



**Human Rights Council
Forum on Minority Issues
5th Session (27th -28th
Nov.2012)**

Agenda: 5

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Madam Chairperson,

Our organisation strongly welcomes the commemoration of the twentieth anniversary on the Rights of Persons Belonging, to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities. This anniversary offers an important opportunity to look at how the 'Declaration has served the principle of advancing the rights of persons ,belonging to minorities" and to evaluate the status of its implementation. . .

While much has been affirmed by the practical use of the Declaration,...still significant challenges remain in its implementation We see this at a practical level when we assess the ongoing realities our communities, and in particular the continuing clashes that have occurred between against the religious minorities in Bangladesh. For many years now the Hindu, Christian, and Buddhist minorities have experienced various forms of discrimination

where the Law enforcing agencies of Bangladesh have been ineffective:in upholding law and order and in many instances they have failed to 'assist religious minorities. The attitude of these law enforcing agencies. have promoted a greater atmosphere of impunity for acts of violence against minorities where they are often at the bottom of the social hierarchy, therefore, have the least political recourse.

In Bangladesh Buddhist minorities are predominantly found among the' indigenous populations of the Bangladesh. As an ancient Pala dynasty inhabiting the land long before Muslims, Buddhists have sought to live peacefully with all its neighbours. In the past few years there have been several attacks and many Buddhist temples have been vandalized and destroyed in the region. Furthermore, incidents on human rights violations including torture, killings, harassment of Buddhist monks, sexual violence against women and children and the dispossession of indigenous peoples' lands by Bengali settlers and military personnel were regularly reported both in the CHT.

Since September 29 2012 Iasi, Muslim religious fanatics, have attacked the Buddhist and Hindu minorities at Rarnu, Ukhia, Patiya and Teknaf under Chittagong division of (southeast) Bangladesh.

At least 24 temples have been burnt down; dozens of Buddhist villages have been attacked, displacing thousands of Buddhists minorities.

Despite the widespread attacks on the minorities, the security forces of Bangladesh have just remained a mute witness and have failed to arrest any of the culprits.

This spate of attacks makes it the third major incident of communal violence this year. Earlier in February the attack on Hindu temple and households in Hathazari, Chittagong remained much under the radar. Major media of Bangladesh decided not to embarrass the so-called progressive secular government by publishing these stories of minority persecution. During the immediate aftermath, government leadership, in the face of utter failure to control the situation in a timely manner, found it convenient to blame the opposition political parties. Eight months have passed, but no real efforts have been made to investigate and punish the perpetrators in Hathazari.

Taking this into consideration we strongly urge the Minority Forum and all other International Bodies to intervene with the Government of Bangladesh for its failure to protect minority lives and worship sites and at the same time the Government must implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities in its true spirit to ensure that peace and justice prevails in the region.