

# Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission

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October 20, 2013

The Honourable Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina  
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh  
Prime Minister's Office  
Tejgaon, Dhaka.

**Subject: A call to pass the CHT Land Dispute Resolution Commission (Amendment) Act 2013.**

Honourable Prime Minister,

Greetings from the International Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission (CHTC).

The CHTC calls upon the Government to pass the Bill on the amendment of the CHT Land Dispute Resolution Commission Act 2001 during the ongoing nineteenth session of the 9th national Parliament which ends on October 24, 2013. We particularly call upon you to ensure that all thirteen points proposed by the Chittagong Hill Tracts Regional Council and the Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs which were approved by the CHT Accord Implementation Committee and adopted by the inter-ministerial committee are fully and accurately included in the Bill. As you are aware, the proposals were approved by the Cabinet on June 3, 2013 and placed in the House on June 16, 2013.

With the upcoming national general elections, the passing of this Act with the inclusion of all thirteen amendments will be an example of your Government's fulfilling a pledge made to the people during the 2008 election. It will also facilitate implementation of the 1997 CHT Accord signed under your leadership. Kindly recall that the Awami League in its Election Manifesto of 2008 had expressly committed to implementing the Accord in full.

We further call upon your Government to take specific measures to appoint a capable, credible and impartial Chairperson of the CHT Land Commission acceptable to all stakeholders so that the Commission can begin the important task of resolving land disputes in the CHT, which is crucial to the implementation of the Accord.

The CHTC is deeply concerned that whilst the Land Commission remains non-functioning, conflicts related to land-grabbing continue to take place in the CHT. To give only a few recent examples:

- Homes of indigenous peoples in Taindong union, Matiranga upazila of Khagrachhari district were attacked on August 3, 2013 during which 30 homes of indigenous peoples were burnt down in an attempt to grab their lands with alleged tacit support of a section of the Border Guards Bangladesh (BGB) who were present in that area during the attacks;

**Co-Chairpersons:**

Sultana Kamal, Lord Eric Avebury, Elsa Stamatopoulou

**Members:**Shapan Adnan, Sara Hossain, Iftekharuzzaman  
Khushi Kabir, Muhammad Zafar Iqbal, Tone Bleie  
Lars-Anders Baer, Michael C. van Walt van Praag  
Hurst Hannum, Yasmeen Haque  
Myrna Cunningham Kain, Victoria Tauli-Corpus

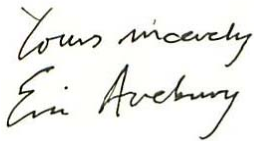
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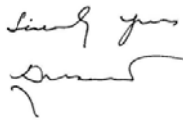
- A BGB battalion headquarter is allegedly being set up on 30 acres of lands in Dighinala upazila of Khagrachhari district, which will cause the eviction of 50 indigenous families in Dighinala. This, as you are aware, is against the 1997 CHT Accord that committed to dismantling of all temporary military camps, and banned the setting up of any new camps for the security forces without the proper authorization of the CHT Regional Council.
- CHTC has also received reports that Mro families from Lama upazila of Bandarban are being intimidated and their lands grabbed by settlers.

These and other allegations of land grabbing of indigenous people's lands can only be addressed once the Land Commission starts functioning fully and effectively. We therefore call upon your Government to support the passage of the amended bill as law without any further delay. We reiterate that all the thirteen points proposed by CHT Regional Council and already approved by the Government at the appropriate levels must be incorporated into the amended law. Failure to do so will leave the credibility of your Government's commitment to fully implement the 1997 Accord into question.

On behalf of the CHT Commission



Eric Avebury  
Co-chair of the  
CHT Commission



Sultana Kamal  
Co-chair of the  
CHT Commission



Elsa Stamatopoulou  
Co-chair of the  
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## CC to: (Not in order of precedence)

1. Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, MP, Honorable Deputy Leader of the House & Chairperson, National Committee for Implementation of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Accord.
2. Dr. Dipu Moni, MP, Honourable Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Dhaka.
3. Barrister Shafique Ahmed, Honourable Minister, Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Dhaka.
4. Mr. Rezaul Karim Hira, MP, Honourable Minister, Ministry of Land, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Dhaka.
5. Mr. Jyotirindra Bodhipriya Larma, Honourable Chairman, CHT Regional Council, Rangamati.
6. Mr. Dipankar Talukdar MP, Honourable State Minister, Ministry of CHT Affairs, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Dhaka.
7. Mohammad Shah Alam, MP and Chairman, Parliamentary Standing Committee, Ministry of CHT Affairs, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Dhaka.
8. Mr. Jatindra Lal Tripura, MP and Chairman, CHT Task Force on Returnee Refugees and Internally Displaced People, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Khagrachari.
9. Mr. Bir Bahadur, MP and Chairman, CHT Development Board, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Rangamati.
10. Mizanur Rahman, Chairman of National Human Rights Commission (NHRC).