

Lessons Not Learnt by Assam:



**Ethnic cleansing and internal
displacement in Karbi Anglong and NC Hills**

Asian Centre for Human Rights

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ASIAN CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

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1. Introduction

Following the murder of three auto-rickshaw drivers belonging to the Dimasa tribe by unidentified assailants at Tissom village under Manja police outpost, about 32 kilometers from Diphu, the district headquarters of Karbi Anglong district on 26 September 2005, a spate of retaliatory killings of the two indigenous tribes, the Dimasas and the Karbis started. The most gruesome of the killings occurred on 17 October 2005 when 34 Karbis were hacked to death at Charchim in West Karbi Anglong, about 25 kilometres away from the Kheroni police station. The involvement of armed opposition groups, the Dima Haram Daogah (DHD) claiming to represent ethnic Dimasas and the United Peoples Democratic Solidarity (UPDS), aspiring to represent ethnic Karbis has been established beyond reasonable doubt.

Assam has witnessed similar ethnic cleansing since the signing of the Bodoland Accord in 1993. Each ethnic conflict displaced thousands of people, mainly indigenous and tribal peoples, deprived them of the dignity inherent to human being and the right to an adequate standard of living and access to (a) essential food and potable water; (b) basic shelter and housing; (c) appropriate clothing; and (d) essential medical services and sanitation. Thousands of internally displaced continue to remain in camps across Assam.

Karbi Anglong had more than its share of ethnic conflicts with Kuki-Karbi and Dimasa-Khasi conflicts in the last two years. The conflict between two largest communities in Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hills, the Karbis and the Dimasas, is bound to cause large scale displacement in remote areas which are generally out of sight of the administration.

Director of Asian Centre for Human Rights, Mr Suhas Chakma visited Karbi Anglong on 3-4 November 2005 including the camps inside Diphu town as well as Dimasa inhabited areas of Dhansiri. During the visit, ACHR Director met concerned government officials, police officials, the representatives of Karbi and Dimasa civil society organisations and of course, the inmates of the camps.

Asian Centre for Human Rights hopes that this report would serve to take effective measures by the Central government of India and the State government of Assam to stop recurrence of such ethnic conflicts, improve the condition of the internally displaced persons (IDPs) and take measures to heal the wounds of the affected communities.

Suhas Chakma
Director

2. Executive summary and recommendations

On 26 September 2005, three auto-rickshaw drivers belonging to the Dimasa tribe were murdered by unidentified assailants, suspected to be members of the armed opposition groups, at Tissom village under Manja police outpost under Diphu police station of Karbi Anglong district.¹ While the identity of those who murdered the Dimasa auto-drivers remained a mystery and no attempt was made by the authorities to identify them, a spate of retaliatory killings of the Dimasas and the Karbis started with the killing of five members of a Karbi family at Hemari Terang village on 2 October 2005. The most gruesome of the killings occurred on 17 October 2005 when 34 Karbis were hacked to death at Charchim in West Karbi Anglong, about 25 kilometres away from the Kheroni police station.²

As of 6 November 2005, 90 persons have been killed. The victims include 76 Karbis, 11 Dimasas, 1 Bodo, 1 Bengali and 1 Nepali.³ Thousands of houses have been burnt, destroyed or looted.

An estimate 44,016 ethnic Karbis and Dimasas have been displaced as on 30 October 2005 in Karbi Anglong, NC Hills and Hojai sub-division under Nagaon district. In the Karbi Anglong district, out of 32,871 displaced persons 25,602 are Karbis, 5,600 are Dimasas and 1,669 are other communities.

Director of Asian Centre for Human Rights, Mr Suhas Chakma undertook on-the-spot field visit to the Karbi Anglong district on 3-4 November 2005. ACHR was the only human rights organization to visit the areas so far.

The summary of the observations of Asian Centre for Human Rights are given below:

- The pattern and organised nature of the killings that started following the murder of 3 auto-drivers belonging to the Dimasas on 26 September 2005 establish beyond any reasonable doubt the involvement of the organised armed opposition groups. Although, the Dima Haram Daogah (DHD) and the United Peoples Democratic Solidarity (UPDS) consistently denied their involvement and blamed it on the common Karbis and Dimasas, the armed cadres assembled the victims and hacked them to death. The internally displaced persons uniformly blamed the armed opposition groups for the killings that brought distrust among two communities which shared excellent cordial relations since time immemorial. Repeated denials and hacking the victims to death, instead of using fire-arms to avoid violations of cease-fire ground rules with the

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government of India and State government of Assam, do not exonerate the DHD and UPDS from the charges of involvement in the killings;

- The killings, which were initially perpetrated by the armed opposition groups, have spread to the community level. The killing of two Dimasas - Gichand Diphusa (38) and Dilaksing Maramus (39) of Disagedepa under Diphu police station on 2 November 2005 is a case in point.⁴ A group of about 25 people waylaid a bus coming from Diphu towards Dhansiri at Charchari around 3.35 pm with spears and machetes.⁵ There have also been stray incidents of arson of abandoned houses in Diphu town at the time of the visit of ACHR's Director;
- Both the state government of Assam and the Central government of India failed to protect innocent lives and stop the orgy of killings because of the failure to (1) enforce respect for the cease-fire ground rules by the DHD and the UPDS, (2) dispatch and deploy adequate security forces to bring the situation under control and (3) initiate inquiry by Justice P K Phukan to identify the culprits and stop recurrence of such killings; and
- The conditions in the relief camps remain deplorable because of overcrowding, lack of proper shelter and accommodation, inadequate provisions for food, absolute lack of firewood and vegetables, inadequate utensils, lack of medical facilities for the pregnant women, absolute lack of baby food, inadequate clothing and the collapse of the education system. It will not be an understatement to state that the provisions provided to the displaced persons is worse than what is provided to the convicted prisoners under the different jail manuals of India.

Conclusions and recommendations:

The conflict, which was initially restricted to the armed opposition groups, has now percolated to both the communities which have been yearning for peace. During the visit of ACHR Director, houses were being burnt inside the Diphu town, sometimes only 200 meters away from the security guards. The failure of the administration to stop such incidents of arson even after one month of continuous violence and killings is palpable.

The barbaric killings - by slaughtering innocent civilians like animals - violate basic principles of international humanitarian laws including the Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions. Both the DHD and the UPDS have been responsible for violations of international humanitarian law standards.

Ethnic cleansings are not new in Assam. They have been a phenomenon since 1993 following the signing of the Bodoland Accord. Assam government irrespective of whichever party is in power has failed to prevent loss of lives,

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bring perpetrators to justice, provide relief and ensure proper rehabilitation of the internally displaced persons. Thousands of displaced persons have been living in camps for over a decade.

No one has ever been brought to justice for such violations of international humanitarian law standards. Impunity is the single most important factor encouraging recurrence of ethnic cleansing.

Asian Centre for Human Rights makes the following recommendations to the government of India and the State government of Assam:

Recommendation 1: Enforce respect for cease-fire agreement with DHD and UPDS

The Central government and the State government of Assam must immediately take measures to enforce cease-fire ground rules especially keeping members of the UPDS and DHD in the designated camps as agreed under the cease-fire agreements. Head count of the members in the designated camps is indispensable for establishing peace.

Recommendation 2: Form Assam State Commission on Internally Displaced Persons and Community Recovery

Given the frequent internal displacement because of the ethnic conflicts and the lack of early warning mechanisms, the State government of Assam should consider forming “Assam State Commission on Internally Displaced Persons and Community Recovery” for a trial period of at least five years. The Commission should compose of government officials working in close collaboration with the authorities directly responsible for internally displaced persons including those responsible for security matters, Assam State Human Rights Commission, prominent social workers, non-governmental groups and displaced communities. Such a commission could be mandated to monitor developments in conflict areas for early warning, address security concerns and facilitate the granting of safe access to internally displaced persons by humanitarian workers, monitor measures taken to ensure recovery of the community and take confidence-building measures.

