. ⁴⁹ Again, on 30 June 1984, the Bengali settlers, with the help of the Bangladesh army, attacked the tribal people of Chota Harina, Bara harina, Chedoa, Garjantali, Soguripara, and Maudong. More than 300 innocent Chakmas were slaughtered. The captured hill people 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. Thirteen thousand Chakmas sought refuge in the Indian state of Mizoram. The regime of General Ershad committed genocide against the defenseless people of the Chittagong Hill Tracts. ^{50,51} By 1984, over 185,000 tribal people died as a result of the Bengali invasion. ⁵²

BENGLI COLONIZATION IN THE WAKE OF TERROR

The process of systematic dispossession of tribal land rights began right from the beginning of Pakistani rule. At first the Pakistani Government ignored the *special status* of the Indigenous Nations in the Chittagong Hill Tract Region, and later abolished it in 1964 to pave the way for Bengali immigration. In the early fifties, several hundred Muslim families were settled in Nanyachar of the Chengi Valley, and in Longudu of the Kachalong Valley. Then again, in the sixties, hundreds of Bengali families were allowed to settle in Ramgarh, Tablchari and elchari of the Feni Valley, in Bandarban of the Sengu Valley, and in Lama, Nakhjong chari, and Alikadam of the Matamuri Valley. During the 1971 war, fifty thousand Bengalis from the adjacent districts – Chittagong and Noakhali – took over tribal farmlands forcibly in the Feni, Sengu and Matamuri Valleys with the help of the Pakistan army.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman encouraged more Bengali settlements in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. In August 1979, General Ziaur Rahman embarked on a secret, three-phased plan to shift Bengali settlers on a large scale through state-initiative. Although the government denies having settled any outsider, Bengalis in the Chittagong Hill Tract Region, 25,000 families (an estimated 150,000 people) had been rehabilitated by the middle of 1980 (First Phase). ⁵³

General Ziaur Rahman was assassinated before he finished the Second Phase of the plan. The present ruler, General Ershad, is carrying out this plan vigorously. Official secret documents smuggled out of Bangladesh show that another batch of 100,000 families (an estimated 500,000 people) had been settled by 1981 (Second Phase). ^{54,55,56,57}

In 1947, the tribal population accounted for 98 percent in the region, and the Bengali population formed two percent of the region's population. The Muslim Bengali population had risen to nine percent in 1951, to 11.6 percent in 1974, and to 39 percent by the middle of 1981. ⁵⁸

The Third Phase of the Bengali settlement plan, which began in 1982, brought in another batch of 250,000 Bengalis. ⁵⁹ It is estimated that the Muslim Bengali population now forms well over 50 percent of the total population of the Chittagong Hill Tract Region. The government has provided the settlers with free

transport and rations, plenty of cash and protection.

Each family has been given five acres of hilly land, four acres of mixed land, and two and a half acres of paddy land.

The Chittagong Hill Tracts are hilly and one-third of the district is set aside as *Reserved Forest*. Level land suitable for plough cultivation is very scarce. The Kaptai Dam flooded 40 percent of the district's agricultural land and the land shortage in the area became just as acute as in the plain districts of Bangladesh. It was for this reason that the Government of Pakistan could not rehabilitate even 16,000 of the total 100,000 people displaced by the dam. The Chittagong Hill Tracts are not thinly populated. A study commissioned by Dhaka clearly stated, *as far as its developed resources are concerned, the Hill Tracts is as constrained as the most thickly populated districts of (Bangladesh) ... the emptiness of the Hill Tracts, therefore, is a myth.*

Where then has the government been settling the Bengalis? Obviously, the Bangladesh armed forces are seizing tribal farmlands by killing the tribal farmers, by herding them into concentration camps, by sponsoring terrorism against them, by pushing them out of the country, and by cheating them for their co-religionists.
60,61

During the British period a tribal family could hold 25 acres of land. The Pakistani regime reduced this quota to 10 acres and the Bangladesh military junta has reduced it further to 5 acres. This law has never been applied to any parts of Bangladesh except the Chittagong Hill Tracts Region. On the other hand, the Muslim Bengalis can hold unlimited land. Even the present *Land Reforms Committee* has recommended fixing of a land holding ceiling for each Bengali family at 25 to 33 acres. Now the Bangladesh army is compelling the tribal farmers to surrender all their lands in order to accommodate the Bengali settlers.⁶²

Almost the entire valleys of the Feni, the Ichamati, the Karnafuli, the Sengu, the Matamuri, the Chota Harina, and the Bara Harina rivers have already been occupied forcibly by the Bengali invaders. Now, exactly the same situation is happening to the fertile valleys of the Chengi, the Kachalong, and the Mayuni rivers.

RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION

The Bangladeshi regime is persecuting the Indigenous Nations of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Region for their religious beliefs. Numerous Buddhist temples have been looted, desecrated, and destroyed. Many monks have been detained without charge or trial and tortured. They are often attacked, harassed, and murdered. On 22 February 1979, the Bangladesh army ransacked the Buddhist temple at **Pujang**, some 20 miles north of Khagrachari. The Bengali soldiers shot at the Buddha's Holy image, broke its head with rifle butts, and then played football with the head in the courtyard of the temple. Reverend Aniruddha Bhikkhu and Reverend Rebata Bhikkhu were severely beaten with the result that the former had suffered a serious head injury and the latter had his right hand broken. On 27 December 1979, Venerable Ajara Bhikkhu and Venerable Bannitananda Bhikkhu of the Buddhist temple at **Thakujiyamakalak** in the Kachalong Valley were hacked to death by Bengali soldiers.

During the massacre of 25 March 1980 in **Kalampati Union**, the Bangladesh army and the Bengali settlers plundered and destroyed many Buddhist temples, and murdered many monks. A parliamentary delegation consisting of Rashed Khan Menon, MP; Shajahan Siraj, MP; and the local Member of Parliament Upendra Lal Chakma visited the area and confirmed that the Buddhist temples at **Betchari**, **Tonghapara**, **Chotadulu**, **Baradulu**, and **Tripuradighi** were completely destroyed, and those at **Headmanpara**, **Poapara**, **Rangeipara**, **Kashkhalimukhpara**, **Kachukhali**, **Chelachara**, **Roazapara**, and **Hatirpara** were heavily damaged.⁶³

Bengalis broke up the Buddha's statue of the Poapara Buddhist temple, and then played football with the broken pieces. The Anti-Slavery Society of London noted in its report *The Chittagong Hill Tracts: Militarization, Oppression and the Hill Tribes* (Report no.2, 1984) that the violence was directed particularly at priests and temples. A few Buddhist monks survived miraculously. They were left for dead. The priests of the Roazapara Buddhist temple, Reverend Pannasara Bhikkhu and Reverend Wannasara Bhikkhu survived, but they had their hands broken. Another survivor, Venerable U Chandra Griya Bhikkhu of the Chaityaraja Buddhist Temple at Kashkhalimukhpara, had his head injured and both hands broken. ⁶⁴

Bengali soldiers stripped a Buddhist monk of the temple at Kattali, 70 miles north-east of Rangamati, slaughtered a cow on his saffron robes, and then sprinkled blood on the holy image of the Buddha. ⁶⁵

On 11 August 1983, Venerable Bodhipal Bhikkhu, the Head Monk of the Banavihar Buddhist Temple at Jedamachyachara, near Panchari, was beaten mercilessly. He fled to Agartala in the Tripura State of India as he could not bear military oppression anymore.

Ulrich Henes wrote in *The Secret War in Bangladesh* (International Fellowship of Reconciliation, Report, October 1980) about the armed Bangladesh occupation of Buddhist places of worship. He describe the occupation of the Buddhist temple at Maischari, some 40 miles north of Rangamati. The Bangladesh armed police occupied this temple for eight months. These illegal intruders reviled the monks, slaughtered a cow on their saffron robes, and smeared the holy image of the Buddha with blood.

Bengali settlers plundered and destroyed many
Buddhist temples, and murdered many monks.

The Bangladesh army prevents the people of the Chittagong Hill Tracts from practicing their own religion. The Buddhist shrine at Chitmarong, 20 miles south of Rangamati, is the holiest of all places for the Buddhists tribals, and the Buddhists from every corner of the district have gone there for pilgrimage. The Bangladesh army set up a checkpoint on the way to the shrine. Tribal people going there are asked for identity cards and they are thoroughly searched. Women are raped. Harassment has increased to such an extent that very few people dare visit the temple.

The military junta has made a secret plan to force the Indigenous Nations to become Muslims. With the financial help of Saudi Arabia, it has built an Islamic Preaching Centre, a huge Mosque, and an Islamic Cultural Centre at Rangamati for this purpose. The government is also building hundreds of Mosques throughout the Chittagong Hill Tracts Region while it is destroying hundreds of Buddhist temples with equal measures of zealotry. The government has secretly circuited a letter to all military officers, now occupying the Chittagong Hill Tracts, encouraging them to marry tribal girls with a view to assimilating the indigenous people. As a consequence, the Bengali soldiers kidnapped thousands of tribal women and forced them to embrace Islam. A number of forcible conversions of tribal men to Islam have already taken place.

