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**Bangladesh: Closure of Kalpana Chakma investigation is the final nail in the coffin for justice**

Amnesty International is dismayed by the Bangladeshi authorities' failure to ensure justice for Kalpana Chakma's family and to hold to account those suspected of criminal responsibility for her enforced disappearance. Kalpana Chakma, a prominent Indigenous rights activist, was abducted from her home in Rangamati, Chittagong, on 12 June 1996 and has not been seen since.

According to [media reports emerging this week](#), Bangladeshi police on 27 September 2016 asked a court in Rangamati to close the case, citing a lack of evidence. This failure to shed light on what happened to Kalpana is deeply disappointing. Under international law, the Bangladeshi authorities have a duty to hold anyone suspected of criminal responsibility for human rights violations to account in fair trials. This should be before ordinary civilian courts and without recourse to the death penalty. They must also provide victims and their family members with truth and reparation. By closing this investigation, the authorities have failed on both counts.

The investigation into Kalpana's abduction has, according to Bangladeshi civil society groups, been marked by a strategy of stalling tactics and misinformation, in what they believe is an attempt to protect members of the military accused of crimes under international law and human rights violations<sup>1</sup>. Two of Kalpana's brothers were also taken from their home with Kalpana, but managed to escape; they named three individuals – an army officer and two members of a local paramilitary group - as responsible in the report they filed to police at the time. However, multiple police investigations as well as a government-appointed commission of inquiry have failed to identify perpetrators, let alone initiate any prosecutions.

Kalpana's disappearance came against a [backdrop of conflict and tension](#) between the Indigenous Peoples of Bangladesh's Chittagong Hill Tracts and the government. Her abduction, and the subsequent failure to shine light on it, has become a powerful

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<sup>1</sup> For further detail on the failed investigations see:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2014/06/kalpana-chakma-information-disinformation-non-information/>

symbol for the continued violations against Indigenous peoples in the region. This inaction also demonstrates the failure to fully implement a Peace Accord signed in 1997, including the restoration of seized land to Indigenous peoples. In September 2016, Amnesty International also highlighted ongoing violence against women and girls in the region in a [submission to the UN](#).

Amnesty International urges the Bangladeshi authorities to ensure that the investigation into Kalpana Chakma's disappearance is continued, and that those suspected of criminal responsibility are held to account.