

An urgent appeal to help develop the CHT situation and implement the CHT Accord

Now the CHT is passing through a serious crisis, as the situation has deteriorated significantly because of government's complete negative policy towards the CHT Accord of 1997 and the indigenous peoples of the CHT region, further land occupation by the Bengali settlers and intensification of the 'Operation Uttoron', the Military rule against the Jumma people and the PCJSS. No body can say which area is going to be the second Mahalchari where 14 Jumma villages were completely destroyed by the Military and the Bengali settlers on 26th August, 2003. Concerned people are aware that the Awami League government of Bangladesh lead by Sheikh Hasina signed the CHT Accord in 1997. She even bagged UNESCO Houpet-Felix Boigny peace award in 1999 for signing the accord. Unfortunately, only a little of the accord was implemented by her government during her three year and eight months tenure. This extent was not enough at all to develop the post accord situation. The BNP led present four-party alliance government took over the state power but during its two years rule it violated vital clauses of the accord. The Bengali settlers of cluster villages have already started occupying lands of Jumma peoples and silent infiltration of Bengali settlers is on with the blessing of the civil and military administrations. The Bengali settlers conducted some large-scale attacks on the Jumma villages with direct support from the Military for making rooms for them even after signing the CHT Accord. The Military could not hide and sterilize their crime done in Mahalchari, which got national and international attention. A recent report of the joint Government-UN Needs Assessment Mission for Humanitarian Relief and Rehabilitation establishes the gravity of destruction.

The signing of the CHT Accord completes its 6th year on 2nd December, 2003. At this juncture the PCJSS, Jumma peoples and the permanent residents of the CHT are convinced that the present Government will not implement the CHT Accord at all and finding no alterative the PCJSS decided to start a democratic movement for the implementation of the accord during its Workers Conference-2003 held at Baghaichari High School Ground under Baghaichari Upazilla in Rangamati Hill District from 14 – 16 November 2003. More than 500 delegates of PCJSS and its front organizations such as, Parbatya Chattagram Mahila Samiti (CHT Women's Association), Pahari Chhatra Parishad (PCP/Hill Students' Council), Hill Women's Federation and Parbatya Chattagram Juba Samiti (CHT Youths' Association) attended the conference from different parts of three Hill Districts of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Region. The overall global, national and local situation, present status of the CHT Accord and process of its implementation, organizational activities, future programme and activities for strengthening the CHT Accord implementation movement were discussed in the conference. The programme adopted by the Workers Conference-2003 is as follows:

1. To accelerate the movement based on the following issues:

- (1) To implement the CHT Accord properly;
- (2) To remove communal, corrupt, plot maker of the Mahalchari attack and opponent of the CHT Accord Abdul Wadud Bhuian, M.P. from the post of the Chairman, the CHT Development Board and appoint a competent tribal as per the CHT Accord;
- (3) To immediately withdraw all temporary camps of Army, Ansar, APB and VDP including the 'Operation Uttoron';
- (4) To appoint a full Minister from the tribals in the CHT Affairs Ministry as per the CHT Accord .

2. To undertake following measures for proper execution of the above issues:

- (1) To observe a dawn to dusk road blocked programme in three hill districts on 2nd December, 2003 in demand of the implementation of the CHT Accord;

- (2) To remove Abdul Wadud Bhuiyan from the post of Chairman, CHT Development Board by 30th November, 2003 and observe dawn to dusk *Hartal* (general strike) in three hill districts on 8th December, 2003 if he is not removed by the given time frame;
- (3) To undertake greater programme if 'Operation Uttoron' and all temporary camps of Army, Ansar, APB and VDP are not withdrawn by 31st December;
- (4) To undertake greater programme if a full Minister from among the tribals is not appointed in the CHT Affairs Ministry as per the CHT Accord by 31st December. 2003.

3. To undertake following programme with a view to implement the above programme:

- (1) To undertake necessary steps for strengthening public support from all strata of the Jumma people as well as the permanent residents;
- (2) To strengthen mass awareness and mass contact programmes;
- (3) To build more strength and activate all party organs;
- (4) To accelerate campaign works for getting more support from the civil society of the country and the international community;
- (5) To activate organizational activities of all tiers of the party;
- (6) To activate movement against all anti-accord plot makers and reactionaries;
- (7) To activate unity and solidarity of the Jumma and permanent Bengali residents for strengthening communal amity for the implementation of the CHT Accord;
- (8) To play more active role for strengthening land rights and fundamental rights of the toiling mass, religious minorities and indigenous peoples of the country;
- (9) To get involved with democratic, progressive and non-fundamentalist forces in issue based movement.

The PCJSS makes fervent appeal to the civil society of the country, the international community, human rights groups and the media to side with the Jumma and permanent residents of the CHT so that the Government:

1. Implements the CHT Accord;
2. Removes Abdul Wadud Bhuiyan, M.P. from the post of the CHT Development Board and appoints a tribal candidate;
3. Withdraws 'Operation Uttoron', the Military rule and temporary camps of the Army, VDP, APB and Ansar and
4. Appoints a full Minister from the tribals in the CHT Affairs Ministry as per the CHT Accord.

Ansar: Islamic Guard, *VDP*: Village Defence Party, *APB*: Arms Police Battalion, *CHT Accord*: Signed between the Government of Bangladesh and the PCJSS on December 2, 1997 to end the two-decade long armed conflict between the center and the periphery', *Jumma*: CHT indigenous peoples, *PCJSS*: Parbatya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samiti (United People's Party).

Circulated by the Department of Information and Publicity, PCJSS from: PCJSS head office, Kalyanpur, Rangamati, P.O. Rangamati-4500, Bangladesh, Phone: +880-351-61248, Email: pcjss@hotmail.com

November 19, 2003