Conspiracy, repression and political intimidation upon PCJSS members being meted out by local Awami League and administration of Bandarban and Rangamati districts

2 killed, 16 detained, 30 injured, false against 50 and more than 200 deserted

Since declaration of schedule for Union Parishad (UP) Election-2016, the local Awami League (AL) leadership of Bandarban and Rangamati hill districts in collaboration with the local administration, police and security forces have been hatching various forms of conspiracy against and meting out repression and political intimidation upon PCJSS members. Such mean activities on part of the local AL and administration have been escalated further during the post-election period. The PCJSS leadership is being projected to false cases, arbitrary arrests and intimidation centering any incident that takes place in recent days. The local AL leadership is seen coming up with open declaration stating depletion of PCJSS, killing PCJSS members and demolishing their properties through holding public meeting and press conference including other social medias. Since declaration of Schedule for UP Election:2016 in last March 2016 till this day, the repressive activities by the local AL against the members belonging to PCJSS and its associate organizations has left 2 killed, 16 detained, 30 injured, filed false case at least against 50 and left more than 200 from their areas. Some of incidents of the kind are given in the following manner:

1. Propagation against PCJSS alleging involvement with illegal weapons and extortion
The ruling party Awami League went on hatching conspiracy and upholding baseless pleas alleging that it had been due to ‘threats of terrorists’ the AL candidates were unable to submit their nomination papers in various UPs under Rangamati Hill district since declaration of the schedule for holding election in the UPs in the district. With a view to destabilizing the situation in CHT and directing the UP election towards different course, AL organized a so called anti-terrorist gathering in Rangamati town on plea of stopping extortion and terrorism and recovery of the illegal arms on 24 March 2016. Consequently, the UP Election in 49 UPs under Rangamati Hill district was declared to have been postponed with expiry of the deadline for submission of nomination papers on 27 April.

In deed many are in opinion that AL has forfeited its credibility due to anti-accord and anti-Jumma interest activities of local AL leadership and non-implementation of the Accord by the government. Sensing the matter, it was due to daring not to go for contest with ‘Boat’ — the Party Symbol, many of the Awami League leaders and workers were not interested in the election.

2. One PCJSS candidate for UP Chairmanship shot dead at Ruma:
Shanti Tripura (35), PCJSS member and an independent chairman candidate for Ghalangya Union Parishad of Ruma Upazila was abducted in the morning of 19 April 2016 from his house at Ramdupara and killed in the jungle adjacent to the Adika village. The perpetrators also set fire in his house. It was learnt that the incident was carried out with the support of AL considering Shanti Tripura to have been a strong contestant.
3. Five held and beaten up by army at Roangchari

The army surrounded Kenaijopara, a village under Noapatong Union of Roangchari upazila of Bandarban Hill district, and held and beaten up Thoaiching Maung Marma and Maung Bu Se Marma, the uncontested UP members, on 19 April 2016. Besides, they also held up five supporters of Thoaiching Maung Marma, intimidated them and pressurized them to file false case against Thoaiching Maung Marma. Afterwards, showing them as witnesses, a fabricated case was filed by the AL-supported chairman candidate against the PSJSS-supported chairman candidate.

4. Vote robbery by AL through fake ballots in the UP elections in Bandarban

During elections in the 25 UPs under the 3rd phase on 23 April 2016, the local AL resorted to wide-scale forgery by supplying hundreds of fake ballot papers to their workers and supporters who got the ballots inserted into the ballot box during casting of their votes. The AL-nominated UP chairman and member candidates were illegally declared to be winners through validating the fake ballot papers by the administration, election commission and the officials deployed for election duty.

5. PCP members attacked and 4 beaten up 4 by the Awami League at Lama

The Chatra League terrorists, having been signaled by the AL, attacked upon the PCJSS and Pahari Chatra Parishad (PCP) workers including the polling agents of Chaching Maung Marma, an independent chairman candidate of Gajalia Union under Lama upazila in Bandarban district on 25 April 2016. At this, one PCJSS member and two PCP members sustained serious injuries.

