

7 October 2005

Begum Khaleda Zia
Honorable Prime Minister,
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Prime Minister
Old Airport Road, Tejgaon
Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh
Fax: + 880-2-811 3244, 811 3243
E-mail: pm@pmobd.org, pstopsecy@pmobd.org, psecretary@pmobd.org

Your Excellency,

We are writing to express our serious concern regarding the decision of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs Ministry (CHTAM) at its 21st meeting on 31 August 2005 to summon indigenous peoples' representatives to answer to allegations of "anti-state" statements at the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) held this May at the UN Headquarters in New York. We cannot understand why their legitimate efforts to draw attention to problems faced by indigenous peoples and to propose peaceful solutions should be viewed in such a light, especially as the focus of this Forum meeting was on fulfilling the Millennium Development Goals of universal primary education and eliminating extreme poverty.

The UNPFII is one of several initiatives at the United Nations to highlight and address the special challenges faced by the indigenous peoples of the world, whose distinct identity and very survival are seriously threatened by pressures toward assimilation, loss of traditional lands and resources, and political and economic marginalization. Indigenous peoples are among the most disadvantaged and vulnerable groups of people in the world today. The United Nations' initiatives on indigenous peoples are indicative of a growing global consensus that special measures are required to protect indigenous peoples' rights, and that such protections are in the long term interests of the UN member states, particularly in terms of human security and prevention/resolution of conflict.

The UNPFII cannot function without the free expression and full participation of indigenous peoples' representatives. The discussions are not behind closed doors, but

open to public scrutiny, and government representatives also are free to present their views. It should be seen as an opportunity for deepening understanding and overcoming misconceptions, rather than as a threat of exposure of internal problems.

Attempts to suppress indigenous peoples' participation in the UNPFII and other international fora, or to discourage it with threats of retaliation, raise serious doubts about your government's commitment to human rights and international norms. Already your government has faced criticism for preventing the chairman of the CHT Regional Council from attending last year's UNPFII. Further repressive measures such as this will not go unnoticed by the international community. We shall continue to pay close attention to your government's actions in this regard. .

It is our deep wish that your government will recognize the legitimacy of indigenous peoples' participation in the UNPFII and other UN fora, and ensure that such participation can continue. Openness to dissent is a key indicator of an open society, and necessary for healthy discourse to address issues for the benefit of all. Your commitment to such openness will certainly be held in high regard by the international community.

Respectfully yours,

Jumma Net

5F Marukou Bldg., 1-20-6 Higashi Ueno, Taito-ku, Tokyo 110-0015

Tel/Fax: 03-3831-1072

E-mail: office@jumma.sytes.net

Japan CHT Committee

3-35-13-204 Higashi Komatsugawa, Edogawa-ku, Tokyo 132-0033

E-mail: jchti@alles.or.jp

The Japan Citizen' Coalition for the UN International Decade of the
World's Indigenous Peoples

3-24-10-403 Koenji Minami, Suginami-ku, Tokyo 166-0003

Tel/Fax: 03-5932-9515 E-mail: indy10-Lj@infoseek.jp

Endorsed by the following organizations and individuals:

Names of Organizations:

Action Center for Development and Rights (Japan)

cade-la@nifty.com

Australia Jumma Federation (Australia)

tanu_r20@hotmail.com

The International Movement Against All Forms of
Discrimination and Racism (IMADR, Japan)

E-mail: hmorihara@imadr.org

International Working Group on Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA, Denmark)

E-mail: iwgia@iwgia.org

Jumma Peoples Network Japan (Japan)

E-mail: jpnj1@hotmail.co.jp

Jumma Peoples Network of the Asia Pacific (Australia)

hill_g@arch.usyd.edu.au

Network for Indonesian Democracy, Japan (NINDJA, Japan)

E-mail: office@nindja.com

Organizing Committee CHT Campaign (The Netherlands)

E-mail: occhtc@xs4all.nl

Sarawak Campaign Committee (Japan)

E-mail: scc@kiwi.ne.jp

Individuals:

ABE Ryuichiro, Associate Professor, Shikoku Gakuin University, Kagawa Pref., Japan

