

UNITED NATIONS WORKING GROUPS ON INDIGENOUS POPULATIONS
20TH SESSIONS, 22ND – 26TH JULY, AT GENEVA.

ITEM 5

FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS OF ZO INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

By Mr.R .Thangmawia
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General Headquarters, ZO RAM.

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Speech on the **ITEM NO . 5**

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By Mr. R Thangmawia
Zo Reunification Organisation (ZORO)

Respected Chair,

I convey to you and respected persons of this august body, warm greetings from ZO people. I am thankful for this opportunity to represent the case of ZO peoples' long struggle for restoration of their Fundamental Rights. Historians and writers in their books recorded the Colonisation of India and Burma by the British and its colonial expansionism policy through the process of expeditions. ZO country, now fall under the administration of India, Burma and Bangladesh, too fell victims to these British armed expeditions.

Respected Chair, History and the expressed aspiration of ZO people bear witness indeed to the fact that :

The ZO Kingdom had been flourished in the ZO inhabited areas since time immemorial. British colonial rulers invaded the ZO country since, 1761 and closed their final invasion, by launching a heavy military campaign, called the "Chin-Lushai expedition, 1888-1890 from three corners, Assam, Bengal and Burma. After conquering the ZO country, the armed forces added parts of their captured areas to their respective administrative units.

However, the Historic Chin-Lushai conference held at Fort William Calcutta, on 29th January, 1892, resolved to put the ZO (Chin-Lushai) country together again under single administrative unit as soon as possible, but kept pending so long.

For obvious reasons, the British kept the ZO country separated applying Acts and Regulations, such as, Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation, 1873; Scheduled District Act, 1874; Assam Frontier Tract Regulation, 1880; Foreign Jurisdiction Act. 1890 and Chin Hills Regulation 1896, which were not operated in India and Burma. Lastly they kept the ZO country separated by promulgating Excluded Area Order on 3rd March, 1936 by King George VI as empowered by the Govt. of India Act. 1935, Sec.91 conforming the definition of the same Act. Sec. 311(1).

For all these reasons, the ZO Chiefs declared War, in World War II separately, "to oppose any invader against Allied Forces" In order to avail the benefits of Atlantic Charter, on 3rd April, 1942.

The political resolution adopted by 50 accredited ZO leaders, under the control of Assam Governor (British India) did put on record the expressed political aspiration of ZO people on the eve of Indian Independence, 14th August 1947. The same sentiment was articulated and enshrined in the Constitution of Burma, 1947.

All political parties formed by ZO people in the post World War II called for reunification of the divided ZO people and her country under single administrative unit. This sentiment was reflected in the memorandums submitted from time to time, to the political rulers of the country to which the ZO people arbitrarily acquired citizenship.

The Memorandum submitted to the Prime Minister of India by the so called Mizo National Front (MNF) party on the 30th October 1965 demanded restoration of ZO people's Fundamental Rights and Self-determination, which followed by armed struggle from 1st March, 1966 till 30th June, 1986, on which date, the armed struggle of MNF party had been came to an end.

Thereafter, the case of ZO people was re-defined and enunciated in the Champhai Declaration, adopted during the First World ZO Convention held between 19-21 May, 1988. The convention resolved the formation of the ZO RE-UNIFICATION ORGANISATION (ZORO) covering the entire ZO country (mentioned as Chin-Lashai country in the Historic Chin-Lushai conference) for its oppressional area.

Respected Chair, ZORO is Social, Cultural and Voluntary Organisation representing all groups of ZO ethnic origin. Firstly ZORO seeks to impress upon the World Community that the Fundamental Rights of ZO people have been deprive of due to tripartite division and subsequent intermittent alienation parts of ZO country till recent times, by means of military force and administrative force; and it claims to restore ZO people's Fundamental Rights, by way of Re-unification, rectifying the past errors of territorial divisions that had been done to them; through a peaceful process to let the ZO people enjoy their Fundamental Freedom and Self-determination.

WITH THESE FEW WORDS I CONCLUDED MY SPEECH

Respected Chair,

THANKING YOU

R.Thangmawia

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