

CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS COMMISSION

Co-Chairpersons: Sultana Kamal, Lord Eric Avebury, Ida Nicolaisen

Members: Shapan Adnan, Lars-Anders Baer, Victoria Tauli Corpuz, Sara Hossain, Muhammad Zafar Iqbal, Lee Swepston, Robert Evans, Hideaki Uemura

25 February 2010

To
Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina
Government of the Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh
Prime Minister's Office
Tejgaon, Dhaka

Subject: Urgent demand to bring peace in the Chittagong Hill Tracts

Honourable Prime Minister,

Further to our memorandum of 23 February 2010 we express our deep concern at the renewed incidents of violence in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, reported on 23 February from Mahajanpara, Milanpur, Madhupur, Shatbaiyapara and adjoining areas in the Khagrachari district, including arson attacks on houses and shops and a further death, following the earlier incident of arson attacks and killings of at least two persons on 20 February 2010 in Baghaichari upazila of Rangamati district.

The CHT Commission ('CHTC') urges the Honourable Prime Minister to immediately establish a high-level, independent and impartial inquiry into the series of arson attacks on more than 200 houses in Baghaichori, Rangamati and the recent attacks in Khagrachori, and the killings that have been reported to date. We further urge that the findings of these inquiries be made public as soon as possible, and that appropriate action be taken against those found responsible for such attacks. We trust that the committee will also examine the causes and consequences of the arson attacks in Baghaichori on 19 and 20 February which were carried out in presence of the law-enforcement agencies.

We welcome the steps taken to date to provide emergency relief, and hope that these will be swiftly followed by measures to ensure emergency shelter to those who have been rendered homeless in the past few days.

In the context of this latest and disturbing outbreak of violence, which has overwhelmingly affected Pahari women, men and children across two districts, the CHTC recommends that the Government of Bangladesh immediately take the following actions:

1. To ensure access of media and relief teams to the areas that have been affected.
2. To ensure that those who have been arrested go through the due process of the law.
3. To ensure that a prompt, independent and impartial investigation, at the highest level, is carried out into the arson attacks and killings, in Khagrachori town and Baghaichori upazila of Rangamati district, including into the allegations that such incidents occurred in the presence of security and law enforcement personnel; to take action against those responsible, and ensure reparations for those affected.
4. To ensure proper, adequate and effective relief and rehabilitation for the individuals affected.

We further take this opportunity to underscore the critical importance of ensuring that the process of implementation of the CHT Accord is continued according to a clear timetable, in order to facilitate the restoration of security and peace in the region.

On behalf of the CHT Commission

*Yours sincerely
Eric Avebury*

Eric Avebury
Nicolaisen
Co-chair of the
CHT Commission
Commission

*Sincerely yours
Sultana Kamal*

Sultana Kamal
Co-chair of the
CHT Commission

*Yours Sincerely
Ida Nicolaisen*

Ida
Co-chair of the
CHT

cc to:

1. Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, Honorable Deputy Leader of the House & Chairperson of the National Committee for Implementation of the CHT Peace Accord.
2. Dr. Dipu Moni, Honourable Minister, Foreign Ministry, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Dhaka.
3. Barrister Shafique Ahmed, Honourable Minister, Law, Justice and Parliamentary Ministry, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka.
4. Mr. Syed Ashraful Islam, Honourable Minister, Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperative Ministry, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka.
5. Mr. Rezaul Karim Hira, Honourable Minister, Ministry of Land, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka.
6. Mr. Jyotirindra Bodhipriya Larma, Chairman, CHT Regional Council, Rangamati.
7. Mr. Dipankar Talukdar MP, Honourable State Minister, Ministry of CHT Affairs, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka.
8. Mr. Hasan Mahmud, Honourable State Minister, Ministry of Forest and Environment, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka.
9. Mr. Promod Mankin, Honourable State Minister, Ministry of Cultural Affairs.
10. Mohammad Shah Alam, MP and Chairman, Parliamentary Standing Committee on CHT Affairs, Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban, Dhaka.
11. Mr. Jatindra Lal Tripura, MP and Chairman, Task Force on Rehabilitation of Returnee Refugees and IDPs, Khagrachari.
12. Mr. Bir Bahadur, MP and Chairman, CHT Development Board, Rangamati.
13. Justice Khademul Islam Chowdhury, Chairperson, CHT Land Commission.

Bangladesh Secretariat:

10/11 Iqbal Road, Mohammadpur, Dhaka-1207, Bangladesh
Phone: +88-02-9146048/01819289622, Fax: +88-02-8141810
chtcomm@gmail.com, www.chtcommission.org