



An NGO supporting the indigenous Jumma Peoples of the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh
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Dr. Fakhruddin Ahmed
Chief Advisor
Interim Caretaker Government
People's Republic of Bangladesh
Dhaka, Bangladesh

December 3rd, 2007

Dear Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed,

We, the undersigned organisations and individuals would first like to offer our condolences to Bangladesh for the loss of life and devastation caused by Cyclone Sidr. We commend and admire the resilience of the Bangladesh people at this time.

We are writing to you to express our grave concern about the current situation in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) in Bangladesh. As you will know, this week marks the tenth anniversary of the signing of the peace accord in the CHT. However, this anniversary does not bring cause for celebration. There has been a catastrophic failure to implement the peace deal, and human rights violations and land grabbing incidents have increased since Emergency Rule was declared in January this year.

More than 50 indigenous activists have been arrested since January, often on false arms charges. Many have been tortured and given long and unjust prison terms, and two Jummas have died in police custody. Ranglai Mro was beaten and tortured before being given a 17 year sentence. It is widely believed that he was targeted for protesting against the eviction of 750 Mro families from their lands to make way for an army training centre. We are concerned for his safety and the safety of other Jummas currently being detained.

Despite the promises of the peace accord, almost all the army camps in the CHT remain in place. Returnee refugees and internally displaced people have yet to have their homes and lands returned to them. Land continues to be stolen from the Jumma tribal people by both the army and by settlers, who are supported by the government in the form of food rations. Intimidation of activists, rape of Jumma women and other abuses of human rights remain rife.

We, the undersigned, urge your caretaker government to use the opportunity of the tenth anniversary to fully implement the peace accord – to withdraw the army camps, to restore land stolen from the indigenous Jummas, to put an end to human rights violations in the region and to ensure that those responsible for these violations are brought to justice. We further ask that the convictions of the Jumma leaders arrested this year be thoroughly investigated by an independent body, and that those who are innocent be released immediately.

Your government's stance on the CHT saddens many Japanese people, tarnishing our friendship and trust towards Bangladesh. We Japanese citizens strongly urge the Bangladesh government to implement the CHT peace accord in good faith.

Yours sincerely,

Shimosawa Takashi, President, Jumma Net

Endorsing Organizations:

Action Center for development and rights
Asia-Japan Women's Resource Center
Chittagong Hill Children Fund
HUTAN Group
The International Movement Against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism (IMADR)
Japan CHT Committee
The Japan Citizen's Coalition for the UN International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples
Jumma Net
Sarawak Campaign Committee
Shimin Gaikou Centre
Walking Together With Jumma Peoples (Jumma-to-Ayumu-Kai)

Individuals:

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