

**A Statement to the 14th session/ Regional meetings of the Expert Mechanism
on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
13 July, 2021(Bangladesh)**

Item 3: Draft Study and Advice on the Rights of the Indigenous Child under the UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child

Item 8: Draft Report on “efforts to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: Indigenous Peoples and the Right to Self-Determination”

***By Toni Chiran
On behalf of Bangladesh Indigenous Youth Forum***

Respected chair,

On behalf of Bangladesh Indigenous Youth Forum, I, **Toni Chiran**, would like to thank you for this opportunity to highlight on the situation of enjoyment the right to self-determination adopted by UN General Assembly of the UN Declaration in 2007 and situation of Indigenous children in Bangladesh.

Most significantly fundamental barrier that Indigenous peoples in Bangladesh face to enjoy the right to self-determination is the lack of legal recognition of the rights in national constitution as well as that different ‘state-apparatus’ are paranoid about the struggle of these people for their indigenous identity.

Indigenous people in Bangladesh face violence, discrimination and subjugation perpetrated by different state agencies, corporation and other influential actor. Indigenous peoples often face eviction from their ancestral land in the name of developments, tourism, economic zone, eco-park and reserve forest. Their lands are often taken away without their consent. The land grabbing scenario of the Indigenous people’s in Bangladesh is miserably depressing.

Some incidents for example, Indigenous peoples (Garo, Koch, Barman) of Madhupur, Tangail district in plain are in fear of eviction following a gazette notification issued by the government declaring 9,145 acres of Indigenous land and territories as reserve forest and so called eco-tourism project without taking any free, prior, and informed consent from Indigenous peoples.

Very recently, Tripura community are threatened by a multinational company to be evicted from their ancestral land in Shitakunda, Chittagong. Mro peoples land are grabbed by a multinational group for five star hotel construction in Bandarban, CHT. Khasi and Rakhine peoples are in threat of eviction from their ancestral land in the name of tea garden extension and special economic zone.

So, the situations are much more vulnerable. In most cases, Indigenous women, adolescent girl are targeted, raped, sexually harassed, killed for any kind of incident and conflict happens in Bangladesh. We protest against these gross human rights violations and demand justice. To dispense justice to all these rights violation is almost non-existent in Bangladesh due to lack of respect for indigenous people, their laws and practices.

The expropriation of Indigenous Peoples land must end and state must adopt necessary actions to access to justice and recognize Indigenous Peoples’ traditional law and governance systems. These conditions are very much important to create the environment for the Indigenous People in full enjoyment of their rights to self-determination.

Besides, Bangladesh is a signatory of the United Nations Convention on the rights of the Child (UNCRC) direct states to take measures so that any indigenous child “shall not be denied to enjoy their own culture, to practice own religion, to use own language. Indigenous children in Bangladesh are doubly discriminated from their rights. The right to education in respective mother tongue for indigenous children not ensured for all yet by the government of Bangladesh. Bangladesh Children’s Act-2013 does not mention Indigenous Children, who especially vulnerable in respect of education, health care, forced labor, physical and sexual violence, abduction and trafficking. Many Indigenous children have died of measles in CHT due to lack of treatment, vaccination in time.

In this context, we recommend the EMRIP mandate

- As part of the mandate of EMRIP, we urge to continue this kinds of dialogue and conversation on self-determination, child rights and recognize these rights.
- We urge the EMRIP mandate in collaboration with UN bodies and international agencies to protect and implement the UNDRIP.
- To conduct country visits to assess the actual ground situations and provide recommendations to the member states.
- To guarantee the full implementation of the CHT accords and create separate land commission for plain land indigenous peoples.
- Recommend a framework and mechanisms to guarantee all these rights..

Thank You

Contact:

Toni Chiran

On behalf of Bangladesh Indigenous Youth Forum

E-mail: tonichiran12@gmail.com