

## Press Statement

### **Abduction of Marma sisters and physical assault on Chakma Queen: CHTC calls for independent investigation and justice**

**Dhaka, 18 February 2018.** The Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission is shocked to learn that two teenage rape and sexual harassment victims Marma sisters were abducted from the hospital by members of the security forces on February 15, 2018 in the name of handing them over to their parents. The Commission is also deeply concerned that Rani Yan Yan, adviser to the Chakma Raja, and her volunteers who were looking after the welfare of the two sisters, were physically assaulted when they tried to prevent this abduction. One of the two Marma sisters was earlier allegedly raped and the other sexually assaulted by members of the security forces. It is very alarming to know that following their abduction from the hospital where they were receiving medical attention the two girls were taken under the custody of a former member of the Rangamati Hill District Council, at his residence in Rangamati town, against their will.

On January 22, 2018 the two Marma teenage sisters from Orasori village, Farua Union, Bilaichari sub-district under Rangamati, were allegedly attacked by security forces in the middle of the night. One of the sisters was raped while the other was sexually assaulted in the same room in the presence of their younger brother, aged about ten. The two sisters were admitted to Rangamati General Hospital. While the state has repeatedly failed to provide security to indigenous women living in the Chittagong Hill Tracts thus creating a culture of impunity, in the case of these sisters it was reportedly the members of state security forces who themselves carried out these crimes. Following the attack, the security forces continued to intimidate the girls and their family and instead of providing them with the legal and emotional support that is needed by survivors of violence, the security forces kept them under their strict surveillance. No actions have yet been taken against the alleged perpetrators. In the meantime, Rani Yan Yan and her volunteers have been providing support to the sisters who wanted to be under her shelter not least because they felt secure in her company.

## Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission

**Co-Chairpersons:**

Sultana Kamal, Elsa Stamatopoulou  
Myrna Cunningham Kain

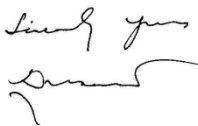
**Members:**

Shapan Adnan, Lars-Anders Baer, Tone Bleie  
Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, Bina D'Costa, Hurst Hannum  
Yasmeen Haque, Sara Hossain,  
Muhammad Zafar Iqbal, Khushi Kabir  
Michael C. van Walt van Praag, Iftekharuzzaman

CHTC also strongly condemns that identity of the victims of rape and sexual harassment was published in the Facebook page of the Rangamati Superintendent of Police (SP), which is a punishable offence. It is more appalling that the SP not only defended this unlawful act, but also made a presumptuous statement that the allegation of rape of the victim may not be proved. The position taken by the SP raises the concern that conspiracy may be going on like in many other such cases so that the victims may be deprived of justice. This is unacceptable. CHT Commission calls on the Government to hold the SP accountable.

The CHT Commission demands an independent, neutral and appropriately mandated commission of inquiry be constituted and those who carried out the rape of the Marma sisters be identified, prosecuted and punished. We demand that those who abducted the Marma sisters and attacked Rani Yan Yan also be brought to justice. We also demand that the state ensures the security of the two Marma young women and their family, along with the security of the Chakma Raj family and other human rights defenders associated with the matter.

On behalf of the CHT Commission,



Sultana Kamal  
Co-chair of the  
CHT Commission



Elsa Stamatopoulou  
Co-chair of the  
CHT Commission



Myrna Cunningham Kain  
Co-chair of the  
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**Members:** Shapan Adnan, Lars Anders Baer, Tone Bleie, Bina D'Costa, Hurst Hannum, Yasmeen Haque, Sara Hossain, Zafar Iqbal, Khushi Kabir, Michael van Walt van Praag, Iftekharuzzaman.

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