

**UA 354/94****Fear for safety****26 September 1994****INDIA           Chakmas and Hajongs in Arunachal Pradesh**

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Unless the state government of Arunachal Pradesh take immediate preventive action, there are fears that members of the Chakma and Hajong communities in that North-east Indian state face imminent attack from groups of civilians.

The communities themselves anticipate being attacked in the coming days, especially by members of the All Arunachal Pradesh Students Union (AAPSU) who have ordered all foreigners in the state to leave by 30 September. The AAPSU have not ruled out violence, and the Chakma and Hajong communities, who are long-term settlers in Arunachal Pradesh (see below), fear that the state government will not act effectively to protect them.

Faced with threats from groups of young men, some 2,000 Chakmas, mostly women and children, living in the Papumpare district of the state, fled to neighbouring Assam on 21 August but were refused permission to stay there. They were forced to return across the state border to Arunachal Pradesh and the Assamese state government on 12 September issued "shoot at sight" orders in Tinsukia district, Assam, against any non-nationals entering the state, mainly Chakmas.

The Congress-led State Government of Arunachal Pradesh, headed by Chief Minister Gegong Apang, reportedly supports the AAPSU demand for foreigners to leave, and the Arunachal Pradesh State Assembly on 10 September resolved to drive out all foreign settlers in the state. The central government in Delhi has not backed the demand that the Chakmas and Hajongs be expelled from the state but have not taken any effective steps to offer protection to the settlers now under threat in the state. Bangladesh (formerly East Pakistan) from where the Chakmas and Hajongs originate, has stated that the Chakmas and Hajongs will not be permitted to return. There are an estimated 60,000 Chakmas and Hajongs in Arunachal Pradesh state.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Thousands of Buddhist Chakmas and Hindu Hajongs settled between 1964 and 1971 in what was then the North East Frontier Agency province (NEFA). They came from the then East Pakistan, now Bangladesh, a Muslim majority state. The Chakmas were at that time displaced by the Kaptai dam, a hydroelectric project in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. The Hajongs originate from the Mymensingh district in the former East Pakistan. Many Chakmas and Hajongs say they came to India because they feared persecution on religious grounds in the then East Pakistan. Originally welcomed in the Indian state, facilities originally granted to them were gradually withdrawn after NEFA was abolished and the state of Arunachal Pradesh was created in 1972. Their presence in the state has grown, and fears have been expressed by the local population that the settlers will outnumber them in certain areas. Since 1979 a series of attacks have been reported on the Chakmas or their property by the local population, leaving villagers homeless. The Chakmas claim that the state government repeatedly failed to react to their complaints, to compensate the victims or bring the perpetrators to justice, thus enhancing their sense of insecurity.

Senior officials of India's Home Ministry in Delhi have stated in recent years that the Chakmas and Hajongs in Arunachal Pradesh are eligible for Indian citizenship, although no steps are known to have been taken to that effect,

the Minister of State for Home Affairs in July stating that the matter of citizenship was "under consideration" by the central government. Nor has the Indian Government taken a clear position on the latest developments involving the AAPSU.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/faxes and airmail letters either in English or in your own language:**

**TO THE ARUNACHAL PRADESH GOVERNMENT**

- expressing concern for the safety of Chakmas and Hajongs in Arunachal Pradesh because of the threats from the AAPSU that these people, who are long-term settlers, should leave the state by 30 September;
- urging the government to take every step to ensure their safety and offer them effective protection as international human rights standards require;

**TO THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT**

- expressing concern for the safety of the Chakmas and Hajongs in Arunachal Pradesh because of the threats from the AAPSU that these people, who are long-term settlers, should leave the state by 30 September
- urging the government to take every step to ensure their safety and offer them effective protection from possible violent attacks as international human rights standards require;
- urging the government to ensure that the human rights of the settlers are properly reflected in any agreement relating to the problems surrounding the settlement of the Chakmas and Hajongs in Arunachal Pradesh.

**APPEALS TO**

**Arunachal Pradesh government**

Mr Gegong Apang  
 Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh  
 Office of the Chief Minister  
 Hanagar  
 Arunachal Pradesh  
 India

**Faxes: + 91 37 81 2446**

**Telegrams: Chief Minister Apang, Hanagar, Arunachal Pradesh, India**

**Salutation: Dear Chief Minister**

**Central government**

Prime Minister  
 Mr P V Narasimha Rao  
 Office of the Prime Minister  
 South Block, Gate No. 6  
 New Delhi 110 011  
 India

**Faxes: +91 301 9817**

**Telegrams: Prime Minister Rao, New Delhi, India**

**Salutation: Dear Prime Minister**

**COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:**

Mr S.B. Chavan  
 Minister for Home Affairs

Office of the Home Minister  
North Block  
New Delhi 110 001  
India

Mr Dinesh Singh  
Minister of External Affairs  
Office of the Minister of External Affairs  
South Block  
New Delhi 110 001  
India

and to diplomatic representatives of India accredited to your country

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat,  
or your section office, if sending appeals after 7 November 1994.