Recommendation 3: Ensure security and protection

The State government must not force those living in the camps to leave the camps for their villages without ensuring their safety, security and dignity. In this respect, the state government must take measures immediately to stop burning of the houses and uphold the rule of law.

Recommendation 4: A central package for rehabilitation

The Central government should declare a package to rehabilitate the

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displaced Karbis and Dimasas to enable them to stand on their own feet, in other words, to be self-reliant. The package should, among others, provide for construction of houses, compensation for properties lost/damaged and at least six months free rations to enable them to start cultivation. These initiatives will go a long way for conflict resolution and peace building.

All citizens of India who are displaced whether by natural calamities such as Tsunami and earthquake or ethnic cleansing, must have equal access to relief and rehabilitation. The government of India must develop standards for providing humanitarian assistance based on the principles of equality and non-discrimination.

The level of assistance to the Karbi and the Dimasa IDPs must be at par with what is being provided to the Kashmiri pandits who have also been displaced from Jammu and Kashmir because of armed conflicts.

Recommendation 5: Improvement of the camp conditions

The government must take immediate measures to reduce overcrowding and provide proper accommodation, adequate provisions for fooding especially firewoods and cash doles for vegetables, adequate utensils, medical facilities especially for pregnant women, baby food, adequate and appropriate clothing and educational facilities for children.

Recommendation 6: Special Focus on Women and Children

The provisions for humanitarian assistance for the IDPs must contain special assistance for baby food, special care and protection for the pregnant women.

Recommendation 7: Vacate the schools and provide proper accommodation

The State Government of Assam and the Government of India must immediately build temporary camps to provide proper accommodation and vacate 32 schools in Karbi Anglong alone presently being used to house the internally displaced Karbis and Dimasas.

The government must immediately provide free textbooks to the children of the displaced persons. Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi must implement his declaration on the issue.

Recommendation 8: Compensation for the dead and injured

The State government must take immediate steps to provide the compensation of Rs 3,00,000 announced for the relatives of those who have been killed.

Compensation must also be paid to those who have been injured.

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Recommendation 9: Justice P K Phukan Commission of Inquiry or CBI Inquiry

Accountability is crucial to stop recurrence of such killings. The Assam government must take all measures necessary to start immediate functioning of the Justice P K Phukan Commission of Inquiry, which is supposed to complete its inquiry within 90 days, irrespective of an inquiry by the Central Bureau of Investigation.

Recommendation 10: Disseminate Geneva Conventions

The State government of Assam and the Central government of India should distribute International Humanitarian Law Standards in Assam and the North East India.

3. Political background and ethnic equations in Karbi Anglong and NC Hills

Karbi Anglong with a geographical area of 10,434-sq km territory is a miniature of Assam in terms of composition of ethnic groups.

In November 1951, a new district, the United Mikir and North Cachar Hills, was carved out of portions of Sibsagar, Nagaon, Cachar and United Khasi & Jaintia Hills. In 1970, it was again split up into two: the Mikir Hills district and the North Cachar Hills district. In 1976, the Mikir Hills district was rechristened as Karbi Anglong.⁶

In 1970, when Prime Minister Indira Gandhi contemplated granting full statehood to Meghalaya, a memorandum was submitted demanding for a separate state consisting of Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hills. Almost 16 years later, on 17 May 1986 that demand for statehood led to the formation of the Autonomous State Demand Committee (ASDC). The ASDC spearheaded a strong mass movement demanding the creation of an autonomous State under Article 244(A) of the Constitution that culminated in signing of the MoU on 1 April 1995 between the Assam government and the leaders of the ASDC.⁷

The signing of the MoU led to upgradation of both councils of Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hills with enhanced powers under the provisions of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India. However, the district councils have failed to fulfill the aspirations of the people because of the lack of funds, lack of administrative and legislative powers. The State government continues to pull all the strings. The funds allocated for the District Councils by the Central government are often allegedly diverted elsewhere or not released in time.

However, with the emergence of the armed opposition groups in 1990s, the influence of democratic forces has reduced. The Central government of India and the State government of Assam has also started giving more importance to the armed groups in order to address insurgency problems.

Karbi Anglong is miniature of Assam in terms of its ethnic diversity and its share of ethnic conflicts. The key ethnic groups residing in Karbi Anglong are the Dimasas in Dhansiri and Mohendijua area, Bodos in Langhin area; Kukis, Thadous and Hmars in Singhason and Koilamati areas, Tiwas in the areas bordering Nagaon and Morigaon District, Garos in Hamren Sub-division, Man-tai speaking community inhabiting in Bokajan Sub-Division, Khasis in

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Hamren Sub-Division, scattered population of Chakmas mostly in Borlangphar area and Rengma Nagas in Nilip Block area.

The demands of the various tribal groups illustrate the nature of the conflict over land and resources.

The demand of the different political groups of the ethnic Karbis centers around creation of an autonomous state. The demands of the United Peoples Democratic Solidarity (UPDS) formed in 1999 in a merger of the erstwhile Karbi People's Front (KPF) and Karbi National Volunteers, include creation of a separate state for the Karbi Anglong and contiguous Karbi-dominated areas of Assam and Meghalaya under Article 3 of the Constitution with additional powers under Article 371, expulsion of those who came to Karbi Anglong after 1951, issuance of domicile certificates to non-Karbis who have arrived before 1951, introduction of inner line permit and an economic package for the region. After the UDPS signed a ceasefire agreement with government of India and the State government of Assam, the anti-talk faction of the UPDS re-christened itself as the Karbi Longri National Liberation Front (KLNLF).

The DHD, formed in 1995 after almost all the leaders and cadre of the erstwhile Dimasa National Security Force (DNSF) surrendered en masse. demands Dimarji kingdom comprising the Dimasa-inhabited areas of North Cachar Hills, Karbi Anglong, parts of Nagaon district and parts of Dimapur district of Nagaland. Its rival faction the Black Widow, formed by the ousted chairman Jewel Garlossa, is also active in the twin hill districts.

The Bodos demand implementation of Clause 8 of the Bodoland Accord of 1993 to provide Scheduled Tribes (hills) status to the Bodos living in Karbi Anglong.

The Kukis demand creation of an Autonomous Regional Council within Autonomous District Council Area of Karbi Anglong.

The Khasi-Pnars of the Block I and II areas in Karbi Anglong have been demanding to be a part of Meghalaya. These areas have remained a disputed area between Assam and Meghalaya for a long time. In 1951, these areas had been transferred to the Karbi Anglong (then called United Mikir and North Kachar Hills) after slicing them from the erstwhile Khasi and Jaintia Hills district and remained with Assam even after the birth of Meghalaya in 1972.

The Biharis and Advasis too have been having conflicts over land and resources under the Howraghat police station area.

4. The current Karbi-Dimasa conflict

The violence was apparently sparked off by the abduction and murder of three Dimasa autorickshaw drivers in a Karbi village on 26 September 2005. The identity of the murderers remained a mystery. As remour had its field days, it is clear that district police authorities took little action to assuage the sentiments of the Dimasas. The armed groups soon took the law into their hands by slaughtering the innocent civilians with *daos*, machetes. Although, fire-arms were used to assemble the victims, the victims were often mutilated and killed in the most despicable way. Even children were not spared.

