

# Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission

**Co-Chairpersons:**

Sultana Kamal,  
Lord Eric Avebury,  
Elsa Stamatopoulou

28 February 2012

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

**Subject: Concern over the CHT Land Dispute Resolution Commission (CHTLDRC) Chairman's latest unilateral declaration to hold hearings on land disputes in violation of the CHT Accord**

Your Excellency,

We write to draw your attention to the recent statements by the Chairman of the CHTLDRC (Land Commission) declaring that hearings on land dispute cases will be started from 28 February 2012. Significantly, this unilateral action has been made despite the continuing lack of agreement between him and his fellow Commission members regarding the procedure to be followed in such hearings.

In the light of your recent reassurances at a meeting with the Chairman of the CHT Regional Council Jyotirindrio Bodhipriyo Larma, as reported in the press<sup>1</sup>, that the Government is working towards implementing the 1997 CHT Accord, it is disheartening to see that the Land Commission Chairman is initiating actions that could undermine that very important process.

We believe that it is essential that the Land Commission follows the clauses of the CHT Accord and that it should start its hearings only after the requisite amendments have been made to the defective CHT Land Dispute Settlement Commission Act of 2001, in accordance with the changes proposed by the CHT Regional Council and subsequently endorsed by the Ministry of CHT Affairs.

As you may be aware, the Chairman of the Land Commission has also taken comparable unilateral decisions earlier to conduct a land survey and hold hearings on the land disputes, without waiting for the 2001 Act to be duly amended. Furthermore, he did so in the face of strong opposition from the indigenous peoples of the CHT, including the members of the Land Commission themselves, such as the Chairman of the CHT Regional Council and the three Circle Chiefs. On this occasion, we understand that the Chairman of the CHT Regional Council and the three Circle Chiefs have not even received any notice of the proposed hearings, even though they are all members of the Land Commission.

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<sup>1</sup> "Initiatives to implement the unimplemented matters," Daily Prothom Alo, Arun Karmakar and Buddhajati Chakma, 21 January 2012.

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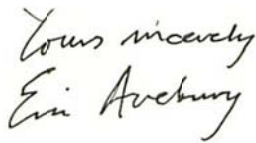
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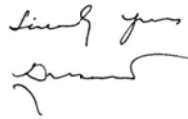
We had earlier appreciated the decision of the CHT Accord Implementation Committee, headed by Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, MP, in its meeting in Khagrachari on 26 December 2010, to suspend all activities of the Land Commission, including hearing of land dispute cases, until the Land Commission Act of 2001 had been duly amended. We are apprehensive that this unilateral action by the Chairman of the Land Commission in violation of that decision will seriously undermine the credibility of your commitment to implement the historic CHT Agreement, the credit for which belongs to your Excellency's Government.

We request Your Excellency to take necessary action against this unilateral decision by the Chairman of the Land Commission in violation of the provisions of the 1997 CHT Accord, and to take immediate steps to implement the peace agreement within the present tenure of your Government and thereby fulfill your electoral pledges.

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  
CHT Commission

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**Copy to (Not in order of Precedence):**

1. Begum Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, MP, Honourable Deputy Leader of the House & Chairperson, National Committee for Implementation of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Accord.
2. Mr. Gowher Rizvi, Foreign Affairs Adviser to the Prime Minister.
3. Dr. Dipu Moni, MP, Honourable Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Dhaka.
4. Barrister Shafique Ahmed, Honourable Minister, Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, 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. Mr Mohammad Shah Alam, MP and Chairman, Parliamentary Standing Committee, Ministry of CHT Affairs, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Dhaka.
9. Mr. Jatindra Lal Tripura, MP and Honourable Chairman, CHT Task Force on Returnee Refugees and Internally Displaced People, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Khagrachari.
10. Mr. Bir Bahadur, MP and Honourable Chairman, CHT Development Board, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Rangamati.
11. Mr. Justice Khademul Islam Chowdhury, Chairperson, CHT Land Commission.
12. Dr. Mizanur Rahman, Chairman, National Human Rights Commission (NHRC).