

Memorandum submitted by Bangladesh Indigenous Women's Network to the State Minister of Home Ministry on alarming violence against indigenous women in Bangladesh demanding punishment to perpetrators

Memorandum

To,
Honorable State Minister,
Home Ministry of Bangladesh Government
Bangladesh Secretariat Building
Bangladesh

Dear Sir,

Warm greetings from Bangladesh Indigenous Women Network (BIWN)! We are anxiously informing you that sexual violence against indigenous women has been increasing in Chittagong Hill Tract and other plain districts recently. The women are becoming victims of sexual harassment in different places like school-college, workplace and other involved areas. Even they are not safe at their home while they stay home alone! Very often women are being attacked for rape, killing after rape, sexual harassment, kidnapping so on. Hence, the indigenous women have been passing their lives without any security. The family members feel tense if any girl/woman goes out of home for their businesses.

If we look at the statistics of women rights violations from January to April 2014, a total of 9 indigenous women from CHT and plain land were rape, killing after rape and attempt to rape. Of them, 2 indigenous women were killing after raped.

1. On 4th of April 2014, a Patro indigenous woman (35) was raped by an army at Kulauti village, Khadimpara Union, Sadarupozela under Sylhet district.
2. On 3 April 2014, around 3:00 pm an indigenous Chakma speech-impaired girl (16) was raped forcibly by two Bengali settlers in Dhungmukh village of Laxmichari union of Laxmichari upazila under the district of Khagrachari. The perpetrators are from Mayurkhill Gutchagram under same district.
3. On 2nd April 2014, an indigenous woman (19) from Rabidas community at Uttorpara village of Solonga upazila under Sirajgonj district attempted to rape. Police arrested a criminal Md. Haider Ali in this connection.
4. On 26 March 2014, a Chakma indigenous girl Bharoti Chakma (28) daughter of Ajoy Kumar Chakma was killed after rape of Korollyachori Headmen Para village of Kiyangghat union of Mohalchari upazila of Khagrachari district.
5. On 14 March 2014, a class 9 school going Marma girl (15) of Amtoly union of Kumarpara village was raped by two people named Adul Khalek and Md. Taru Mia.
6. On 7th March 2014, a 17-year-old girl was raped in Pichlatola union of Manikchhari upazila, Khagrachari. Three Bengali settlers were arrested in connection by police.

7. On 25th February 2014, a 14-year-old Tripura girl was allegedly raped by two Bengali settlers in Matiranga, Khagrachari. An arbitration was carried out by locals and the perpetrator was fined Tk. 1 lakh. The perpetrator gave a condition that no case should be filed against him in the future.
8. On 15th February 2014, a 30-year-old woman, Sabita Chakma, a mother of a 7-year-old girl, was raped and murdered allegedly by a group of Bengali settlers in Kamalchari, Khagrachari. A case was filed but the name of the three main suspects was left out from the FIR that was filed by the victim's husband. The name of the land-owner was also put down as a suspect in the FIR without the victim's husband's knowledge.
9. On 18th February 2014 a subedar and a sepoy of the Bangladesh army allegedly attempted to rape a 30-year-old Chakma woman in Baghaichari, Rangamati. No one was arrested.

Moreover, in 2013, a total of 67 indigenous women and children across the country, 54 from the CHT and 13 from plain land were subjected to violence. Of them, 15 indigenous women and children (12 from CHT and 3 from plain) were raped. Among 16 indigenous five indigenous Tripura girls from CHT were rescued from a Madrasa to convert into Islam by force. Again, police also rescued 3 indigenous girls from Faridpur-Rajbari crossing across Dhaka-Khulna highway while they were being trafficked out to India after enticing into providing them well-paid jobs in that country. Besides, 6 indigenous women were abducted and 16 indigenous women were physically assaulted and molested. 69% of the all women victims were under age of 18. On the other, 89% of the perpetrators are found from Bengali settlers and land grabbers, while 7% were indigenous origin and 4% of the perpetrators are from security forces. (Source: KapaeengFoundatio's human rights report 2013).

It is notice that as a reason of increasing violence on Indigenous woman, delaying of local administration to file case on woman violence, attempt to hide the truth of medical report of rape case, lack of investigate of case, critical and lengthy judgment system, deficiency of legal aid, lack of security of the victims family, no proper/worthy punishment for criminal etc are the causes of rising violence on woman day by day. There are many cases related to indigenous woman and human rights violence is hanging in the court. There is no appropriate example of violence on Indigenous woman up today.

Other human rights are violating besides rising of violence on Indigenous woman. As a cause of no specific regulations on Indigenous woman in National woman policy, no reorganization as an Indigenous in constitution, lack of Indigenous woman participation in national political structure, lack of legal aid support to the victims of woman and children, lack of proper punishment, lack of implementation of Peace accord of CHT in 1997, lack of separate land commission in plain land, ongoing millenarian in CHT are the issues to be more marginalized the indigenous woman status. As a result, the indigenous woman victimize on murder, rape, killing after rape, physical assaulted, sexually harassment, kidnapping, trafficking and human rights violence.

Since there is no initiative to stop violence on indigenous woman and no proper punishment of criminals, the violence related it is increasing day by day. So it is demanded to be taken the instant and effective intervene of police administration, local administration and local government representatives and proper punishment of the criminals. In addition, we emphatically insist to form a separate land commission for plain land indigenous, fully implementation of Peace accord of CHT,

make effective of land dispute settlement commission and empowerment of indigenous woman with ensuring indigenous woman security of them.

Sincerely yours

ChanchanaChakma
Joint Convener
Bangladesh Indigenous Women Network
Dated: 7th April 2014

Copy:

1. Honorable State Minister , Ministry of Women and Children Affairs
2. Honorable State Minister , Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs
2. Honorable Chairman, CHTRegional Council
4. Honorable Chairman, Bangladesh Human Rights Commission
- 5Inspector General of Bangladesh Police