As of 6 November 2005, 90 persons have been killed. The victims included 76 Karbis, 11 Dimasas, 1 Bodo, 1 Bengali and 1 Nepali. An estimated 1,014 houses - 534 of Karbis, 469 of Dimasas, and one of Nepali were burnt down.⁸

a. Chronology of the killings

The first retaliatory attack against the killing of 3 Dimasa auto drivers on 26 September 2005, took place at around 1.00 am on 2 October 2005. Suspected armed members belonging to the Dima Halom Daoga (DHD) allegedly barged into the house of the headman of Karbi village of Hemari Terang under Diphu police station in Karbi Anglong and asked all the male members of the family to come out. The five family members Sing Terang, 60 years, Jacod Terang (21 years), Risobasa Terang (38 years), Chandra Terang (50 years) and Sar-im Terang were then taken to a nearby paddy field and their hands were tied up before the rebels hacked them to death using machetes and crude implements.⁹

On 8 October 2005, eight Karbis, including women and children were killed. The violence reportedly erupted in the wee hours of the day following torching of about 60 houses and destruction of properties by a group of around 150 miscreants, 20 of them equipped with sophisticated weapons and dressed in army fatigues in Walingdisa village under Dhansiri police station around 4.30 am.¹⁰ The victims were identified as Kolomsing Rongpi (30 years), Shanti Killingpi (2 years), Rupsing Hanse (16 years), Bilat Killingpi, Paniram Engleng, Elish Englengpi, Tensing Killing (45 years) and Kison Killing (5 years).¹¹

On 9 October 2005, seven Karbis and one Nepali were killed and about 130 houses, all belonging to Karbi people, set ablaze in twelve different villages under Diphu and Bokajan police stations in Karbi Anglong district. Eyewitnesses reported that the miscreants came to Monsing Ingti gaon, Bura

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Terang gaon, Kangthar Kro gaon, Norik Teron gaon, Diliram Terang gaon and Longso with sophisticated arms and sharp weapons and fired indiscriminately following which the villagers fled to safer places. The miscreants later set the houses afire. Those killed were identified as Mr Kamising Tisso (25 years), Master Sanjib Tisso alias Bishnu (5 years), Mr Bura Phangchao (55 years), Mr Sar Timung (45 years), Mr Hemar Terang (20), Mr Sarthe Kramsa (85) and Mr Klar-et Dera (75) and Mr Ram Prasad Sharma (50).¹² According to eye witness, Mr Kamising Tisso (25 years) and Master Sanjib Tisso alias Bishnu (5 years) were killed by the police from point blank range just after an encounter with an armed opposition group to apparently show that the two were killed in cross-fire.

The Karbi armed groups reportedly hit back by killing at least five Dimasa tribesmen, including women and torching of 63 houses in Kheroni village early in the morning of 10 October 2005. A group of about 20 armed Karbis accompanied by over 200 villagers, armed with sharp weapons, allegedly attacked Khenori village and shot dead five Dimasas besides setting ablaze 63 houses.¹³ The dead have been identified as Ms Rahila Diphusa (65), Mr Archikgra Hasnu (75), Ms Saibodi Doulagajau (63), Mr Ronga Sing Diphusa (90), Mr Thramparam Daulagupu (90 years).

Eighty six houses - 15 at Loringlangso, 40 at Bijoy Rongpigaon, 15 at Mensing Hanse gaon near Doldoli, eight at Dokiju Dimaja gaon near Borlangpher villages and seven in Diphu town under Diphu Police Station were reportedly set on fire by miscreants during the intervening night of 10 and 11 October 2005 and in the morning of 11 October 2005.¹⁴

On 12 October 2005, Ms Sonamai Hajoi, 30 years from Disakadeba village under Manja Police Outpost of Diphu police station was killed.¹⁵

One hundred and twenty more houses were reportedly burnt down in Longnit and Bagmari areas under Diphu Police Station areas of Karbi Anglong district by miscreants in the wee hours of 15 October 2005.¹⁶

On 15 October 2005, Mr Babulsing Terang, 22 years and Mr Sanjoy Terang of Singh Terang Village, Doldoli under Dhansiri Police Station were killed.¹⁷

Another 200 houses were reportedly burnt down by miscreants at Hojaipur, Doldoli and Dhansiri areas under Diphu police station limits on 16 October 2005.¹⁸

On 16 October 2005, Mr Prafullah Basumatary, 22 years from Hojaipur under Diphu Police Station was killed.¹⁹

The orgy of ethnic violence between the Karbis and Dimasas further escalated

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on 17 October 2005 with 34 more persons being killed and four being injured by members of the armed opposition groups in the morning at Charchim. The mayhem began at 6.40 am when 20 to 25 members of the armed opposition groups in military fatigues armed with sophisticated weapons reportedly stopped two buses numbering (AS-09-3896) and (AS-09-4743) at Charchim village and asked the Karbi passengers to get down and line up on the road. Five passengers of bus No. (AS-09-3896) that was going from Mokailum to Hamren were shot dead and the bus was then set afire which claimed five more lives. Ten passengers of the other bus (AS-09-4743), bound for Diphu from Mokailum, were also reportedly hacked to death with sharp weapons. Not satisfied with the killing, the members of the armed opposition groups then set upon two villages of Waingdisagaon and Disagisamgaon and killed 14 more persons and injured four other persons. About 26 houses were burnt down in Waingdisagaon and four more in nearby Disagisamgaon.²⁰

During the night of 17 October 2005, seven more Karbi youths were reportedly shot dead by Dimasa militants at Doyangmukh village while a young boy was killed at Barlongfar. In an immediate retaliatory action, Karbi miscreants burnt down about 130 houses belonging to the Dimasas at Tumprang in Hamreng sub-division and Barlangfar and Diphu-Manja areas under Diphu police station. According to the police, 30 more houses at Jeramukh, 18 at Haripur, 17 at Rangjumi and three at Dhelapara belonging to Dimasas under Baithalangsu police station were torched during the night.²¹

In another incident on 17 October 2005, Mr Dilip Das from Borlangfer Tisso village and Mr Bidyasing Terang from Ramsing Terang village under Diphu police station were killed by unknown miscreants.²²

On 18 October 2005, altogether 123 houses- 48 at Ikorani, 30 at Manja, 3 at Vellapara, 17 at Rongjamir and 31 Deramukh were reportedly set ablaze by miscreants. While no casualty has been reported during the day, a body was recovered from Borlangphar Tisso gaon under Diphu police station, taking the toll to 35 in 17 October 2005 carnage. The deceased was reportedly identified as Dilip Das.²³

On 19 October 2005, seven more bodies recovered from the Prisek jungle under Kheroni police station. While six of the bodies have reportedly been identified as Lang Denghee (75), Borsing Teron (75), Kareng Rongpharpi (65), Kame Rongpharpi (65), Kangpura Denghee (40), Kajek Rongpharpi (35), one remain unidentified.²⁴

During the day miscreants allegedly ransacked three houses at Dongkhamokam while seven dwelling houses were torched at Kuthupi under Baithalangshu police station.²⁵

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With the reported killing of 9 armed cadres of the UPDS by the DHD cadres on 21 October 2005 at Tamulbari village under Diphu Police station, around 12 kilometres from Diphu towards Lumding Road, the death toll of the ethnic violence since 26 September 2005 rose to 88. A group of about 12 armed UPDS cadres reportedly went to Kakubasti and set afire as many as 12 Dimasa houses. From there, they went to the nearby Kishibam village and torched seven houses there too. However, when the UPDS cadres entered Tamulbari village where a group of suspected DHD armed cadres had been laying an ambush, the DHD cadres opened fire killing nine of the Karbi militants on the spot.²⁶

