



Genocide Warning: Persecution of the Jumma People in Bangladesh

Genocide Watch is issuing a Genocide Warning for the Jumma people in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh's indigenous people are dispersed throughout the country but are concentrated in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) in southeast Bangladesh. Known collectively as the Jumma people, the indigenous people comprise 12 different ethnic groups: the Chakma, Marma, Tripura, Tanchangya, Mro, Lushai, Khumi, Chak, Khiyang, Bawm, Mrung/Riang, and Pangkhua. Their religions differ from the majority Muslim Bengali population. Likewise, they have a distinct language and culture. They faced social, economic, and political marginalisation, exclusion, persecution, and [displacement](#) prior to the independence of Bangladesh, which then continued with further forced displacement, violence, land confiscation, and denial of their [identity](#) under the Bangladesh Constitution.

The Bangladesh government transferred more than [400,000](#) Bengalis into the CHT without the consent of the Jumma people as part of their "[transmigration programme](#)," seizing their land amidst violent clashes and changing the [demographic](#) makeup of the area. The Bangladesh military moved into the CHT in early 1972 and has carried out [atrocities](#) against the Jumma people alongside attacks from Bengali settlers. These include [rape](#) and sexual abuse, forced evictions, destruction of property, torture, and murder in a "[genocidal campaign against them](#)." The treatment of the Jumma people has been described as persecution and even "[creeping genocide](#)."

In 1997, a political group representing the Jumma people, Parbatya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samiti (PCJSS), signed the [CHT Peace Accord](#) with the government of Bangladesh. The Peace Accord aimed to resolve the conflict peacefully via its agreements to afford special governance to the region, demilitarize the region, and establish a land dispute resolution mechanism. These agreements, however, have not been fully [implemented](#), leading to continued tensions between the government and the Jumma communities. According to the UN Special Rapporteur on Religious Intolerance, this persecution "threatened the survival of the cultural and religious identity of Indigenous populations."

Today, Bengali settlers outnumber Jumma people in the CHT. The Jumma people remain displaced from major portions of their former lands. They are subject to [judicial harassment](#) by Bengali settlers in systematic denial of the land rights of the Jumma people. They suffer attacks including [arson](#) and property destruction by Bengali settlers who are supported by the Bangladesh army. In 2017 these attacks. Even religious sites became targets of destruction. The government has taken no action to hold the perpetrators of these attacks accountable. Indigenous advocates have been targeted and [killed](#). Rape and sexual assault have been used as a [weapon](#) to terrorize the Jumma communities. In [2020](#), 889 rapes of women and girls were reported. A true tally may never be collected, as many rapes have gone unreported. The overwhelming [majority](#) of perpetrators of violence against the Jumma people are Bengali settlers. There is widespread [impunity](#).

Genocide Watch considers that the following stages of genocide are present in Bangladesh's treatment of the Jumma people in CHT: **Stage 3: Discrimination, Stage 5: Organization, Stage 8: Persecution, and Stage 10: Denial.**

Genocide Watch recommends:

- Bangladesh should ratify the international conventions relating to the protection of indigenous peoples, including the ILO C.169 - Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 ([No. 169](#)) and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples ([UNDRIP](#)).
- The Bangladesh government must fully implement the 1997 CHT Peace Accords.
- State authorities should investigate and prosecute crimes of rape and sexual assault against Jumma people.
- Bangladesh should adopt the recommendations of UN human rights treaty [mechanisms](#) and those set out by the UN Human Rights Council in its most recent [Universal Periodic Review](#).
- Bangladesh should stop the slow-moving genocide that threatens to destroy the Jumma people, their identity and way of life.