

Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission

Co-Chairpersons:
Sultana Kamal, Elsa Stamatopoulou
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, Myrna Cunningham Kain,
Michael C. van Walt van Praag, Iftekharuzzaman

June 3, 2017

To
Mr. Asaduzzaman Khan MP
Honorable Minister
Ministry of Home Affairs
People's Republic of Bangladesh
Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka

Subject: Demand for immediate arrest of those responsible for the arson attack in six hill villages in Longodu Upazila, ensuring the safety of the villagers and providing proper compensation of the victims.

Dear Sir,

Greetings from the International Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission.

The International Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission is deeply concerned to hear that on the morning of June 2, 2017, houses of nearly three hundred people in the hill villages of Tintila, Bottola, Battya Para, Kattoltola, Manikbi Chhora along with Longodu Upazila Sadar of Rangamati district were set on fire. The Commission is deeply shocked and concerned about this tragic attack.

According to newspaper reports, on Thursday June 1, 2017, the body of Jubo League organizing secretary of Longodu Upazila Md. Nurul Islam was found in an area called Char Mile in Khagrachori. It has been learnt that Pahari homes in the village of Longodu have been attacked and set on fire. A 70-year-old woman by the name of Gunmala Chakma has also been killed during this time. The CHT Commission strongly condemns the killing of Md. Nurul Islam and demands that those who were involved in the killing of this man be immediately brought to justice. A communal group has taken advantage of this incident and taken the law into their own hands and burnt hundreds of Pahari homes. This proves once again that they do not respect the constitution and the conventional laws. At the same time this group, with support from the powerful have been repeatedly carrying out violence in the hills. The role of the security forces during these attacks also needs to be investigated. The Commission is puzzled by how such violent acts are carried out in the overwhelming presence of the security forces. Following the incident, the Longodu Upazila administration imposed Section 144 from 12 noon. It will be very important to carry out a serious investigation as to why the local administration did not take prompt action before the situation got out of control.

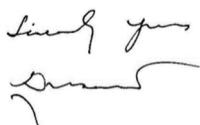
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The CHT Commission makes strong demands that the government ensure safety of the victim families and proper compensation for them immediately. At the same time, the CHT Commission urges the government to identify those involved in the communal attacks and bring them under the purview of the law.

On behalf of the International Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission,



Sultana Kamal
Co-chair of the
CHT Commission



Elsa Stamatopoulou
Co-chair of the
CHT Commission

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

Advisers: Jenneke Arens, Tom Eskildsen, Meghna Guhathakurta.

CC to: (Not in order of precedence)

1. Dr. Gowher Rizvi, International Affairs Adviser to the Honorable Prime Minister.
2. Mr. Jyotirindra Bodhipriya Larma, Honourable Chairman, Chittagong Hill Tracts Regional Council, Rangamati.
3. Mr. Bir Bahadur U Shoi Shing, Honorable State Minister, Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs.
4. Mr. Naba Bikram Kishore Tripura, Honorable Secretary, Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs.
5. Mr. AKM Shahidul Haque, Honorable Police Inspector General, Police Headquarters.
6. Major General Jahangir Kabir Talukder, GOC, 24 Infantry Division, Chittagong.