



# ACTION SHEET

**September 2017**

## CASE STUDY

### KALPANA CHAKMA



© Ittukgula Chakma

#### ABDUCTED FROM HER HOME WHILE CAMPAIGNING FOR THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN BANGLADESH

Kalpana Chakma was the organising secretary of the Hill Women's Federation, an organisation which campaigns for the rights of indigenous peoples in the Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh.

The indigenous Pahari had their land taken away, but over 20 years ago an agreement was signed that guaranteed the rights of indigenous peoples and their rights to their traditional lands in Bangladesh's Chittagong Hill Tracts. However, they are still waiting for their lands to be restored and they continue to lose land as a result of government supported land grabbing.

Kalpana Chakma campaigned for land rights. On the 12th of June 1996, Kalpana, then

aged 23, and her two brothers were abducted from their home in Lallyagona village. Her two brothers managed to escape and identify the kidnappers, but were then not allowed to write down the names of the soldiers seen taking her in the police files.

In 2010, an investigation report stated that no specific witness or evidence was found against anyone related to the abduction of Kalpana Chakma. Her brother Kalindi formally expressed his discontent with this, and, as a result, the court instructed the police to further investigate Kalpana's case, and another report was submitted in 2012.

In January 2013, Kalindi once again expressed his discontent with the findings and the failure to investigate the three accused suspects. This led to the court rejecting the 2012 report and instructing the police to investigate the case again. In April 2013 the Police Superintendent stated that she was too busy with miscellaneous administrative work, to further investigate the case.

There have now been three investigations by 39 investigating officers, but the witnesses to her disappearance and the three soldiers seen taking her away have not been interviewed.

Kalpana's case is important because organised land grabbing continues and women suffer most from the associated violence. In June this year a mob of 1,000 settlers burnt the homes of 300 indigenous families. Attacks of this type are frequent.



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On the 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary of her abduction this year eight women from the Hill Women's Federation were beaten and arrested for protesting the lack of justice.

## **ARBITRARY DETENTION**

Amnesty International considers Kalpana Chakma a victim of arbitrary arrest. Arbitrary arrest means the detention of an individual when there is no likelihood or evidence they committed a crime.

## **SOLIDARITY ACTION**

Send a letter to Kalpana Chakma's brother Kalicharan Chakma to let him know that you support him in bringing justice to his sister's case.

Language: English or Bangla

Suggested message: I am writing to you from England. We have heard about your sister's disappearance and you and your family are in our thoughts. We hope you are safe and that the government takes your sister's case seriously, bringing justice to those who took her away.

We will be campaigning for you and we will continue to watch out for any developments in your case. We wish you all the best.

## **APPEAL ACTION**

You can write to the Home Minister in Bangladesh, asking him to 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

## **SEND YOUR ACTION LETTERS AND CARDS TO US AND WE WILL FORWARD THEM ON:**

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Don't forget to include your name and the name of your school with your cards and letters (but not on the cards themselves).