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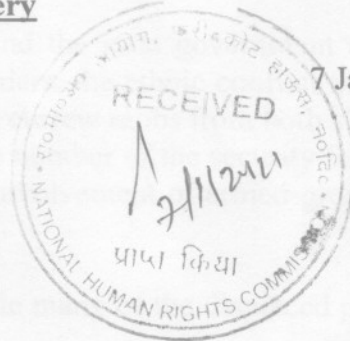
C-3/441-C (2nd Floor), Janakpuri, New Delhi - 110058, INDIA

Tel/fax: +91-11-25620583, 25503624; Email: suhaschakma@achrweb.org; Website: www.achrweb.org

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By Hand Delivery

7 January 2011



Justice K.G. Balakrishnan
Chairperson
National Human Rights Commission
Faridkot House, Copernicus Marg,
New Delhi- 110001

Subject: Seeking the NHRC's urgent intervention to provide adequate security and relief and rehabilitation to the displaced persons as a result of ongoing ethnic clashes/ communal riots between Rabha and Garo tribal communities in Assam-Meghalaya border areas

Dear Justice Balakrishnan,

As you may be aware, since 1 January 2011 there have been ethnic clashes/ communal riots between Rabha and Garo tribal communities in Assam-Meghalaya border areas leading to the killing of at least eight persons, burning of hundreds of houses and displacement of over 18,000 persons from both communities. The conflict continues unabated and information is still pouring in.

I am writing this to seek the urgent intervention of the National Human Rights Commission to provide adequate security in the affected areas and adequate relief and rehabilitation to the displaced persons.

As per the information received by Asian Centre for Human Rights (ACHR), over 18,000 Garo and Rabha tribals have been displaced from their homes in Assam and Meghalaya after their houses were attacked/burnt. Over 3000 victims have taken shelter in six relief camps in Kharkutta, Mendhipathar, Dainadubi and Dilma in East Garo Hills district of Meghalaya and over 15,400 victims have taken shelter in 12 relief camps in Goalpara district of Assam.

The affected villages in Meghalaya include Dangkhong, Hatibasa, Gelang, Chailang Thapa, Tongla, Rom, Daram, Dagal, Charakpara, Teklipara, Halowapara, Thorika, Mendipathar, Harinkata, Manikganj, Sagarkana, Barjhara, Rangchi, Rangduk Nongsar, Rompara, Dilma, Resu, Soinang and Tapa Danggre, among others, in East Garo Hills district.

The affected villages in Assam include Kuchumari, Kukurikata, Labang, Sarakpara, Tiklipara, Putimari, Belbari, Belpara, Kamari, Kasbanga and Boro Matia, among others, in Goalpara district.

Although both the state government of Assam and the state government of Meghalaya have imposed curfew and issued shoot at sight orders, the ethnic conflict there is no sign of the conflict slowing down. Despite the ongoing curfew mobs from both sides continued to roam the streets targeting remote villages as the number of the security forces deployed is not sufficient. There have been allegations of involvement of armed groups from both the communities which has escalated the conflict.

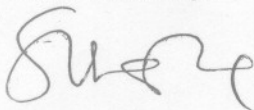
As I write this letter, villages are being burnt while many of the displaced persons do not have access to food and shelter.

I therefore request the NHRC to kindly take the following measures:

- Direct the state government of Assam and the state government of Meghalaya to ensure the protection of the life and properties in the riot-affected areas and contain the ethnic conflict including by urging the Ministry of Home Affairs to deploy adequate number of Central security forces in the riot hit areas;
- Direct the state government of Assam and the state government of Meghalaya to provide adequate relief to all the displaced persons including adequate food, clean and safe drinking water, clothes and blankets, medicines etc;
- Direct the state government of Assam and the state government of Meghalaya to take measures for the safe return and rehabilitation of all the displaced persons to their respective villages as normalcy returns;
- Direct the state government of Assam and the state government of Meghalaya to provide housing assistance as per the Indira Awas Yojana (IAY) scheme and free ration for at least one year to all those families whose houses have been burnt down, and conduct a survey in this regard; and
- Take any other measures which the Commission deems fit and proper.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,



Suhas Chakma
Director