

**The 12<sup>th</sup> session of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**  
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**Agenda Item 3: Study on the Indigenous people's rights in the context of borders, migration and displacement**

Thank you, Madam Chair,

My name is Shohel Chandra Hajang belonging to Hajong indigenous community. I am representing Bangladesh Indigenous Peoples Forum and Kapaeeng Foundation. I wish to express my gratitude to the UN Voluntary Fund for allowing me to participate in this session.

I would like to request to the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples to encourage the government of Bangladesh on the following issues.

1. To adopt of appropriate measures to stop forcible migration of indigenous peoples from their ancestral lands and any form of land confiscation in the name of reserved forest, camps of security forces, national/eco-parks, tourism complexes, development projects and government establishments on their ancestral lands without meaningful free prior and informed consent of local indigenous peoples.
2. To enact an Indigenous Peoples' Rights Protection Act in order to stop all forms of suppression and oppression upon the indigenous peoples;
3. To encourage Bangladesh Government to form a separate Land Commission for the indigenous peoples living in the plains. Also, to cancel of the Reserve Forest declared by the forest department, especially in the Madhupur of Tangail district;
4. To encourage the Government of Bangladesh to rehabilitates India repatriate Jumma refugees and the Internally Displaced Persons of Chittagong Hill Tracts following the provisions of the CHT Accord.

Madam Chair,

Like other parts of the world, indigenous peoples in Bangladesh are the most disadvantaged, neglected and vulnerable folks in the country. They often face eviction from their ancestral land by state and non-state actors in the name of developments, tourism, camps of security forces, economic zone, parks, and reserve forest.

According to the report of *Kapaeeng Foundation (2008)*, more than five hundred indigenous families from remote rural localities Bandarban Hill District had already migrated to Arakan (Rakhine State) of Myanmar during the last 4 to 5 years under sheer pressure of lacking security to life and property, deprivation of potential services, shrinkage of shifting cultivation areas, severe scarcity of livelihood means. The indigenous peoples in plains become foreigners in their mother land while losing all of their lands and homesteads.

The indigenous activists engaged in the democratic movement for their rights had to put up with intense fear and anxiety in the face of growing human rights violations of serious nature throughout

the last some years. The indigenous rights activists were subjected to ruthless physical torture, death in custody, arbitrary arrests on false pretexts, slipping of arms insidiously and sending them to jail on allegation of keeping arms, entangling them in fictitious cases, etc.

Fanatic elements, land grabbers and settlers carried out numbers of communal attacks on indigenous peoples, and destroyed and looted their houses and properties. As many as 200 houses belonging to indigenous villagers were set on fire and burnt to ashes by land grabbers in the presence of law enforcing agencies in Gaibandha district on 6 November 2016. And Langadu, Chittagong Hill Tracts in June 2017.

These types of communal attacks and continuous insecurity of indigenous peoples also make them displaced from their ancestral lands.

Thank you, Madam Chair.