On 2 November 2005, two bus passengers identified as Gichand Diphusa (38) and Dilaksing Maramus (39) of Disagedepa under Diphu police station were hacked to death.²⁷ A group of about 25 people waylaid a bus coming from Diphu towards Dhansiri at Charchari around 3.35 pm with spears and machetes.²⁸

Names of persons killed in the ethnic cleansing since 26 September 2005

26 September 2005

Sl No	Names of victims	Age	Sex	Name of Father/Husband/Wife	Address
1	Madan Langthasa	24	M	S/o Horen Langthasa	Mohendijua
2	Biswa Jigdung	25	M	S/o Mohen Jigdung	Mohendijua
3	Ratul Maramsa	20	M	S/o Bedhon Maramsa	Upper Kheroni

2 October 2005

Sl No	Names of victims	Age	Sex	Name of Father/Husband/Wife	Address
1	*Sing Terang	60	M	S/o Late Sarpo	Hemari Terang vill, 8 KM Diphu, Lumding Road
2	*Jacob Terang	21	M	S/o Late Sing	Hemari Terang vill, 8 KM Diphu, Lumding Road
3	*Risobasa Terang	38	M	S/o Late Sing	Hemari Terang vill, 8 KM Diphu, Lumding Road
4	*Chandra Terang	50	M	S/o Late Sarpo	Hemari Terang vill, 8 KM Diphu, Lumding Road

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5	*Sarim Terang	-	M	S/o Khoiya Terang	Hemari Terang vill, 8 KM Diphu, Lumding Road
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*The above victims belong to the same family

3 October 2005

Sl No	Names of victims	Age	Sex	Name of Father/Husband/Wife	Address
1	Khorsing Terang	27	M	S/o Sarbura	Upper Dikrong Kathar Ingti vill, under Dillai POP, Bokajan PS
2	Heera Timung	38	M	S/o Lt Ramsing Timung	Upper Dikrong Moja Phangcho vill, under Dillai POP, Bokajan PS
3	Khoiya Teron	-	M	S/o Late Sarpo Terong	Kolomsing Teron, under Dillai POP, Bokajan PS

8 October 2005

Sl No	Names of victims	Age	Sex	Name of Father/Husband/Wife	Address
1	Kolomsing Rongpi	30	M	-	Borsing Bey vill, Langmili, PS Dhipu
2	Shanti Killingpi	2	F	-	Borsing Bey vill, Langmili, PS Dhipu
3	Rupsing Hanse	16	M	-	Hurnat Terang, Langmili, PS Dhipu
4	Bilat Killingpi	-	F	-	Kamsing Chinthong vill, Langmili, PS Dhipu
5	Paniram Englung	-	M	-	Sarthe Killing vill, Langmili, PS Dhipu
6	Elish Englungpi	-	F	-	Sarthe Killing vill, Langmili, PS Dhipu
7	Tensing Killing	45	M	-	Sarthe Killing vill, Langmili, PS Dhipu
8	Kison Killing	5	M	-	Sarthe Killing vill, Langmili, PS Dhipu

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9th October 2005

Sl No	Names of victims	Age	Sex	Name of Father/Husband/Wife	Address
1	*Kamsing Tisso	25	M	S/o Longsing	Choi-ang village, under Bakulia POP, Howraghat PS
2	*Sanjiv Tisso Alias Bishnu	5	M	S/o Late Kamsing	Choi-ang village, under Bakulia POP, Howraghat PS
3	**Ramprashad Sharma	37	M	S/o Danduram Sharma	10 Mile, Dillai, under Dillai POP, Bokajan PS
4	Bura Phangcho	55	M	No details yet	Longsing Engti Village, Lansoliet under Diphu PS
5	Sar Timung	45	M	-	Bura Terang Village, Lansoliet under Diphu PS
6	Hemar Terang	20	M	-	Dilliram Terang, Lansoliet under Diphu PS
7	Sarthe Kramsa	85	M	-	Sarthe Kramsa Village, Lansoliet under Diphu PS
8	Klar-et Dera	75	M	-	Monsing Engleng Village, Lansoliet under Diphu PS

*The two are father and son and eye-witness tells that police killed them at point-blank range at around 9-40 am just after an encounter with an Extremist group to apparently show that the two were killed in cross-fire.

**Ramprashad Sharma was killed in an attack by DHD cadres on the Nepali village.

10th October 2005

Sl No	Names of victims	Age	Sex	Name of Father/Husband/Wife	Address
1	Saibadi Daulagupu	65	F	W/o Late Senalsing Daulagupu	Kheroni, under Manja POP, Diphu PS
2	Rohila Diphusa	65	F	W/o Late Mansing Daulagupu	Kheroni, under Manja POP, Diphu PS
3	Rongasing Diphusa	90	M	S/o Late Udoksing Diphusa	Kheroni, under Manja POP, Diphu PS

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4	Thramparam Daulagupu	90	M	S/o Late Phulon Daulagupu	Kheroni, under Manja POP, Diphu PS
5	Archikgra Hasnu	75	M	S/o Late Joygoha Hasnu	Kheroni, under Manja POP, Diphu PS

12th October 2005

Sl No	Names of victims	Age	Sex	Name of Father/Husband/Wife	Address
1	Sonamai Hojai	30	F	W/o Joynal Hojaisa	Disakadeba, Under Manja POP, Diphu PS

15th October 2005

Sl No	Names of victims	Age	Sex	Name of Father/Husband/Wife	Address
1	Babulsing Terang	22	M	S/o Langtuk	Sing Terang Village, Doldoli, under Dhansiri POP, Diphu PS
2	*Sanjay Terang	22	M	S/o Khoiya	Sing Terang Village, Doldoli, under Dhansiri POP, Diphu PS

*Sanjay's wife is Sonali Ingtipi (19), 7 month pregnant and no earning member and now an inmate of a relief camp at Diphu.

16th October 2005

Sl No	Names of victims	Age	Sex	Name of Father/Husband/Wife	Address
1	Prafulla Basumatary	22	M	S/o Kalicharan	Hojaipur, under Diphu PS

An unidentified headless body was recovered by the police of Bakulia POP in the river Jamuna

Names of Victims of “Charchim” killings on 17 October 2005

Sl No	Names of the deceased	Age	Sex	Name of Father/Husband/Wife	Address
1	Kareng Timungpi	17	F	W/o Lt Sai Timung	Charchim vill PO/PS Kheroni, West Karbi Anglong
2	Biren Teron	25	M	C/o Khrishna Sharma	Jirikindeng, PO-Jirikindeng, PS-Kheroni