INTERNATIONAL AID SUPPORTS GOVERNMENT TERROR

The Bangladesh Government often seeks foreign aid for the economic and social

development of the the Indigenous Nations of the Chittagong Hill Tracts. After receiving the aid, the military regime uses the money for the military and for the Bengali settlers, and not for the tribal peoples. ⁶⁶

1. *The USAID (United States Agency for International Development) financed Kaptai Hydro-electric Dam which flooded tribal lands and only benefitted the outsider Bengalis.*
2. *The SIDA (Swedish International Development Agency) funded the Bangladesh Forest Development Project which created jobs for Bengalis and further encouraged migration to the Chittagong Hill Tracts.*
3. *The UNICEF (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund) aided the development of a Drinking Water Supply Project which benefitted only army camps, Bengali colonies, urban centres and concentration camps.*
4. *The World Health Organization (WHO) organized the Malaria Eradication Project which has been used to serve the armed forces and the Bengali settlers.*
5. *The Australian Development Assistance Bureau (ADAB) sponsored the Chengi Valley Road Building Project which has been used to facilitate army movement in the hills and to open up the interior to Bengali immigration.*
6. *The Asian Development Bank (ADB) assisted by supporting the Livestock and Fisheries Programmes which have directly benefitted the Bengali new comers only.*
7. *The Asian Development Bank financed the Joutha Khamar Projects (Joint Farming Projects) which are really concentration camps for the tribal farmers who have been forced to leave their ancestral homes and farmlands to accommodate the Bengali invaders.*

The Indigenous Nations of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Region welcome foreign aid if it is used for their benefit. But, at present, foreign aid from international institutions and countries like Australia, Sweden and the United States of America is helping the Bengalis only and these outsiders are annihilating the indigenous people. So the tribal people and various human rights groups have appealed to donor countries to stop their aid to Bangladesh. Sweden responded to these appeals by stopping the Forest Development Project on the grounds that the Bangladesh Government refused to employ the hill people in the project. ^{67,68} Australia, similarly, pulled out of the road building project because the road helped the military and also the Bengali settlers to move deep into the tribal homelands. ⁶⁹ Other aid, however, continues to flow into the Bangladesh treasury.

The indigenous peoples have no say in the affairs of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Region. The Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board, which has been operating since 1975, is not accountable to the tribal leader. ⁶⁸ Its tribal members have never been involved in making decisions, and they are simply asked to endorse the decisions taken by the senior military leaders or by other Bengali members. One of the tribal members, Niharbindu Chakma, protested against the Board's policy designed to deprive the tribal people of the benefit of all development projects. No action has taken by the authorities to redress his grievances. Instead, he was arrested without warrant. His fate is still unknown. The Chairman of Balukhali Union, Shantimoy Dewan, was also arrested, but he was released on condition that he would *keep his mouth shut*. Infact, the indigenous people are never consulted by the government before any decisions are taken, and they have no opportunity to appeal to the higher authorities.

The Anti-Slavery Society recommended to the international funding agencies

and state governments providing development aid for projects in the Chittagong Hill Tracts that they withdraw support where such projects are against the wishes and interests of the indigenous peoples, and that all future projects should be carried out only after consultation with representatives of Indigenous Nations.

INDIGENOUS NATIONS' DEMANDS

The Bangladeshi regime is fundamentally hostile to the Indigenous Nations of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Region. It does not speak the language of justice, humanity or tolerance. Moreover, Islamic fundamentalism is growing rapidly in Bangladesh. In these hostile circumstances the peoples of the Chittagong Hill Tracts will not survive unless the international community protects them, and also their homeland from the violent Bengali invasion. In view of the extreme hostility of the Bangladeshi regime, the following measures are deemed absolutely necessary to ensure the survival of the indigenous peoples:

1. Immediate release of all tribal people imprisoned in jails and in detention centres located in different parts of Bangladesh.
2. Immediate removal of all non-tribal settlers from the Chittagong Hill Tracts.
3. Immediate withdrawal of all Bangladesh armed forces, including the non-tribal police force.
4. Retention of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Regulation of 1900 and constitutional provisions restricting the amendment of the regulation.
5. Autonomy for the Chittagong Hill Tracts with its own legislature and recognition of the hill peoples' right to self-determination.
6. Deployment of a United Nations peace Keeping force in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, and implementation of the said operations under the auspices of the United Nations.

