

**Mandates of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples; the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association; the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons and the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls**

Ref.: AL OTH 132/2025  
(Please use this reference in your reply)

20 November 2025

Dear Mr. Lacroix,

We have the honour to address you in our capacities as Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples; Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association; Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons and Working Group on discrimination against women and girls, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 60/4 , 59/4, 59/12 and 59/14.

We are independent human rights experts appointed and mandated by the United Nations Human Rights Council to report and advise on human rights issues from a thematic or country-specific perspective. We are part of the special procedures system of the United Nations, which has 59 thematic and country mandates on a broad range of human rights issues. We are sending this letter under the communications procedure of the Special Procedures of the United Nations Human Rights Council to seek clarification on information we have received. Special Procedures mechanisms can intervene directly with Governments and other stakeholders (including companies) on allegations of abuses of human rights that come within their mandates by means of letters, which include urgent appeals, allegation letters, and other communications. The intervention may relate to a human rights violation that has already occurred, is ongoing, or which has a high risk of occurring. The process involves sending a letter to the concerned actors identifying the facts of the allegation, applicable international human rights norms and standards, the concerns and questions of the mandate-holder(s), and a request for follow-up action. Communications may deal with individual cases, general patterns and trends of human rights violations, cases affecting a particular group or community, or the content of draft or existing legislation, policy or practice considered not to be fully compatible with international human rights standards.

In this context, we wish to bring to the attention of your Department of Peace Operations information concerning **the recurrent involvement of military officials from Bangladesh in alleged human rights violations against Indigenous Peoples in the country.**

Despite multiple letters having been sent to the Government of Bangladesh expressing concerns about these issues, we remain deeply worried about the volume and gravity of allegations implicating its military in serious human rights violations. These include extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detention, torture, sexual violence, forced evictions for so-called development projects, and attacks against human rights defenders. These violations are reported to be longstanding and systemic, particularly in the Chittagong Hill Tracts and other regions inhabited by Indigenous Peoples such

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as the Bawm, Chakma, and Mro. Reports indicate that state security forces, including the army, have been repeatedly implicated in these violations, which often occur in the context of militarization and resource exploitation. These actions have resulted in the displacement of communities and the erosion of Indigenous Peoples' rights to their traditional lands, territories, and resources.

We have raised these issues repeatedly before the Government of Bangladesh. Several of our communications remain unanswered, while others have received only limited responses from the Government.<sup>1</sup>

We note that Bangladesh is among the top troop-contributing countries to United Nations peacekeeping operations, with over 5,000 personnel currently deployed. While we acknowledge the important contributions of Bangladeshi peacekeepers, we respectfully recall that, according to UN policy, the human rights record of troop- and police-contributing countries is a key consideration in decisions regarding the selection and deployment of personnel. This includes assessments of conduct and discipline, as well as past performance in missions.

We are concerned that the deployment of individuals who may have been involved in serious human rights violations poses significant risks – not only to the safety and well-being of affected populations in host countries, but also to the credibility and integrity of United Nations peace operations. The presence of such individuals may undermine the trust from local populations, compromise mission effectiveness, and expose the United Nations to reputational harm.

We understand that, since 2015, your office has named the nationality of personnel implicated in reported cases of sexual exploitation and abuse in UN field missions. We also note that the UN database currently includes four substantiated cases of sexual exploitation and abuse, including rape, sexual assault, sexual exploitation/transactional sex, and an exploitative relationship perpetrated by UN police and military personnel from Bangladesh against adults and children.

The purpose of this letter is to respectfully enquire how the assessment of a Member State's historical performance record on human rights is carried out, including whether the alleged human rights violations committed by members of the Bangladeshi military against Indigenous Peoples, including gender-based violence, are taken into account during the process for the selection and deployment of peacekeepers from Bangladesh. We would appreciate further clarification on how these criteria are applied in practice, particularly in relation to allegations of serious human rights violations by military personnel prior to deployment. We would wish to obtain more information on how the standards of United Nations Human Rights Human Rights Screening Policy are being applied to personnel nominated by Bangladesh, including in relation to Indigenous Peoples', women's and girls' rights, and crimes related to sexual exploitation and abuse.

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<sup>1</sup> See communications [BGD 8/2023](#), [BGD 3/2022](#), [BGD 8/2020](#), [OTH 84/2020](#), [BGD 2/2018](#), [BGD 4/2014](#), [BGD 12/2013](#), as well as their responses, available at <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/>. See also: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/country-reports/ohchr-fact-finding-report-human-rights-violations-and-abuses-related>

I would be grateful for any information your Department may be able to provide in this regard.

This communication and any response received from your Excellency's Government will be made public via the communications reporting [website](#) within 60 days. They will also subsequently be made available in the usual report to be presented to the Human Rights Council.

Please note that we will send a copy of this letter to the Permanent Mission of Bangladesh in Geneva, for its information.

Please accept, Dear Mr. Lacroix, the assurances of our highest consideration.

Albert K. Barume  
Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples

Gina Romero  
Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association

Paula Gaviria  
Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons

Claudia Flores  
Chair-Rapporteur of the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls

## **Annex**

### **The United Nations' human rights responsibilities**

This annex sets out the internal regulatory framework applicable to all United Nations entities and agencies, who are required to uphold, protect, promote, and respect international human rights law in the discharge of their functions. This annex does not contain the international human rights standards and obligations of United Nations' Member States contributing with troops for United Nations Peace Operations.

The United Nations is founded upon the principles enshrined in the Charter, which affirm that one of its purposes is to promote and encourage respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction of any kind. Articles 55 and 56 of the Charter further commit the United Nations and its Members to take joint and separate action to achieve universal respect for human rights.

In this context, the Organization has adopted policies to ensure the integration of human rights across its activities. The Policy on Human Rights in United Nations Peace Operations and Political Missions mandates that human rights considerations be embedded in planning, implementation and reporting.

In accordance with the Policy on Human Rights Screening of United Nations Personnel, the Organization affirms its commitment to ensuring that only individuals who meet the highest standards of integrity and respect for international human rights and humanitarian law serve within the United Nations system. This policy establishes procedures requiring Member States to certify that nominees have not committed, nor are alleged to have committed, criminal offences or violations of international human rights or humanitarian law. It further requires individuals seeking to serve with the United Nations to provide self-attestations confirming their compliance with these standards. The Secretariat will maintain an information exchange mechanism to facilitate the collection and assessment of relevant data on candidates' prior human rights conduct.

In addition, the Secretary-General has issued a series of bulletins that further articulate these responsibilities. The bulletin on the status, basic rights and duties of United Nations staff members (ST/SGB/2016/9) incorporates the Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service, which require staff to respect the dignity and rights of all persons. Additional bulletins, including those on special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (ST/SGB/2003/13) and on observance by United Nations forces of international humanitarian law (ST/SGB/1999/13), underscore the Organization's commitment to safeguarding human rights in all operational contexts.

In accordance with the Staff Regulations and Rules (ST/SGB/2024/1), all staff members are required to uphold the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity. These standards encompass respect for international human rights norms and principles. Regulation 1.3 reinforces this obligation by prohibiting discrimination and affirming equality and dignity in all aspects of the Organization's work. Complementary guidance is provided in the Human Rights Handbook for United Nations Staff, which sets out practical measures for promoting and protecting human rights in daily work.

These obligations apply to all United Nations entities, agencies, funds and programmes. In fulfilling these responsibilities, personnel must ensure that their actions and decisions respect international human rights standards, take proactive measures to prevent violations, and promote human rights principles in policies, programmes and advocacy efforts.