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3	Aroti Phangchopi	16	F	D/o Lt Sarsing Phangcho	Zirikendeng, PS Kheroni
4	Kangbura Rongphar	45	M	S/o Lt Lt Sing Rongphar	Charchim, Kheroni
5	Rupsing Ingti	30	M	C/o Hemari Timung	Rongtengkiri, near Sangsika, P/S Kheroni
6	Kare Tissopi	18	F	D/o Senot Tisso	Charchim, Kheroni
7	Hemari Killing	35	M	S/o Jonti Timung	Charchim, Kheroni
8	Omphu Patorpi	35	F	W/o Bimalsing Bey	Charchim, Kheroni
9	Mensing Phangcho	40	M	S/o Manik Bey	Charchim, Kheroni
10	Kania Tisso	14	M	S/o Lt Kangbura Tisso	Terang vill, near Charchim, Kheroni
11	Bina Kropi	15	F	D/o Sarbura Kro	Ram Terong vill, Zirikendeng, Kheroni
12	Rajen Ronghang	12	M	S/o Lt Sing Ronghang	Charchim vill, Kheroni
13	Kangbura Terang	15	M	S/o Lt Hemari Terang	Charchim, Kheroni
14	Lata Kramsapi	28	F	D/o Larsing Kramsa	Sar-ucha vill, Zirikindeng, Kheroni
15	Jodhon Timung	25	M	S/o Ram Timung	Charchim, Kheroni
16	Bijoy Bey	7	M	S/o Bimalsing Bey	Phonglangso, Kheroni
17	Rajen Terang	8	M	S/o Kania Terang	Charchim, Kheroni
18	Dongjai Inghee	30	M	C/o Krishna Sarma	Terang village, Zirikindeng
19	Bikram Bey	10	M	S/o Bimalsing Bey	Phonglangso, Kheroni
20	Sonali Ingheepi	30	F	W/o Bimalsing Bey	Phonglangso, Kheroni
21	Rashm Beypi	8	F	D/o Bimalsing Bey	Phonglangso, Kheroni
22	Kasang Phangchopi	30	F	W/o Lt Harsing Ronghang	Charchim, Kheroni
23	Biren Terang	3	M	S/o Kania Terang	Charchim, Kheroni
24	Yet to be named infant	1 month	M	S/o Longsing Tamung	Charchim, Kheroni
25	Kareng Terangpi	30	F	W/o Ram Tossip	Charchim, Kheroni

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Ethnic cleansing and internal displacement in Karbi Anglong and NC Hills



Innocent Karbi Passenger slaughtered at Charchim village under Kheroni Police Station (Total killed 50 on 17th October, 2005)



Sika Lekthepe (19)
Langmili village, 9th October, 2005

Lessons Not Learnt by Assam

Ethnic cleansing and internal displacement in Karbi Anglong and NC Hills



8 Hemari Terang village, 2nd October, 2005
(Total killed 5)



8 Hemari Terang village, 2nd October, 2005
(Total killed 5)

Lessons Not Learnt by Assam

Ethnic cleansing and internal displacement in Karbi Anglong and NC Hills



Hira Timung (40)
3rd October, 2005



Hemari Terang village, 2nd October, 2005
(Total killed 5)

Lessons Not Learnt by Assam

Ethnic cleansing and internal displacement in Karbi Anglong and NC Hills



Innocent Karbi Passenger slaughtered at Charchim village under Kheroni Police Station (Total killed 50 on 17th October, 2005)



Innocent Karbi Passenger slaughtered at Charchim village under Kheroni Police Station (Total killed 50 on 17th October, 2005)

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26	Harsing Ronghang	32	M	S/o Kania Ronghang	Charchim, Kheroni
27	Sintu Ingtipi	28	F	W/o Longsing Timung	Charchim, Kheroni
28	Kangbura Teron	20	M	S/o Thong Teron	Charchim, Kheroni
29	Sar Killing Phangcho	75	M	S/o Lt Rah Phangcho	Rongchejeng village, Kheroni
30	Borsing Teron	60	M	S/o Lt Basa Teron	Charchim, Kheroni
31	Kare Rongpharpi	50	F	W/o Borsing Teron	Charchim, Kheroni
32	Kache Rongpharpi	25	F	W/o Kangbura Inghee	Charchim, Kheroni
33	Kangbura Inghee	28	M	S/o Late Long	Charchim, Kheroni
34	Long Inghee	60	M	S/o Late Sarthe	Charchim, Kheroni
35	Kareng Rongpharpi	55	F	W/o Late Long	Charchim, Kheroni

Name of persons burnt alive at Charchim, Kheroni

Sl No	Names of the deceased	Age	Sex	Name of Father/Husband/Wife	Address
1	John Ingti, SGB	85	M	Late Solok	Charchim, Kheroni
2	Kaleng Timungpi	65	F	W/o Sumpo Teron	Charchim, Kheroni
3	Kangbura Phrangcho	35	M	S/o Late Kania	Charchim, Kheroni
4	Sangwai Teronpi	30	F	W/o Late Sarbura Hanse	Prisek, Kheroni
5	Sarlongki Ronghang	11 1/2	M	S/o Harsing	Prisek, Kheroni

17th October 2005

Sl No	Names of victims	Age	Sex	Name of Father/Husband/Wife	Address
1	Dilip Das	-	M	S/o Durjudhon Das	Borlangfer Tisso Village
2	Bidyasing Terang	35	M	S/o Ramsing Terang	Ramsing Terang Village, Diphu PS

21 October 2005

Sl No	Names of victims	Age	Sex	Name of Father/Husband/Wife	Address
1	Moheswar Singnar	-	M	-	-

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2	Arteng Ronghang	38	M	-	-
3	Umrong Ronghan	-	M	-	-
4	Sanjiv Kathar	23	M	-	-
5	Waisong Taro	22	M	S/o Mondol Taro	Rongkimi, Diphu under Diphu PS
6	Binva Ingti	16	M	-	-
7	Roshon Bey	19	M	-	-
8	Rajen Thapa	-	M	-	-
9	Mangalsing Phangcho	-	M	-	-

* The above named dead bodies were recovered from Khejurbon Dimasa village, details of the deceased not yet available

b. Failure of the State

The failure of the Assam government to learn from previous ethnic conflicts, which have been raging in the State since 1993, requires little introduction.

Until the present ethnic clashes, the Karbis and the Dimasas despite being two largest ethnic groups did not have any ethnic conflict. While the present killings have increased distrust and suspicion, the intensity of the conflict has baffled both the communities. That the killings were not ethnic conflicts but handiwork of the armed opposition groups - DHD and UPDS- has been a common refrain of both the Dimasas and the Karbis met by ACHR delegation.

That the State has failed to fulfill its responsibility to protect the lives and properties of the citizens is all-pervasive.

i. Septmber 26th murder: Conflict over territory or resources?

In the 1990s, Karbi Anglong witnessed the formation of the armed opposition groups, mainly UPDS claiming to represent the Karbis and DHD claiming to represent the Dimasas. The formation of these armed opposition groups could be attributed to measures taken by armed opposition groups from neighbouring areas as a response to the counter-insurgency measures of the government of India.

On 23 May 2002, the UPDS entered into a ceasefire agreement with the state government of Assam and the government of India. The UPDS designated its camps at Diphu and Hamren.

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On 23 December 2003, the DHD entered into a similar cease-fire agreement with the state government of Assam. The designated camps of the DHD are at Dhansiri, Haflong and Doyangmuck.

Under the cease-fire agreements, the members of the UPDS and DHD are supposed to remain in designated camps.

The DHD designated camp in Dhansiri Reserve Forest area under Karbi Anglong district has been a bone of contention between the DHD and UPDS. The UPDS has been demanding its removal. It has been highlighted as an ostensible trigger for the ethnic cleansing.

While the DHD designated camp at Dhansiri certainly remains a contentious issue, the DHD had entered into cease-fire more than one and half years ago on 23 December 2003. The central government and the state government of Assam are yet to start any substantive talks with the DHD or UPDS to address their demands. Why would the Dhansiri designated camp spark off the killings now?

It is clear that non-enforcement of the cease-fire agreement is responsible for the conflict. As over 450-odd armed cadres of the DHD and the UPDS roamed freely, the situation immediately went out of control. When Governor of Assam, Lt General (Retd) Ajay Singh visited the UPDS designated camp in Diphu, he reportedly found only two members of the UPDS in the militant outfit's designated camp in Diphu in place of the dozens that were supposed to be there.²⁹ The non-enforcement of cease-fire ground rules also make it difficult to distinguish between those which are in cease-fire and those which are not such as the Black Widow and the Karbi Longri North Cachar Hills Liberation Front.