References

1. An appeal made by the Jana Sanghati Samiti on 16 January 1980.
2. Survival International Review, No.43, 1983.
3. Wolfgang Mey, *Genocide in Bangladesh: The Chittagong Hill Tracts Case*, a paper presented to the Seventh European Conference on Modern Asian Studies, London, 7-11 July 1981.
4. Anti-Slavery Society, *The Chittagong Hill Tracts: Militarization, Oppression and the Hill Tribes*, Report No. 2, 1984.
5. Ulrich Henes, *The Secret War in Bangladesh*, from IFOR (International Fellowship of Reconciliation) Report, October 1980.
6. Venerable Aggavansa Mahathero (Chakma Rajguru), *Stop Genocide in Chittagong Hill Tracts (Bangladesh)*, a handbook.
7. Bhabatosh Dewan and Priti Kumar Chakma, *A Closed Door Slaughter House: Chadigang*, an appeal made on behalf of the Jana Sanghati Samiti on 18 January 1984.
8. Colin Johnson, *No Land Rights in Bangladesh*, a report on the plight of the peoples of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Region.

9. Upendra Lal Chakma, *Koakhali Massacre: Bangladesh Army Slaughters Civilians in Chittagong Hill Tracts*, Statement distributed by U. L. Chakma, MP; at his press conference in Dacca, Bangladesh 1 April 1980.
10. Sunandu Datta-Ray, *Chittagong Buddhists Fear Death in the Jungle*, article from the OBSERVER, (England) 27 April 1980.
11. Robin Lustig, *Tribes Face Genocide*, article from the OBSERVER, (England) 14 December 1980.
12. Patrick Keatly, *Genocide Policy Alleged in Bangladesh*, article from the GUARDIAN, (England) 16 December 1980.
13. *Revolt in Chittagong Hill Tracts*, article from the ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL WEEKLY, (Bombay, India) 29 April 1978.
14. Michael Roche, *Report from Bangladesh*, article from the BUDDHIST PEACE FELLOWSHIP OF THE USA NEWSLETTER.
15. *Present Situation of Chittagong Hill Tracts*, letter to the International Fellowship of Reconciliation sent by a Bangladeshi Buddhist monk in August 1981.
16. *The Newest Situation in the Chittagong Hill Tracts*, letter sent to the International Fellowship of Reconciliation sent by a Bangladeshi Buddhist monk in December 1981.
17. *Malaria Deaths*, article from the TIMES OF INDIA, 29 April 1983.
18. *Malaria Victims*, article from the TIMES OF INDIA, 3 October 1983.
19. *Malaria Deaths*, article from the GUARDIAN (England), 3 October 1983.
20. *350 Bangla Tribals Caught Trying to Enter Tripura*, article from the TIMES OF INDIA, 29 June 1981.
21. *Refugees from Chittagong Mass in Tripura*, from the ANANDA BAZAR PATRIKA (Calcutta, India), 30 June 1981.
22. *Refugee Influx in Tripura*, from the AMRITA BAZAR PATRIKA, 30 June 1981.
23. *Exodus of Thousands of Chakmas from Bangladesh to Tripura*, from the JUGANTAR PATRIKA, 1 July 1981.
24. *End Tribal Influx, Bangla Told*, from the TIMES OF INDIA, 3 July 1981.
25. *Tribal Massacre in Chittagong*, from the AMRITA BAZAR PATRIKA, 11 July 1981.
26. *Stir Against Bangla Executions*, from the TIMES OF INDIA, 25 September 1981.
27. *DPs pour into Tripura*, from the TIMES OF INDIA, 26 September 1981.
28. *Bangla Hill Area Death-Roll 500*, from the TIMES OF INDIA, September 1981.
29. *More Influx of Tribals*, from the TIMES OF INDIA, 28 September 1981.
30. *Influx of Bangla Tribals On*, from the TIMES OF INDIA, 29 September 1981.
31. *Stop Tribal Influx, Bangla Told*, from the TIMES OF INDIA, 30 September 1981.