6. One Juba Samiti member killed, another one arrested in Bandarban

On 31 May 2016, Subil Chakma, Information & Publicity Secretary of Kibuk Para branch of CHT Juba Samiti in Kualong Union of Bandarban Hill district was killed at the wee hours at night. It came to be known that the killing incident occurred with the AL support following hot exchanges with them during the election campaign before. With a mean objective to flow the killing incident to different direction and thereby to make a safe crossing over the election hurdle, upon hatching conspiracy in collaboration with the AL, a false case was filed against four members of Juba Samiti and one Maigya Marma amongst them was taken arrested.

7. Vote robbery and attack by AL & BGB at Choto Harina centre, left 19 injured

In collaboration with Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) of 25 Harina Zone, the supporters of Awami League-supported chairman candidate, Mamanur Rashid occupied Choto Harina polling center of Ward No.3 under Bhushanchara Union of Barkal upazila and cast wide-range of fake votes during election held at 6th phase on 4 June 2016. A group of 50-60 cadres from outside occupied Choto Harina Government Primary School polling center during casting votes in the morning and forcibly drove out the polling agents of Dilip Kumar Chakma, the acting chairman and also independent candidate of Bhushanchara Union with pineapple symbol and swooped upon the male & female voters of Jumma community standing in queues and all the polling agents of the counter-party candidates. The attack claimed at least 19 Jumma villagers injured. At this hour, all the ballot boxes from 6 booths were taken and gathered at the room of Presiding Officer at his directives. The attacking party cast fake votes for ‘boat symbol’ of AL candidate with direct assistance of the concerned Presiding Officer and Polling Officers for hours together.

8. Four youths arrested by the army at Bilaichari
The army of 13 Bengal from Dighalchari army zone held four workers of CHT Juba Samiti and PCP from Bilaichari sadar on 14 June 2016 during peaceful observation of road and waterways blockade program in protest of vote robbery at Choto Harina polling center of Ward No-3 under Bhushanchara Union by the AL and in demand for holding re-election in the said center. Later, though the police released three persons under mass pressure, arrested Suniti Moy Chakma, the PCP member in a fabricated case under the provision of the Prevention of Oppression Against Women and Children Act.

It is worthy to be mentioned that the local inhabitants caught red-handed one Ayna Chakma from Jibtali of Rangamati while being engaged in anti-social affairs with one Mohammed Shihab, a married Bengali settler running a shop at Bilaichari Bazaar. Following settlement of the incident, they handed over Ayna Chakma to her parents. While she was being escorted by her parents back home, as they reached at the Gaskabachara army camp, she took shelter in the army camp. The army, after learning about having relationship with a Bengali Muslim, became too interested in her and that they called up police and handed over Ayna to them and even Ayna was intentionally admitted to the hospital. Before handing Ayna Chakma over to police, the army personnel kept her signature in a plain paper. Later, with the help of police, Ayna Chakma filed a fabricated case against 7 persons charging them with sexual molestation to her. The next day, Shubha Mangal Chakma, chairman of Bilaichari Upazila, went to the police station and undertook an initiative to settle down the case and on an understanding, Ayna was handed over to her parents. Though it was categorically written in the understanding that reads: “The Petitioner has withdrawn the case No.01/03 Memo No. 1083(3) dated 29/05/2016” yet Suniti Moy Chakma was taken arrested showing as an accused of the said case on 14 June 2016.

9. False case filed against PCJSS leaders in Bandarban, 6 arrested

Mongpu Marma of village Jamchari Mukh under Rajvilla union of Bandarban sadar and also a member of ruling AL was kidnapped by some unknown person(s) on 13 June 2016 centering which the local AL, in collaboration with the police and military administration filed a fabricated case against the 38 members of PCJSS, PCP, Juba Samiti by names along with unknown 15 to 20 people en masse. In this connection, 6 persons including Uchaching Marma, President of PCJSS Bandarban Thana Committee were arrested. Of them, one was released after two days. Since the incident, the army-police contingents with the AL workers have been conducting regular searching operation in the areas of Rajvilla, Kuhalong, Noapatang and Bandarban sadar in the name of rescuing the hostage and taking arrest of the accused. This has led to creation of delicate situation in these areas and the people being victimized have become tired of. More than hundred of leaders and workers of PCJSS and its associate organisations have obliged to abandon their respective areas, in a bid to veer prosecution on falsehood cases and undue harassment.