Non-enforcement of cease-fire agreements can lead to more conflicts among the armed opposition groups over collection of resources. These groups can openly carry out activities which are hitherto banned by the government. As one Karbi official on condition of anonymity stated, "earlier the notice for taxes used to come secretly, now they deliver it in bikes".

Were the Dimasa auto drivers murdered on 26 September 2005 for non-payment of taxes?

There has been no attempt to find out the reason behind the murder. This inaction on the part of the administration flared up the killings.

ii. Failure to deploy adequate security forces

The failure of the state government despite repeated ethnic cleansing has been all pervasive. There is credence to the joint demonstration of Karbi

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Student Union (KSU) and All Dimasa Students Union (ADSU) held in Guwahati on 19 October 2005 which held the State Government and the district administration responsible for allowing the situation to go out of hand.³⁰

It is clear that the State Government did not use the security options available at its disposal. Only after the death toll reached to 70 that the State Government decided to call the army to aid the civil authorities.³¹

Senior political leaders irrespective of their political parties or ideologies resorted to political skullduggery and blame game. What remains disconcerting is that no statement has emanated from the political figures of the Karbi Anglong and NC Hills outrightly condemning the violence, mobilising people to take visible peace initiatives and condemning stray incidents of burning down the deserted houses which can easily turn into ethnic conflict. It is easy for the opposition³² to blame the government and for the government³³ to conjure up conspiracy theories about the opposition. While the government has the primary responsibility, ethnic conflict requires the leaders to rise above party politics.

However, stray incidents of burning down of the abandoned houses as witnessed during the visit of the ACHR delegation to Karbi Anglong have the potential to spread to NC Hills. This will further intensify the conflict but the State administration until today appears to be complacent about these stray incidents.

iii. Failure to establish accountability

The failure to establish accountability is one of the reasons for recurrence of ethnic cleansings in the North East. Experiences from Rwanda to Darfur in Sudan show that accountability is crucial to stop recurrence of such incidents.

Asian Centre for Human Rights does not suggest the need for international war crimes tribunal. But the need to establish accountability is fundamental to stop such gruesome killings. While most perpetrators of communal riots in other parts of India continue to roam freely, there have been at least few inquiry commissions and prosecutions. In the North East, inquiry commissions have seldom been ordered. When the inquiries are ordered, the reports are never made public. The question of prosecution never arises.

On 10 October 2005, Assam Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi instituted a one-man inquiry committee headed by retired judge, Justice PC Phukan to inquire into the recent killings in Karbi Anglong. The inquiry report is supposed to be submitted to the State Government within three months.³⁴

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About a month has passed, the terms of reference of Justice Phukan's Commission have not been made public. No staff or resource has yet been provided to Justice Phukan Commission. Worst, Justice Phukan has not visited Karbi Anglong so far. Is Justice Phukan expected to visit the affected areas after all the evidence has been destroyed? Or is it a case that the number of people killed still does not warrant a visit?

In the meanwhile, the Assam government in a press release of 27 October 2005 reportedly decided to request the Central government to institute a probe by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).³⁵

Truth once again appears to have become the victim.

The Chief Minister announced an ex-gratia of Rs 3 lakhs to the kin of each of the victim who are dead.³⁶ Until today, not a single relative of the victim has received any compensation. The District administration officials when asked by ACHR informed that they are following up with the State government!

5. Profiles in displacement: Karbi Anglong, NC Hills and Nagaon

On 19 October 2005, the State Government of Assam stated that within 22 days from 26 September to 18 October 2005, altogether 1,014 houses - 534 of Karbis and 469 of Dimasas, and one of Nepalese, were burnt down causing displacement of at least 22, 469 persons of as many as 43 villages.³⁷

As of 3 November 2005, about 44,016 persons remained displaced in Karbi Anglong, North Cachar Hills and Nagaon districts.

According to the statement provided by the District Administration, there were 79 camps respectively 57 in Karbi Anglong, 7 in North Kachar Hills and 15 in Nagaon district (Hojai).

i. Total relief camps and inmates³⁸

District	No of relief camps	No of camp inmates	Adult Male	Adult Female	Minor Male Female	No of inmates and who left for whom	Persons died in camps
Karbi Anglong	57	36555	11,570	10,914	14,071		8
North Kachar Hills	7	2135	631	777	727	550	1
Nagaon (Hojai)	15	5326	1302	851	3173		
Total	79	44016	13503	12542	17971	550	9

ii. Camp-wise figures of the displaced in Karbi Anglong district as on 2.11.2005³⁹

Sub-Division Diphu:

Sl No.	Name of the Camp	Number of Families	Number of Inmates	Community
1	Lorulangso Community Hall	106	678	Karbi
2	Lorulangso Englengcherop Community Hall	129	707	Karbi
3	Lorulangso Market	36	197	Karbi
4	Rengbonghom H.S. School	108	604	Karbi

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5	Rengma Community Hall	48	240	Karbi
6	Basic Training Centre	181	981	Karbi
7	Diphu Indoor Stadium	76	333	Karbi
8	Dhansiri High School	202	934	Dimasa
9	Dhansiri Indoor Stadium	95	449	Dimasa
10	Dhansiri Handloom Centre	54	245	Dimasa
11	Dhansiri M.E. School	63	295	Dimasa
12	Dhansiri L.P. School	52	261	Dimasa
13	Dhansiri Nepali Bosti Community Hall	87	418	Dimasa
14	Kathalguri L. P. School, Dhansiri	125	626	Dimasa
15	Jr. Basic School, Diphu	43	235	Karbi
16	PWD L.P. School, Diphu	37	210	Karbi
17	Taralangso Cultural Complex	247	1158	Karbi
18	Dimasa Club	31	108	Dimasa
19	Dharamnala L.P. School	91	423	Others
20	Rongnihang L.P. School	83	342	Karbi
21	Manja Tiniali L.P. School	88	434	Karbi
22	Manja Mission Home	141	659	Karbi
23	Manja Baptist English School	79	474	Karbi
24	Manja Co-operative Godown	72	350	Karbi
25	Manja Cultural Hall	148	876	Karbi
26	Manja Block Campus	184	1051	Karbi
27	Manja.Hindi L. P. School	140	803	Karbi
28	Oxford English School, Manja	417	2010	Dimasa
29	Dillaji L.P. School	150	754	Karbi

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30	Klirdap M.E. School, Diphu	84	440	Karbi
31	Borlongphar L. P. & M.E. School	212	1246	Others
32	Govt. Boys' & Girls' School, Diphu	281	1417	Karbi
33	Diphu Govt. College	343	1736	Karbi
34	Lognit High School	265	1300	Karbi
35	Chutianala L P School	213	1056	Karbi
36	DAV H.S. School, Diphu	167	846	Karbi
37	ITI Hostel, Diphu	44	182	Karbi
38	Chandra Sing Teran High School, Diphu	39	210	Karbi
39	Matikhola L.P. School, Howraghat	10	54	Dimasa
40	Dhaujukha L.P. School	14	58	Karbi
41	Dhansiri Bengali L.P. School	42	200	Dimasa
	Total		5027	25,603

Sub-Division Bokajan

42	Dillai High School	29	165	Karbi
43	14th Mile	93	594	Karbi
44	Rongplimplam Market	191	1159	Karbi
	Total	313	1,918	

Sub-Division - Hamren

45	Phangtengfrang High School	40	273	Karbi
46	Kheroni High School	125	688	Karbi
47	Jirikinding High School	459	2430	Karbi
48	Kherani Cinema Hall	67	181	Karbi
49	Kopili College	29	152	Karbi

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50	PWD Mechanical Workshop	48	270	Karbi
51	DPEP Office, Kheroni	33	188	Karbi
52	Jengkak High School	53	330	Karbi
53	DPEP Langthat	155	838	Karbi
	Total	1,009	5,350	
	Grand Total	6,349	32,871	

iii. Community wise figure of affected people in Karbi Anglong:

Out of the 32,871 displaced persons in Karbi Anglong, 5,600 are Dimasas, 25,602 are Karbis and 1669 are other communities.

