Co-Chairpersons:
Sultana Kamal,
Lord Eric Avebury,
Elsa Stamatopoulou

Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission

14 July, 2011

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

Subject: Withdraw letter to the CHT Commission

Honourable Prime Minister,

Greetings from the Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission.

We would like to refer to the letter dated 29 September, 2010 (no: 29.223.017.00.00.04.2010-130), issued by the Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs with reference to a letter from the Prime Minister's Office, dated 8 September, 2010 (no: 22.09.3.0.0.1.2010 (part-3)-697(4)). Regarding CHT Commission's missions to the CHT, the letter asked the Commission to:

a) Have a Government representative present with the CHT Commission if they carry out a mission in the future,
b) To hold dialogues with both Pahari and Bangali communities in presence of the administration, and
c) Not to participate in any missions without the prior invitation of the Government.

We would like to inform you that one of the main purposes of the CHT Commission is to conduct periodic missions to the CHT in order to raise awareness regarding the need for implementation of the 1997 CHT Accord to ensure sustained peace in the CHT. The work of the Commission is to support the Government and especially the Ministry for CHT Affairs (the establishment of which was an outcome of the CHT Accord itself) in identifying obstacles to such implementation.

We would further take this opportunity to inform you that the CHT Commission was recently reconstituted and Ms. Elsa Stamatopoulou has joined as co-chair of the Commission in place of Ms. Ida Nicolaisen, who completed three years in this position. Ms. Stamatapoulou is the former Chief of the Secretariat (2003-2010) of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. She has headed the UN Centre for Human Rights in New York for 10 years, was the Deputy Director in the New York Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and also served as the Senior Legal Adviser to the Under-Secretary General for Administration and Management at UN Headquarters.

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The newly reconstituted CHT Commission wishes to conduct a mission to the Chittagong Hill Tracts during this year and hopes to work with the Government of Bangladesh to conduct missions to the CHT and work with all concerned to ensure full implementation of the Accord. The CHT Commission anticipates that the Ministry of CHT Affairs at the direction of the Honourable Prime Minister will withdraw the limitations mentioned in the letter dated 29 September, 2010 so that CHT Commission's missions conform to the established standards for international missions (which we believe to be a violation of basic rights, including the right to freedom of movement and personal liberty, as well as freedom of expression) to enable the CHT Commission to continue to do its work in raising public awareness about the Accord and the need for peace in the CHT and fulfilling its mandate:

> *To promote respect for human rights, democracy, and restoration of civil and political rights, participatory development and land rights in the Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh, including examination of the implementation of the CHT Peace Accord of 1997.*

On behalf of the CHT Commission

Yours sincerely
Eric Avebury

Sincerely yours

Eric Avebury Co-chair of the CHT Commission	Sultana Kamal Co-chair of the CHT Commission	Elsa Stamatopoulou Co-chair of the CHT Commission

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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. Syed Ashraful Islam, MP, Honourable Minister, Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Dhaka.
5. Mr. Rezaul Karim Hira, MP, Honourable Minister, Ministry of Land, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Dhaka.
6. Mr. Jyotirindra Bodhipriya Larma, Honourable 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, Dhaka.
8. Dr. Hasan Mahmud, Honourable State Minister, Ministry of Environment & Forests, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Dhaka.
9. Mr. Promod Mankin, MP, Honourable State Minister, Ministry of Cultural, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Dhaka.
10. Mohammad Shah Alam, MP and Chairman, Parliamentary Standing Committee, Ministry of CHT Affairs, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Dhaka.
11. Mr. Suranjit Sengupta, co-chair of the parliamentary special committee for constitutional amendment, and also chief of the parliamentary standing committee on the law, justice and parliamentary affairs ministry.
12. 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.
13. Mr. Bir Bahadur, MP and Chairman, CHT Development Board, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Rangamati.
14. Mizanur Rahman, Chairman of National Human Rights Commission (NHRC).