



Chin National Front
General Headquarters
CHINLAND

**A Speech Delivered by Cung Bik Ling, the Chin National Front, Chinland at the
18th Session of the U.N. Working Group on Indigenous Populations
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Mr. Chair, thank you for this opportunity to make a brief Statement.

In Burma, the situation of the Chin indigenous people, as well as other Indigenous peoples, is extremely precarious, and increasingly more so, under the present regime. It is therefore difficult to communicate to people outside of Burma the true circumstances to which the indigenous peoples are subjected.

Mr. Chair, as you know the Burmese military regime still retains its power within the country by force, and is considered one of the most brutal governments in the world. The United Nations General Assembly and Commission on Human Rights have condemned, in nine consecutive resolutions, the persecution of religious and indigenous minorities, as well as the political opposition. Burma has also been condemned for a wide range of human rights violation, including forced labor, exploitation, and sexual violence against indigenous peoples women.

Since the military took control of the state in 1988, it quadrupled its military strength in order to consolidate their power and to carry out the “Burmanization” of our people. The military junta has massively increased its military deployment in the land of my people, Chinland, creating an atmosphere for the systematic abuse of all kind of human rights. For example, Mr. Chair, on 26 June 2000, the field monitor of the Chin Human Rights Organization (CHRO) Mr. Zothang and two other villagers who were not even affiliated with the Organization, Pu Zadun and Mr. Siamhmingthang (of Bungkhua village, Thantlang township), were shot dead by the Burmese soldiers of the Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) number 266.

Through forced labour, the military government has caused tremendous economic hardship, and it is a means of maintaining the powerlessness of the Chin people. In one instance, the eldest daughter of one family was forced to quit middle school and take the place of her father, who became ill, in a labour camp. Not only was she unable to complete her education, she did not receive any wages for her labour.

Of course, these are specific examples of the many, many instances of human rights violations taking place in Burma every day. Since 1988, the military junta closed down all schools in Chinland which were not affiliated with the government. And although the government reported this month that students all over Burma are returning to classes, this is the first time in three years. The universities remain under severe restrictions. Moreover, they have only been opened for three out of the last twelve years. It is well

known that the government persecutes practitioners of all religious. Recently, however, Burmese soldiers were secretly selling confiscated Bibles back to Christians in the border town of Tamu.

The Burmese military regime is systematically eliminating the existence of the Chin, as well as other indigenous peoples in Burma. Therefore, we request that the United Nations and the international community help us put an end to the rampant inhuman acts committed by the Burmese military regime upon our people.

Thank you