The following villages have reportedly been identified as violence affected and where massive displacement took place: Hemari Terang Village, Walingdisa Village, Bagmari Village, Monsing Ingti gaon Village, Bura Terang gaon Village, Kangthar Kro gaon Village, Norik Teron gaon Village, Diliram Terang gaon Village, Longso Village, Bura Phangeto gaon Village, Loringlangso Village, Bijoy Rongpigaon Village, Mensing Hanse gaon near Doldoli Village, Dokiju Dimaja gaon near Borlangpher village, Longnit Village, Hojaipur Village, Doldoli Village, Dhansiri Village, Charchim Village, Waingdisagaon Village, Disagisamgaon village, Disagedeba Village, Doyangmukh Village, Tumprang Village, Barlangfar Village, Ikorani Village, Vellapara Village, Rongjamir Village, Deramukh Village, Kheroni Village, Jeramukh Village, Hariapur Village, Rangjumi Village, Dhelapara Village, Thapadao Village, Majgaon Village, Najrungdisa Village, Sikarighat Village, Uttorborbil Village, Rajapathar Village, Diphu Rongkhelan Village, Nagarjan Village, Sunpura Village, Barlangla Village, Langsoliet Village, Barpathar Village, Kalahendel Village, Tissomgaon Village, and Barjan Village.

6. Deplorable conditions of the IDPs in Karbi Anglong, NC Hills and Nagaon

“Such a carnage is bound to happen in a jungle”- stated Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi while justifying failure of the State to prevent further loss of lives.

The statement of the Chief Minister explains the apathy of the state government towards the displaced persons in Karbi Anglong, NC Hills and Hajoi of Nagaon.

It will not be an understatement to state that the provisions provided to the IDPs in Karbi Anglong, NC Hills and Hajoi is worse than what is being provided to the convicted criminals under different jail manuals of India.

a. Lack of proper accommodation

Representative of Asian Centre for Human Rights visited the camps of the IDPs in Dhipu and Dhansiri on 3 and 4 November 2005 including the Oxford English School which houses about 2000 people.

The displaced Karbis and Dimasas are housed in most unhygienic conditions like chickens in coop. The camps are extremely overcrowded, and most inmates have to sleep in the open. There is no adequate space to sleep for all the inmates. When it rains, there is no adequate space even for standing.

b. Lack of adequate food and utensils

Apart from rice, Dal and *chirra*, the government has also not provided adequate clothes, cash doles to buy vegetables or firewood. The lack of firewood and vegetable has been described as most problematic.

In Karbi Anglong district, there were 32,871 inmates and the State government as of 30 October 2005 had only provided only 8,504 plates.⁴⁰ It implies that four persons have to share a plate. This is highly inadequate. Even each convicted prisoner is given a plate and glass. But the victims of gross human rights violations are not provided any such assistance.

c. Inadequate medical facilities

The government has failed to take preventive measures against the spread of malaria. An estimated 1,170 families have not been provided mosquito nets as on 3 November 2005. There are 6,349 families but the government has provided mosquito nets to only 5,179 families.⁴¹ Many families have more than five members. The lack of adequate mosquito nets is a problem in all the camps.

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There are about 200 women in the relief camps who are in early stages of pregnancy. But there are no special medical facilities for these women. Due to the lack of facilities and transport, babies were delivered inside the camps and not at the hospital.

There have been nine deaths in the relief camps.

d. No baby food

Out of the 44,071 inmates, 17,971 or overwhelming 40.78% are listed as minors. A large number of them are babies and infants.⁴²

Yet, no baby food is being supplied in the camps. This remains the most scandalous.

e. Lack of appropriate clothing

The provision for clothes is abysmal. The state government has provided only 6,964 blankets for 44,016 internally displaced persons.⁴³

With winter approaching, there is a need for more blankets as well as warm clothes.

In the absence of dresses other than what they have wearing at the time of fleeing their homes, majority of the displaced persons have been facing the shortage of clothes. The state government has failed to provide adequate clothes to the majority of the inmates. For example, the government provided only 5,000 dhuti Punjabis for 13,503 adult males, 4,999 shawls for 12,452 adult women and 12,080 frocks, pants and shirts for 17,971 boys and girls.⁴⁴

Many of the internally displaced persons do not have clothes to change their dress.

f. Lack of education

The education system has collapsed in Karbi Anglong. All the schools and colleges remain closed although Durga Puja vacation ended on 17 October 2005. About 20,000 students have been affected as the schools are being used to house the internally displaced persons.

Out of 53 camps in Karbi Anglong, 32 are schools. In addition, about ten other schools remain closed.⁴⁵

The government has not taken any measure to vacate the schools by building temporary camps for the inmates. Apart from the displaced children, all students in Karbi Anglong district have been affected due to the closure of the schools.

7. Lessons Not Learnt by Assam

Assam has been plagued by unprecedented ethnic conflicts since 1990s after the signing of the Bodoland Accord. While the control over land, resources and establishment of homeland based on ethnicity are some of the root causes, the clear involvement of both State and non-State actors had exacerbated the conflicts leading to internal displacement.

Assam has failed to learn from the past ethnic conflicts in Karbi Anglong and its failure to rehabilitate the internally displaced persons in Bodoland areas.

a. Recent ethnic conflicts in Karbi Anglong

The two hill districts of North Cachar and Karbi Anglong in recent areas have witnessed a series of ethnic conflicts. Given the fact that ethnic conflicts flare up easily in the NC Hills and Karbi Anglong, the State government should have been able to deal with such conflicts.

A cursory scrutiny of the conflicts illustrates the need for quick interventions and early warning system.

i. Bihari-Adivasi conflict

On 18 July 2005, Adivasis and Hindi-speaking people at Ganapathar village under Bokulia outpost clashed in which five of the latter, including two women, were killed and 10 others seriously injured. Those who were killed were identified as Sudama Chauhan (60), Lalmoti Devi (45), Ratan Chauhan (35), Ramavati Devi (55) and Nandlal Chauhan (60). The injured have been admitted to Bakuliaghat Hospital and the condition of one of them -Pritam Kurmi -is reported to be critical. The Adivasis went on a rampage torching about 40 houses, most of them thatched, belonging to 13 Bihari families. Tension had been simmering between the two communities since 15 February 2005 over a land dispute in which about four Adivashis had been allegedly beaten up by some Hindi-speaking people. One Adivasi namely Dinesh Gaur (30) died in the incident. The police, however, failed to confirm the death.⁴⁶

Thousands of Biharis torched as many as 25 houses of Adivasis in Sampathar area of Bakulia under Howraghat police station in Karbi Anglong district on 13 August 2005.⁴⁷

ii. Kuki-Karbi conflict

The ethnic conflict between the Kukis and Karbis that started in 2003 continued till mid 2004. Both the United People's Democratic Solidarity (anti-

