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ZO-REUNIFICATION ORGANIZATION (ZORO)
GENERAL HEADQUARTERS : ZORAM
SOUTH & SOUTH EAST ASIA

Tenth Sessions of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (PFII) at **United Nations Headquarters, New York, May 16-27, 2011.**

Joint statement delivered by Raphael Thangmawia, on behalf of the ZO Indigenous people inhabiting South & South East Asia.

Item No.3 (c) & 4(a) Free, prior and informed consent and Implementation of the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous peoples.

Respected Chair,

On behalf of my Organisation and on my own behalf, I congratulate your election to the chair of this august Forum. Also I thank you for allowing me to present a statement to the tenth Session of this Forum.

In earlier Sessions of the PFII, I had the privilege of highlighting who the ZO Indigenous people are and how came their Fundamental Rights had been deprived of through the process of Colonisation of their ancestral land and territory by rulers of the then British India in the form of the successive invasions, concluded in their final invasion of their so called '**Chin-Lushai Expedition, 1888-90**, effecting the territorial tripartite divisions of ZO (Chin - Lushai) country and the people therein under three Administrative heads, namely under Assam, Bengal and Burma Provincial Administrative Divisions.

Wrongful territorial division of Zo Country with the people under three administrative units was acknowledged to be wrong by the Chin - Lushai Conference, 1892, Fort William, Calcutta, which was attended by heads of the Civil and military rulers of the British India Government " who had resolved to put the Zo country together again under one Administrative Head.

One hundred and nineteen years had passed, since the Chin - Lushai Conference was held, and for generation after generations, we are the people being trapped into a situation where the agony of being a people of same ancestry with common culture and same language but to three different nationalities namely Bangladeshis, Indians and Myanmarese has been a grim political reality till today.

The aim of my Organisation is : Restoration of the Fundamental Rights of ZO Indigenous people, which have been deprived of by way of tripartite divisions, and that should be restituted by way of Re-unification under one administrative

head, rectifying the past errors of territorial divisions, and thereafter to let the Zo people also avail the Fundamental freedom towards a peaceful process of Self-determination, following Atlantic Charter and UN Charter

Nevertheless, my Organisation holds no grudge against the present administration of Myanmar, India and Bangladesh for the invasion, subjugation and the territorial divisions of the ZO (Chin-Lushai) country. It has been ZORO's hope and prayer that the United Nations being World Body would initiate steps to rectify the past errors and injustices done to ZO people in the spirit and conforming to Chin-Lushai conference resolution (1892), and as well in accordance with the provisions of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous peoples (UNDRIP).

Notwithstanding, Respected Chair, less known and unexplored ZO country has been endowed by God with huge natural and mineral wealth that some parts of the land which falls within the North East region of the Indian state administration are expected to be rich in Oil wells and Natural gas reserve, as well as some parts of the land under Myanmarees Administration. Aware of the untapped Natural resources and potentials of the rivers for Hydro power Generation, State Administration of India has its attention focus on undertaking massive oil drilling operations and construction of Dams under Indian State owned Projects, as Kaptai Dam had been done in Chittagong Hill tracts while in Pakistan, now Bangladesh, resulted displacement of the ZO inhabitants; regardless of the consideration of the ZO indigenous peoples rights, as well as neglecting free, prior and informed consent, as enshrined under Art.32 of the UNDRIP.

My Organisation fear that accelerated the so call developmental projects of the States within the territories of the Indigenous peoples, inconsidering Art.19 of the UNDRIP, would be added to deplorable insult to their rights and economic interest.

With this end in view, my Organisation desires that this august Forum recommend a suggestion that the UN BODY should initiate a campaign and urge to all the States supporting the adoption of the UNDRIP to corespondingly adopt the UNDRIP in their respective National and regional legislative bodies while suspending the existing respective project works not in conform with the UNDRIP subject to ammendment or modification of their respective norms, which will surely be enhance towards implementation of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous peoples.

THANK YOU.