

BIWN demands to stop alarming violence against indigenous women and girls and punishment of perpetrators

Leaders of Bangladesh Indigenous Women's Network (BIWN) voiced to prevent alarming violence against indigenous women and girls and also demanded for ensuring punishment of perpetrators to ensure access to justice of indigenous women.

This demand was raised by the indigenous rights activists in a human chain, formed in front of National Press club in Dhaka on 7 April 2014, by BIWN, a network of Kapaeeng Foundation. Presided over by joint convenor of the BIWN Ms. Chanchana Chakma, the human chain was attended by representatives of women rights organizations and human rights defenders. The human chain was followed by submission of memorandum to the Home Minister of People's Republic Government of Bangladesh. Chandra Tripura, member of BIWN conducted the human chain program.

Indigenous leaders claimed that violence against indigenous women is increasing in an alarming rate. Rape, killing after raped, sexual harassment, kidnapping and suppression to indigenous women have increased in Chittagong Hill Tracts and plain lands. Hence, indigenous women are passing insecure life.

Rabindranath Soren, president of Jatiya Adivasi Parishad said that whole indigenous societies are worried about violence against indigenous women and girls. Most of the time the local administration did not conduct an accurate investigation and sometimes they delayed to arrest perpetrators in connection with violence against indigenous women. He urged the government to take immediate action to prevent violence against indigenous women.

Razib Mir, Assistant Professor, Department of Mass Communication and Journalism, Jagannath University said that lack of proper investigation, complex and long justice system, lack of legal aid support, insecurity of victims' family, culture of impunity to the perpetrators etc. are the main causes of increasing violence against indigenous women and girls.

Researcher coordinator of Kapaeeng Foundation and human rights activist Bipasha Chakma said that, indigenous women are mistreated when they went their work place, school or college and even when they stayed at home. She urged the government to implement CHT Accord for ensuring security of indigenous women.

Chanchana Chakma, joint convenor of BIWN, described present horrible situation of indigenous women. She said that at least 9 indigenous women have been raped, killed after rape and attempted to rape in last three months both in CHT and plain land. She also informed in her speech that almost 54 from CHT and 13 from plain land indigenous women and children were

mistreated countrywide in 2013. Finally, she also read out the memorandum which was submitted to the State Minister of the Home Ministry.

Through the memorandum, indigenous women demanded to local administration, police and local government representatives to take proper step to end the culture of impunity and to ensure security of indigenous women and punishment of perpetrators. Moreover, they also demanded establishment of separate land commission for plain land and full implementation of CHT Accord.

Architect Enamul Haque, Convenor, Desh Premik Jote; Mahbulul Haque, Director, BCHR; Dilara Rekha, Coordinator, Bangladesh Nari Progoti Sangha; Jotishman Chakma, general secretary of Hill Students Council; Hill Womens Federation leader Monira Tripura; Ripon Chandra Banai of Bangladesh Indigenous Peoples Forum; Kamrun Nahar from Naripokkho et al were attended the human chain and expressed their solidarity. Besides, different organizations, including Bangladesh Mohila Parishad, Nari Mukti Sangsad, Institute for Environment and Development (IED), Bangladesh Adivasi Chatra Sangram Parishad and Adivasi Nari Parishad also extended their solidarity with BIWN human chain.

Finally, a team of BIWN, comprising of five members, namely, Chanchana Chakma, Bipasha Chakma, Helena Talang and Chandra Tripura, submitted the memorandum at the Home Ministry of the Government of Bangladesh.

Incidents of violence against indigenous women and girls from 1 January to 9 April 2014:

1. On 5 January 2014 a 9-year-old Tripura girl was allegedly raped by a local Bengali settler in Manikchari upazila in Khagrachari district. A local arbitration was carried out and the perpetrator was fined Tk. 12,000 and caned in public. No case was filed.
2. On 9 January 2014 a Bengali settler allegedly attempted to rape a 13-year-old Marma girl in Lama upazila in Bandarban. Her brother filed a case at the local police station. Local Awami League leaders allegedly arranged an arbitration and fined the perpetrator Tk. 15,000 and got him released from police custody.
3. On 15 January 2014 a 13-year-old Marma girl was allegedly raped by four Bengali settlers in Naikhyongchari upazila in Bandarban district. One of them, who the girl recognized, was arrested.
4. On 16 January 2014 a military officer and a member of Bangladesh Ansar allegedly sexually abused a Buddhist monk by stripping him and robbing him of his personal belongings in Bilaichari, Rangamati. This was done to him in two more previous occasions by the same persons.
5. On 15 February 2014, an indigenous Chakma woman named Sabita Chakma (30) was murdered after gang rape by a group of Bengali settlers at Chengi chor area of Kamalchari union under Khagrachari sadar upazila in Khagraghari district. Police did not arrest any alleged perpetrator.
6. On 18 February 2014, an indigenous Chakma woman (28) was attempted to rape allegedly by security person in Laxmichari areas of Sajek union under Baghaichari upazila in Rangamati district. Nobody was arrested.
7. On 25 February 2014 at around 11:00 am, an indigenous Marma girl (15) was raped by two Bengali settlers at Kumar Para of Amtali union under Matiranga upazila in Khagrachari district. Nobody was arrested.

8. On 7 March 2014 a 19-year old indigenous girl was gang raped by a group of three Bengali settlers of Pichlatala union under Manikchari upazila in Khagrachari district. Police arrested three alleged perpetrators.

9. On 14 March 2014, a 13-year old indigenous Chakma girl was attempted to rape by a Bengali settler named Mohammad Aitullah at her home in Logang Machchochara under Panchari upazila in Khagrachari district.

10. On 21 March 2014 a 15-year school going indigenous Marma girl was tried to kidnap by a leader of Chatra League (Bengali settler) from Betbunia union of Kaokhali upazila under Rangamati district.

11. On 26 March 2014 a 28-year old indigenous woman named Bharati Chakma was allegedly killed after gang rape at Headman Para of Karalyachari under Kyangghata union of Mahalchari upazila in Khagrachari district.

12. On 2 April 2014 a 19-year old Rabidash woman was raped by a member of Ghurka union council named Hadis Ali at Bhuiyan Ghati Uttor Para under Salangya upazila in Sirajganj district. Police arrested a criminal Md. Haider Ali in this connection.

13. On 3 April 2014 an indigenous Chakma disable with speech girl (16) was raped by two Bengali settlers in Dhungmukh village of Laxmichari union of Laxmichari upazila under Khagrachari district.

14. On 4 April 2014, a Patro indigenous woman (35) was raped by an army member at Kulauti village of Khadimpara union under Sylhet sadar upazila in Sylhet district.

15. On 5 April 2014 an indigenous Tanachanga woman was kidnapped alleged by a group of 5-6 Bengali settlers led by Dr. Hamja and Dr. Muktar from Reju Fattrajhiri village of Naikhyongchari upazila in Bandarban district.

Please find memorandum submitted to Home Minister attached herewith.

Please also visit for media coverage: <http://thedailystar.net/newsarchive/9-raped-in-last-3-months-none-punished-19230>

Kapaeeng Foundation

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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, Sadar upozela 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 Mayurkhil 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 Manikchari 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: Kapaeeng Foundatio'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,

Chanchana Chakma
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, CHT Regional Council
4. Honorable Chairman, Bangladesh Human Rights Commission
- 5 Inspector General of Bangladesh Police