ABE Yupo(yupo/abe), Vice President, Ainu Association of Hokkaido, Hokkaido Japan

SHIGERU Aoki, Aichi Prefecture Japan

ARAMAKI Yasuko, Tokyo, Japan

Sanchay Chakma, Permanent representative of Asian Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Network(AITPN) to the UN, Geneva Switzerland
FUJIBAYASHI Yasushi, Saitama Prefecture Japan
FUJII Miki, Staff Writer, The Yomiuri Newspaper, Tokyo, Japan
FUJIOKA Mieko, IMADR Guatemala Project Coordinator, Tokyo, Japan
Fukuzawa Ikubun, President, DesignFF, Tokyo Japan
FURUYA Yasushi, Japan
GUNJI Mayumi (NPO WE21 Japan), Kanagawa Prefecture, Japan
HAKODA Tetz, Hyogo Prefecture, Japan
HASEGAWA Yuuki, Australia
IIBE Noriaki, Dohto University, Hokkaido, Japan
ISHIMI Hiroaki, Tokyo, Japan
IWAMI Chiyoko, Windfarm,Co.,Ltd, Fukuoka Prefecture Japan
KASHIDA Hideki, Reporter, Kanagawa Prefecture, Japan
KIGUCHI Yuka, Japan
KITANI Tomoji, Kochi Prefecture, Japan
KOBAYASHI Junko, Tokyo, Japan
KOSHIDA Kiyokazu, Hokkaido, Japan
KURODA Hideyuki, Sapporo freedom school "yu", Hokkaido, Japan
MICHIHIRA Kaoru, Japan
MORI Kazutoshi, Kanagawa Prefecture, Japan
NAGASE Riei, Japan
NOGAWA Atsuko, International Peace Pilgrimage, Tokyo, Japan
NUMATA Tetsu, Tokyo, Japan
OGAWA Sanae, President of Eteke Kanpa no Kai, Hokkaido, Japan
OGURA Keiko, Hiroshima Prefecture Japan
OWAKI Noriyoshi, Plaintiffs of the Ainu Communal Property Case, National Network in Support of the Ainu Communal Property Case, Hokkaido, Japan
Prajnalankar Bhikkhu, Peace Campaign Group (PCG), New Delhi, India
SAITO Fumiko, Hiroshima Prefecture, Japan
SAITO Kiyoshi, Teacher, Yokohamasiritu Heiraku Junior High School, Kanagawa Prefecture, Japan
SATO Maoki, Space Alta, Kanagawa Prefecture, Japan
TESHIMA Takemasa, Former Professor of Kyushu Women's University, ?????
TUTIYA Yutaro, Japan
UZAWA Kanako, Association of Rera, Norway

Mark Winchester, Hitotsubashi University (Indigenous Studies), Tokyo, Japan
YASUBA Jun, Association for Exchange between Taiwanese Indigenous People and
the Japanese, Japan
YOSHIKAWA Shinichi, Hokkaido, Japan

end

CC:

Mohammad Mosharaf Hossain, MP

Honorable Chairman

Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry for Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs

Bangladesh National Assembly, Sher-e-Banglanagar

Dhaka, Bangladesh

Telephone: +880-2-9894752-3

Fax: +880-2-8823702

E-mail: bayeasternmd@yahoo.com, bayeasternlimited@hotmail.com

Mr. Mani Swapan Dewan

Honorable Deputy Minister,

Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs,

Building No. 4, 6th Floor, Bangladesh Secretariat,

Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh

Tel: + 880-2-861 3214

Fax: + 880-2-956 5300

E-mail: mochtadh@bttb.net

The Minister of Foreign Affairs Ministry

Kasumigaseki 2-2-1, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-8919, Japan. Tel: +81- (0) 3-3580-3311

The President of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)

6th?13th floors, Shinjuku Maynds Tower

1-1, Yoyogi 2-chome, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo 151-8558 Japan

+81-3-5352-5311/5312/5313/5314

The President of Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC)

4-1, Ohtemachi 1-chome, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-8144,

Japan +81-3(5218)3101