

*Amnesty International USA*  
**16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence:**  
**Let's Challenge Militarism and End Violence Against Women**  
(25 November – 10 December 2013)

**Bangladesh:**  
**Justice for Kalpana Chakma!**

Kalpana Chakma was the organizing secretary of the Hill Women's Federation, an organization that campaigns for the [rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh. At 23 years old, she was abducted from her home in Lallyagona village, Bagaichari, Rangamati district, on [June 12, 1996](#).

**Kalpana Chakma has never been found.**



(Kalpana Chakma. Copyright © Amnesty International)

It has been suggested that Kalpana Chakma's abduction was linked to her support of a candidate representing the interests of indigenous people in the parliamentary elections that took place in Bangladesh on June 12, 1996.

Her abductors were a group of plain-clothed security personnel believed to have been from the nearby Ugalchhari army camp. Kalpana Chakma and two of her brothers, Kalindi Kumar Chakma and Lal Bihari Chakma, were forcibly taken from their home, blindfolded and with their hands tied. The brothers managed to escape despite being shot at by security personnel. They identified the kidnappers of their sister but they were not permitted by the Officer in Charge of Bagaichhari Police Station to write the names of the three accused kidnappers' in their case file. The case was filed without mentioning the names of the accused, and they were omitted from the investigation.

In 2010, the Investigation Officers of Bagaichhari police station and a government-appointed commission of inquiry formed by the Home Ministry submitted a report of the investigation and stated that no specific witness or evidence was found against anyone related with the abduction of Kalpana Chakma. Kalindi Kumar Chakma, formally expressed his discontent with the findings submitted by the Bagaichhari Police Station Final Report. The Court arranged a hearing and ordered the police station to further investigate the case. A new Final Report was submitted after two years of investigation on September 26, 2012.

In January 2013, Kalindi Kumar Chakma once again submitted a Court Order expressing his discontent with the latest findings and failure to investigate the accused suspects during the original investigation. As a result, the court rejected the Final Report and instructed the Police Superintendent of Rangmati Hill District to further conduct an investigation into the case and stated that every effort should be given to 'rescuing the victim Kalpana Chakma.' He also said that

statements from witnesses should be recorded under Section 161 of the Criminal Penal Code, and that the three accused kidnappers should be investigated.

A new investigation report was supposed to be submitted on March 20, 2013, and then in May after delays by the Police Superintendent. In a letter to the Chief Judicial Magistrate in April 2013, the Police Superintendent stated that the 2012 Final Report was already approved by her and that she agreed with the findings. She also stated that she is busy with miscellaneous administrative work including 'controlling the law' and it is difficult for her to investigate the case uninterruptedly. She asked that the responsibility of the investigation be re-assigned to the Senior Police Officer of the Criminal Investigations Department or the Assistant Police Superintendent.

**To date there has still been no investigation report submitted by the Police Superintendent.**

Kalpana Chakma's disappearance has been a high-profile case in Bangladesh, and has become symbolic of the violence and repression faced by Pahari Indigenous People. Each year, Pahari women's rights activists meet on the date of her disappearance to commemorate her work and call for an independent inquiry. Although her disappearance took place over 15 years ago, the court order at the beginning of 2013 for an investigation into her case means it is now a crucial time to put pressure on the authorities to ensure that the investigation is carried out and the perpetrators are brought to justice.

### *Chittagong Hill Tracts*

More than 15 years after an agreement guaranteeing the rights of Pahari-Indigenous Peoples to their traditional lands in Bangladesh's [Chittagong Hill Tracts](#), Pahari continue to wait for their lands to be restored to them. The government of [Bangladesh](#) has remained ineffectual throughout, failing to protect the Pahari's right to security, their rights to traditional lands, livelihood, and to effective participation in decisions that affect them.

**Take Action Now!**

### **Write a letter to the Home Minister of Bangladesh:**

Call for the Rangmati District police to conduct a thorough and independent re-investigation of Kalpana Chakma's case, which includes the interrogation of the three main suspects.

*Minister of Home Affairs*

Muhiuddin Khan Alamgir

Ministry of Home Affairs

H-16, R-25, B-A, Banani

Dhaka-1213, Bangladesh

*Email:* mkalamgir@yahoo.com, [minister@mha.gov.bd](mailto:minister@mha.gov.bd)

## **SAMPLE LETTER**

Dear Home Minister,

It has been seventeen years since the disappearance of Pahari activist, Kalpana Chakma, from the Chittagong Hill Tracts. In 1996, at 23 years old, she was abducted from her home in Lallyagona village, Baghaichari, Rangamati district. Kalpana Chakma has never been found.

In January 2013, the court rejected the latest 'Final Report' into the investigation of Kalpana Chakma's disappearance. Subsequently, the Police Superintendent of Rangmati Hill District was instructed by the Court to further conduct an investigation into Kalpana Chakma's case and stated that every effort should be given to 'rescuing the victim Kalpana Chakma.'

A new investigation report was first supposed to be submitted on March 20, 2013, and then in May after administrative delays. The Police Superintendent has since stated that it is difficult for her to investigate the case 'uninterruptedly.' To date, a new investigation report following the instructions of the Court has not yet been submitted.

I urge you to:

- Provide the Rangmati District police the resources needed to carry out the re-investigation of Kalpana Chakma's disappearance as mandated by the court order.
- Provide protection to investigators and witnesses in accordance with their wishes so there is no risk of reprisal for people giving evidence.
- Ensure that a thorough and independent re-investigation of Kalpana Chakma's case is conducted, which includes the interrogation of the three main suspects, and that any perpetrators are brought to justice

Yours Sincerely,

## **Tweet in solidarity and to demand government action!**

In addition to letter writing, tweet your support. Here are some sample tweets:

- #Bangladesh home minister Muhiuddin Khan Alamgir police ensure an independent investigation of Kalpana Chakma's case #16days [@AmnestyWomenRts](#)
- 17 years is enough! #Bangladesh a real investigation is needed into the abduction of Kalpana #16days #justiceforkalpana [@AmnestyWomenRts](#)

**Questions?** Please email us at [whr@aiusa.org](mailto:whr@aiusa.org)!

Published by **Amnesty International USA's Women's Human Rights Coordination Group**

**Find us on Facebook:** [Amnesty International USA Women's Human Rights Network](#)

**Follow us on Twitter:** <https://twitter.com/#!/AmnestyWomenRts>