It was learnt that on 14 June 2016, the following day of the incident, Kyaw Shwe Hla Marma, Chairman of Bandarban Hill district Council, called up Sama Prue Marma, wife of the hostage Mongpu Marma including some of their relatives to Bandarban sadar and Mongpu Marma’s wife was asked to sign the pre-arranged ‘Ejahar’ (petition) meant for filing up a case. Mongpu’s wife Sama Prue, however, could not agree to comply with when she came to learn the names that appeared in the list of accused such as, the name of one of her sons-in-law, CHT Regional Council's members namely, K S Mong Marma and Sadhuram Tripura, Rowangchari Upazila Chairman Kyawba Mong Marma, former UP Chairman Shambhu Kumar Tanchangya, President of PCJSS District Committee Ucho Mong Marma and the names of other known persons. The leaders of AL pressurizing Mongpu’s wife for putting signature, among others, were – Kyaw Ching Shoi Marma, Gachi Aung Marma and Hla
Ching Marma who got tempered at the refusal of Sama Prue and at certain state, were about to beat up her. Even they threatened Mongpu’s wife of involving in the abduction case for her disagreeing to sign the paper. As Sama Prue did not agree to put her sign, the AL leaders got Hla Mong Ching Marma, son-in-law of Mongpu Marma signed the paper under pressure as the petitioner in filing the abduction case with the police station. Also it came to knowledge that the incident of Mongpu Marma’s abduction lay in the causes of disputes over sharing power and conflict in between the District Awami League President Kyaw Shwe Hla Marma and Mongpu Marma. But the incident is being used as political weapon against the PCJSS members who are being politically harassed by way of filing falsehood case involving all the ranks and files of the PCJSS and its wing organizations including the innocent villagers at mass scale.

It is further mentioned worthy that centering the incident Kyaw Shwe Hla Marma held a meeting with the inhabitants of Jamchari village. The Karbari (village head) of the village pointed out that it was due to getting the accused involved in the case on falsehood basis, some kind of complicated situation already cropped up in the village for which they wanted to withdraw the case – opined the Karbari. The angered Kyaw Shwe Hla Marma scolded him in inexplicable language and threatened him of not sparing from getting entangled also.

10. Decision to deplete PCJSS members in the Bandarban AL meeting:

It was learnt that an emergency meeting of Bandarban District Awami League was held at the office of Bandarban Hill District Council's chairman on 3 July 2016 in which it was decided that the PCJSS leaders and workers would be depleted in the name of extortion of money, killing and kidnapping. This said decision has been post to Face Book status of AKM Jahangir, leader of Awami League Bandarban District Committee. The face book status also contains Kyaw Shwe Hla’s declaration that the leaders and workers of PCJSS and PCP would punish and none of them would be spared any more.

On the other hand, the Minister of State and MP Bir Bahadur Ushwe Ching, while talking to PCJSS leaders in the Ministry of CHT Affairs, openly threatened by saying: ‘K.S. Mong and PCJSS leaders would not be spared.’ Such irresponsible and reckless words uttered by Bir Bahadur while being positioned as the State Minister in the CHT Affairs Ministry can never invoke well being result.

Immediate Action:

The main objective of conspiracy, fascist repression and political intimidation being meted out by the local Awami League and administration against the members of PCJSS and its wing organizations is to flow the mass anguish and discontentment towards the ruling party for anti-accord and anti-Jumma interest activities of the local AL leaders and not implementing the CHT Accord by the ruling party to different direction. If the fascist moves on part of the government agencies continue in this way, the situation would bound to develop from bad to worse. For any undesirable situation that might appear as the outcome, the Awami League leadership and administration including the State Minister Bir Bahadur, Bandarban Hill District Chairman and District Awami League President Kyaw Shwe Hla, shall remain responsible, which can never be imperative. Hence, stop this model of conspiracy, fascist repression and political harassment against the members of PCJSS and its wing organizations with immediate effect and let the concocted and fabricated cases filed against them be withdrawn at the soonest. Let there be a joint move to rescue Mongpu Marma instead of making use of the kidnapping incident for political end.
In conclusion, PCJSS longs for kind interference of the Awami League central leadership in the critical situation that has been created in Bandarban by the District Awami League leadership including the State Minister Bir Bahadur Ushwe Sing.

This statement was published & circulated by Information and Publicity Department of PCJSS from its Central Office, Kalyanpur, Rangamati, on 7 July 2016.

Please find Bangla version of this statement attached here.