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talk faction) and Kuki Revolutionary Army were involved in the killings of people from both the communities.⁴⁸ The Karbi and Kuki civil society groups and community organisations questioned each other's role but reiterated the refrain about the State government's apathy to the conflict. The National Socialist Council of Nagalim (Isak-Muivah) reportedly mediated to bring peace between the warring KRA and the anti-talk faction of the UPDS.⁴⁹

On 18 January 2004, members of a Karbi armed opposition group swooped on the Basamili village in the Singhasan Hill area under Karbi Anglong district at around 9 a.m. and started firing indiscriminately killing Kimnoy Singson, Ngahneichisong Langthin and Konnen Singson on the spot and injuring K Singson, P Langthin and T Singson belonging to the Kuki community. They also set ablaze around 14 houses.⁵⁰ On 19 March 2004, 4 Kuki villagers including a woman were gunned down and 10 houses were torched at Hong Bong village in Karbi Anglong district.⁵¹

On 24 March 2004, suspected members of the Kuki armed opposition groups in Karbi Anglong district allegedly massacred twenty-eight Karbi villagers. The rebels raided the Woden Tisso village, dragged villagers out of their houses, lined them up and fired indiscriminately. Two other villages of Sarpo Terang and Sarke Englung were attacked and 22 Karbis were mowed down in these three villages. The rebels then attacked Jarigaon Terang village under Manja police outpost at around 12 noon killing six Karbis.⁵² More than 50 houses were burnt down.⁵³

On 27 March 2004, Kuki armed groups attacked the three Karbi villages of Arlung Fara, Bohakandoi and Ranganlam in Deopani area under Bokajan police station and burnt down about 50 houses. Patar Kachari, Chandra Bahadur, Raju William and Joyram Kathar were killed in the attacks. Three other persons- Lindok Ingty, Kem Lekthe and Manik Lekthe, were seriously injured.⁵⁴

The conflict between the Kukis and Karbis erupts on and off.

In the early morning of 4 July 2004, armed groups opened fire at the Kuki village Deigrun Teron in upper Deopani area under Bokajan police station in Karbi Anglong district killing Jiten Teron and injuring his father Borsing Teron, brother Rocky Teron and a neighbour Ranjit Ingtik.⁵⁵

On the night of 13 September 2005, eight Karbis were shot dead by suspected Kuki armed opposition groups at Kangburatisso village in the Thekerajan area under Diphu police station. The dead were four men, three women and a one-month-old baby.⁵⁶

iii. Dimasa-Khasi conflict

In March 2004, about 70 Khasi families living in the border areas of Cachar district were displaced following the murder of Thomas Tariang, headman of Khasi-dominated Boro Damcherra village near the Cachar-North Cachar border area on 11 March 2004. Tariang was also Secretary of the Village Defence Party.⁵⁷

In August 2004, Assam State Human Rights Commission (ASHRC) intervened into the alleged “systematic rape of tribal women and assault on tribal village chiefs, particularly of the Khasi-Jaintia tribe of Maniknagar Tea Estate, and the inaction of the district administration over the matter in spite of repeated complaints by the victims”. The Barak Valley Khasi-Jaintia Welfare Association, in a petition to the ASHRC, alleged that miscreants belonging to a particular community, had been “systematically” perpetrating rape on tribal women with a view to create panic among the Khasi-Jaintia populace at Maniknagar Tea Estate. The association also furnished a list of six victims.⁵⁸

In the last week of November 2004, about 200 Khasi families fled Cachar Hills in Assam to escape atrocities by armed groups.⁵⁹ Over 4,000 Khasi-Pnar people who were displaced from Block I and II areas in Karbi Anglong district of Assam due to alleged threats and harassment from the United People’s Democratic Solidarity (UPDS) and Karbi National Volunteers (KNV) returned in late 2003⁶⁰ only to come back to Meghalya in 2004.

b. Rehabilitation of internally displaced persons

Assam has also witnessed large-internal displacement since the signing of the Bodoland Accord in 1993.

In addition to displacement due to ethnic conflicts in Karbi Anglong areas, there are about 1.25 lakh internally displaced persons belonging to 23,742 families in 130 camps in Dhubri, Bongaigaon and Kokrajhar districts are yet to be rehabilitated. Belonging to Bodo, Adivasi and Rabha communities, they were displaced after the Bodo-Adivasi ethnic violence between 1996-1998 in Bodoland areas. The government is supposed to provide rice as ration for ten days, drinking water facilities, primary health and educational facilities.

The living conditions in the relief camps are unhygienic and IDPs starve for days due to irregular supply of rations. There are little school or health care facilities.⁶¹

The Assam government has not allotted any land to rehabilitate the IDPs. It has been providing a grant of Rs 10,000 per family for rehabilitation.⁶² About 9,200 Adivasi families were reportedly rehabilitated by 2003. On 8 February

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2004, Assam Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi stated that the State Government had already made arrangement for the rehabilitation of 18,000 Adivasi IDPs.⁶³ After a meeting between the armed opposition group the Adivasi Cobra Military of Assam and the Chief Secretary of Assam on 9 June 2004, the state government has reportedly agreed to release Rs. 10 crores for rehabilitation of 10,000 IDP families.⁶⁴ In October 2004, the government once again promised to release Rs 10 crore for their rehabilitation based on the proposal submitted by Health Minister Dr Bhumidhar Barman as the chairman of the Cabinet Sub-Committee on rehabilitation of IDPs.⁶⁵

By September 2005, there were nearly 2,000 riot victim families in Kokrajhar, Bongaigaon and Dhubri districts who were yet to receive Rs 10,000 rehabilitation grants.⁶⁶

About 4,500 Muslim families were evicted from Bengtol, Durgapur, Patabari, Anandabazar, Malivita, Jamunaguri, Bhawraguri, Amteka, Koilamoila and other villages of both Kokrajhar and Bongaigaon. On 5 March 2004, the government stated that it would rehabilitate them in Dhubri, Kokrajhar, Goalpara and Bongaigaon district.⁶⁷ However, these IDPs later on declined to accept a set of rehabilitation measures on the ground that the State government did not fulfilled its promise of providing genuine rehabilitation aid.⁶⁸

8. Applicable international law against the killings of innocent civilians

The international humanitarian law applicable to the armed conflicts situations is found in Article 3 common to the four Geneva Conventions of August 12, 1949-known as “Common Article 3.”

Common Article 3 provides international law and standards governing the conduct of parties in an internal armed conflict, including government forces and insurgents. Common Article 3 provides that:

(1) Persons taking no active part in the hostilities, including members of armed forces who have laid down their arms and those placed hors de combat by sickness, wounds, detention, or any other cause, shall in all circumstances be treated humanely, without any adverse distinction founded on race, color, religion or faith, sex, birth or wealth, or any other similar criteria.

To this end, the following acts are and shall remain prohibited at any time and in any place whatsoever with respect to the above-mentioned persons:

(a) violence to life and person, in particular murder of all kinds, mutilation, cruel treatment and torture; (b) taking of hostages; (c) outrages upon personal dignity, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment; (d) the passing of sentences and the carrying out of

executions without previous judgment pronounced by a regularly constituted court, affording all the judicial guarantees which are recognized as indispensable by civilized peoples.

(2) The wounded and sick shall be collected and cared for.

Persons protected by Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions include all non-combatants, even if they have provided food, shelter or other partisan support to one side or the other, and members of the armed forces of either side who are in custody, are wounded or are otherwise hors de combat. If under these circumstances, such persons are summarily executed or die as a result of torture, their deaths are tantamount to murder.

The violence to life of the Karbis and Dimasas, in particular murder of all kinds, mutilation, cruel treatment and torture are prohibited under international law. The governments have a responsibility to bring the perpetrators to justice.

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