32. *Escape from Terror*, from the TIMES OF INDIA, 1 October 1981.
33. *Bangla Ignores BSF Proposal*, from the TIMES OF INDIA, 1 October 1981.
34. *Tribals Influx. Pointer to Dacca's Changing Policies*, from the TIMES OF INDIA, 1 October 1981.
35. *Fall-out in Bangladesh*, from the STATESMAN WEEKLY (England), 3 October 1981.
36. *India and Bangladesh to Hold Flag Meeting*, from the STATESMAN WEEKLY (England), 3 October 1981.
37. *Dacca Okay Awaited on DP Issue*, from the TIMES OF INDIA, 4 October 1981.
38. *Bangla Tribals Forced to Flee*, from the TIMES OF INDIA, 5 October 1981.
39. *3000 Held in Chittagong*, from the STATESMAN WEEKLY (England), 10 October 1981.
40. *Bangladesh Rifles 'Admits' to Exodus*, from the STATESMAN WEEKLY (England), 10 October 1981.
41. *Influx from Bangla On*, from the TIMES OF INDIA, 13 October 1981.
42. *Indo-Bangla Talks in the Balance*, from the TIMES OF INDIA, 22 October 1981.
43. *Tribal Influx: Bangladesh Charges Against India*, from the STATESMAN WEEKLY, 24 October 1981.
44. *Repatriation of Tribals to Bangla Soon*, from the TIMES OF INDIA, 20 November 1981.
45. *Refugee Children Dying Like Flies*, from the TIMES OF INDIA, 22 November 1981.
46. *Repatriation of Tribals Stalled*, from the STATESMAN WEEKLY, 28 November 1981.
47. *800 Bangladeshis 'Killed in Massacres by Bengali Settlers'*, from the GUARDIAN (England), 9 August 1983.
48. Venerable Aggavansa Mahathero, *A Report on the Bangladesh Armed Forces' Bestial Oppression in Chittagong Hill Tracts* 20 August 1983.
49. *Even After Twenty Years 25 Thousand Chakmas Have Not Acquired Citizenship*, from the ANANDA BAZAR PATRIKA (Calcutta, India), 15 August 1984.
50. Venerable Aggavansa Mahathero, *The Bangladesh Army's Hellish Tyranny at Bhushanchara of the Chittagong Hill Tracts*, 16 August 1984.
51. Survival International Urgent Action Bulletin, BAN/1b/SEPT/1984.
52. *Buddhist Tribe Slaughtered in Jungel Genocide*, from the SUNDAY TIMES (England), 14 October 1984.
53. *Bangladesh: Recent Developments in the Chittagong Hill Tracts and Amnesty International Concerns*, AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REPORT, ASA 13/03.80, 4 November 1980.
54. *Secret Letter of the Bangladesh Government*, issued by Saifuddin Ahmed, the Commissioner of Chittagong Division on 5 September 1980.

55. *Secret Letter of the Bangladesh Government*, issued by Ali Haider Khan, the Deputy Commissioner of the Chittagong Hill Tracts, 15 September 1980.
56. *Demand for Political Solution of the Tribal Crisis*, from the Ganakanta (Dacca, Bangladesh), 5 October 1980.
57. *Despit Opposition of the Tribals, Arrangement for Rehabilitating 100,000 families from other districts in the Chittagong Hill Tracts*, from the Ganakanta (Dacca, Bangladesh), 16 October 1980.
58. *Hill Tribes Dilemma for Zia's Successor*, from the TIMES (England), 29 March 1983.
59. *Report on Chittagong Hill Tracts*, International Fellowship of Reconciliation, 29 March 1983.
60. *Massacres Feared in Bangladesh*, from the OBSERVER (England), 15 March 1981.
61. *Uphill Problem for Chittagong Tribesmen*, from the GUARDIAN (England), 29 July 1981.
62. *Land Reforms Committee Submits Report*, from the NEWS BULLETIN issued by the Bangladesh High Commission in London, on 1- 15 April, 1983.
63. *Report Delivered by the Parliamentary Fact- finding Team for the Kalampati Massacre*, (Dacca, Bangladesh) 25 April 1980.
64. *Flames of Rebellion*, from the NEW NATION (Dacca, Bangladesh), 13 April 1980.
65. *Racism in Chittagong*, from the NEW LIFE (London, England), 6 April 1984.
66. Wolfgang Mey, *Development Strategies and Social Resistance in the Third World. The Chittagong Hill Tracts Case: Genocide in Context*, a paper presented to the International Conference organized by the University of Copenhagen, Denmark, April 1981.
67. The Swedish Government's letter of 27 February 1981.
68. Brian Ead, " ", report sent to the OBSERVER (England), 19 August 1978.
69. The Australian Government's letter of 10 December 1980.