

Attack on indigenous villagers by Bengali land grabbers in Cox's Bazar leaving 7 women injured

On 11 November 2013 indigenous Chakma (Tanchangya) villagers were attacked by a group of Bengali land grabbers at Mosharkholar village in Palongkhali union of Ukhiya upazilla under Cox's Bazaar district. At least seven women sustained serious injuries and few women were sexually harassed in this attack.

On that day a gang of Bengali miscreants led by Shafiqur Rahman alias Prakash Mutia (55) son of late Abdul Manjur made a blitz upon the indigenous Chakma people of Mosharkholar as they (Chakmas) had protested the forced grabbing of the land of Sujit Chakma (35) son of Amroracha. It is learnt that on the night before the incident (10 November), Shafiqur and his fellows dug across the dam of Sujit Chakma's fish farm and released water from therein with the intention to occupy Sujit's land that he leased from the Forest Department few years back. Then on the day of the incident miscreants started to prepare the land for agricultural cultivation in order to secure Shafiqur's occupancy over that land.

Then the Chakma villagers came to know about the incident and they protested the encroachment. At around 2:00 pm the gang of Shafiqur along with other Bengali villagers brutally attacked the Chakma villagers with deadly weapons such as knife, machete, and stick. As a result, following persons were seriously injured: 1) Shanti Devi Chakma (30) wife of Sujit Chakma; 2) Mashingfu Chakma (40) wife of Kinadhon Chakma; 3) Mashoh Chakma (27) wife of Chintaimong Chakma; 4) Newsha Chakma (26), wife of Lamong Chakma; 5) Gudume Chakma (26) wife of Olataing Chakma; 6) Shinesing Chakma (40) wife of Oiyiamong; and 7) Rukchamong Chakma (29), daughter of Choimongla. The miscreants also sexually abused the women present at the spot tearing their clothes. Besides, the miscreants snatched the mobile phones and other valuables from the victims while the attack was being made.

Notably, even prior to this particular attack, the perpetrators used to make similar attack against the indigenous peoples of that area and spread religious and racial hatred with the intention to grab their lands. Indigenous villagers alleged that a local influential group backs such attacks from behind the curtain. In the incident on 11 November 2013, Munu Mia, son of Shahar Mulluk alias Surur, the general secretary of ruling Awami League's Ward No. 6 branch of Palongkhali union was allegedly involved with the attack. However, persons involved with such incidents have always enjoyed impunity.

A complaint was lodged against the perpetrators naming 35 people (please see the list bellow) with Ukhiya police station. On the other hand, the perpetrators also made a complaint against the victims. When contacted, assistant sub-inspector of police Shimul Barua of Ukhiya police station informed that they had made an investigation of the incident. And a negotiation between two parties is likely soon as both the parties have agreed upon it.

It is also learnt that a 6-member committee comprising 3 representatives from each Chakma and Bengali community was formed. However, while the committee started arbitration at Ukhiya police station on 18 November 2013 around 5:00 pm, Sub-Inspector (SI) of Ukhiya police station Mr. Shimul Barua one-sidedly fined taka 5000 to Bengali perpetrators and forced Chakma villagers to come up compromise with this money.

Name and address of the persons (in the complaint made by the victims):

1. Shafiqur Rahman (Prokas Mutia) (55), son of Late Abul Monujur;

2. Nurul Haque (25), son of Habibulaah;
3. Babul Mia (22), son of Late Ali Akbar;
4. Forkan Mia (21), son of Late Monu Mia;
5. Gias Uddin (35), son of Sultan Mia;
6. Abul Kalam (29), son of Abul Monjur;
7. Abdur Rahman (25), son of Habibur Rahman;
8. Putinna (30), son of Habibullah;
9. Lalaiya (23), son of Abul Monjur;
10. Khaled Ahmed (37), son of Late Akbul Mia;
11. Babul (22), son of Badsha Mia;
12. Ismile Prokas Sona Mia (55), son of Apsat;
13. Farid (40), son of Late Abdul Goni;
14. Monir Uddhin (22), son of Habib Hossain;
15. Ebadullah (25), son of Nurul Islam;
16. Farid Ahmed (30), son of Ali Ahmed;
17. Eshaiya (28), son of Hossain Ahmed;
18. Bodhiur Rahman (40), on of Fajar Rahman,
19. Mohammad Taher (32), son of Abul Monjur;
20. Moktar Ahmed (26), son of Air Mohhammad;
21. Soyod Alam (35), son of Ali Ahmed;
22. Abu Siddik (40), son of Late Abdur Rashid,
23. Kashem (42), son of Late Mokbul Ahmed;
24. Abul Kasem (55), son of Late Abdur Rashid;
25. Abdullah (22), son of Abdur Siddik;
26. Gura Putia (24), son of Soyod Kasem;
27. Robi Alam (32), son of Fojor Ahmed;
28. Habibur Rahman (50), son of Late Jalal Ahmed;
29. Alam (60), son of Late Jalal Ahmed;
30. Nurul Islam (45), son of Late Hashon Ali;
31. Rana (23), son of Sirajul Haque;
32. Hasem (38), son of Unknown;
33. Dayla (27), son of Soyod Kasem;
34. Habib Hoson (50), son of Late Hason Ali;
35. Badsha Mia (50), son of Asrafjaman.

All are from Moshorkhola village of Ward No. 6 under Palongkhali union of Ukhiya upazila in Cox's Bazar district.

Kapaeeng Foundation

(A Human Rights Organization for Indigenous Peoples of Bangladesh)

Shalma Garden, House # 23/25, Road # 4, Block # B, PC Culture Housing, Mohammadpur, Dhaka-1207, Telephone: +880-2-8190801

Email: kapaeeng.foundation@gmail.com, kapaeeng.watch@gmail.com, Web: www.kapaeeng.org