**Call for inputs: Access to information on climate change and human rights**

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**Introduction**

This report includes interviews with NGOs and young climate activists, focusing primarily on the Munda (Munda community mainly come from rachi, India. Munda communities have been brought from Rachi to clear Sundarban mangrove forest for making land for the Jamindars (land lord) and Marma communities from Bandarban and Rangamati in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. Over one million people were displaced by the Remal cyclones in May 2024, highlighting the critical link between climate change and human rights. Additionally, this report addresses the lack of access to information in ongoing development projects in Bangladesh, demonstrating how access to information is crucial for climate justice and human rights.

**Background of Communities Interviewed in Bangladesh**

The Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), located in southeastern Bangladesh, are among the most deprived and economically vulnerable regions in the country. Covering approximately 13,184 square kilometers or 10% of the nation's territory, the CHT comprises the districts of Rangamati, Bandarban, and Khagrachari. Geographic isolation and economic disadvantages hinder the progress of these communities, which are often situated in remote, hard-to-reach areas.

The region affected by this disaster is charactersed by several social issues. Rangamati and Bandarban districts are part of the Chittagong Hill tracts (CHT) which is a region predominanly inhabited by indigenous people who have been marginalized since the creation of the state of Bangladesh in 1971. A civil war in the region was ended in 1997 with the signature of the CHT accord. However, CHT still is a strongly militarised zone with a high level of violence ([see: Chowdhury, Mong Shanoo, ed. (2014). Survival under Threat. Human Rights Situation of Indigenous Peoples in Bangladesh. Chiangmai: AIPP](http://kapaeeng.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/HR-Situation-of-ips-in-Bangladesh.pdf).

The residents of CHT face significant challenges, including high levels of poverty and unemployment. Access to basic services such as income support, food security, education, and healthcare is limited. The population consists of eleven ethnic indigenous communities—Chakma, Marma, Tripura, Mro, Tanchangya, Bawm, Chak, Khyang, Khumi, Pangkhua, and Lushai and the plain land indigenous people Munda (district Satkhira, Khulna and Magura) —as well as mainstream Bengalis.

**Impact of Climate Disasters**

The coastal region of Bangladesh faces extreme conditions due to climate change, exacerbated by heatwaves (2024) and the super cyclone Remal. On May 27, 2024, Cyclone Remal made landfall, resulting in the deaths of at least sixteen people and the displacement of around a million. The Munda populations and others comunities in the Chittagong Hill Tracts and the subdistricts of Koyra and Shyamnagar were particularly affected. Indigenous people of Chittagong hill Tracts, Munda community of Koyra sub district of Khulna district and Shyamnagar sub district of Satkhira district have been suffered most as they have been living at that mouth of coastal rivers.

Unpaid volunteers, both indigenous and non-indigenous, conducted fieldwork and interviews despite adverse weather conditions. The report highlights the long-term consequences of climate disasters, including community displacement, loss of livelihoods, and health impacts due to prolonged exposure to extreme weather. As Bangladesh grapples with these challenges, robust climate adaptation strategies and international support are essential.

**Access to Information and Climate Disasters**

During Cyclone Remal, many community members reported that authorities did not inform them about the impending disaster. This highlights a critical issue: the lack of awareness about the connection between climate change and human rights. Extreme heatwaves hinder daily activities, affecting livelihoods and constituting a violation of human rights.

Several factors exacerbate the risks faced by indigenous communities:

* Economic and water crises due to climate change and human rights violations.
* Inadequate competence in the Bengali language and low literacy levels hinder access to information.
* Rising groundwater salinity affects drinking water, forcing women to spend significant time fetching water.
* Economic hardship and climate change impacts increase vulnerability to food insecurity and health issues.
* living hard to reach areas.
* Most of their infrastructures are not disaster protect and mostly climate vulnerable

However, looking more deeply into the reasons that cause the loss of human lives and property, a few other factors appear to be important: such as climate change, Deforestation, stone lifting, Construction of the Kaptai Dam and flooding of the lowlands, increasing population in the hills, Land grabbing and lease of large surfaces of land, Lack of planning of settlements, Tourism business, Weak governance, Education in all respects is weak and Role of women etc.

**Community Response and Information Dissemination**

Community members often communicate with NGOs and local authorities but feel their concerns are not adequately addressed. Relief distribution is highly mediated, increasing feelings of neglect among the Munda. Information dissemination mainly occurs through official announcements and NGO efforts, but there is a lack of material in the Munda language, affecting the community's sense of ownership and identification with the message.

**Economic, Social, and Cultural Impacts**

The Munda community primarily engages in day labor in construction, brickfields, farming, prawn farms, and vegetable sales. With incomes typically around $4.50 USD per day, many families face severe economic hardship. The Remal cyclone caused extensive damage, particularly to agricultural areas, exacerbating the community's struggles.

Other communities in the Chittagong Hill Tracts are also predominantly rural, engaging in various occupations such as vegetable sales, online entrepreneurship, government services, and day labor. The disaster disproportionately affected the Munda population, destroying their homes and livelihoods.

**Intersecting Forms of Discrimination**

Indigenous communities in Bangladesh face widespread prejudice, affecting their access to services and economic opportunities. Despite being the original inhabitants, they are often viewed as outcasts and denied equal rights. This discrimination compounds the challenges posed by climate change and economic. Constitutionally they are not recognized as indigenous community but ethnic minorities.

**Access to Information and Climate Catastrophic Investments**

In the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, large-scale development projects threaten the survival of the endangered Shompen Tribe in India Despite public hearings and opposition from tribal leaders and experts, the Indian government has proceeded with the Great Nicobar Development Project without adequate consultation or consideration of its impact on indigenous communities namely the Shompen community.

Access to information is crucial for respecting the human rights of indigenous and vulnerable communities. Ensuring their participation, consent, and consultation in development projects is essential to uphold their rights and mitigate the adverse effects of climate change and economic development.

**Conclusion**

This input underscores the profound connection between climate change, human rights, and the need for access to information. As climate-related disasters and investments continue to impact vulnerable communities, robust strategies, and international support are vital to protect their rights and ensure their resilience.

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