

The United Nations Working Groups on Indigenous Populations Geneva, July 31St to 4th of August 2006 24th Session
Agenda Item 4 (c). Indigenous Peoples and Conflict Prevention& Resolution

Collective Statement by Jebra Ram Muchahary on behalf of ICITP-NEZ, ABPF and ABPGYF

We, on behalf of Indian Confederation of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples North East Zone, All Boro Peace Forum and All Boro Post Graduate Youth's Federation would like to make this collective statement on the serious issues of Indigenous Peoples and Conflict Prevention & Resolution.

Mr. Chairperson, distinguished government delegates, Indigenous brothers & sisters, ladies and gentlemen.

Gwjwntwng! we bring cordial greetings from our people for all of you.

We would like to draw the attention of this August forum to the grave situation due to prolonged armed conflicts between the Indigenous Peoples' revolutionary groups and the government forces in North East India.

Mr. Chairperson, the North Eastern region of India as a whole has been witnessing different arms struggles based on the various ideologies of different ethnic groups asserting their rights to self determination against the prolonged systematic subjugation, exploitation, suppression, oppression and domination under the political system of the Indian government.

Historically and ethnically, the North East region was never a part of Indian territory prior to the advent of the British who subsequently annexed the different kingdoms and areas of the North East India to their rule. It was yet the prerogative of the Indigenous Peoples of the region to be free from any external aggression and rule after the departure of the British from the region. On this historical background, the different ethnic armed revolutionary groups of the region are found to be in the armed conflict apparently to liberate themselves from the forced occupation of the Indian rule. The two decades old struggle of the National Democratic Front of Boroland (NDFB) is not exception to this resistance of the various ethnic armed revolutionary groups in the region.

Mr. Chairperson, we would like to draw your kind attention towards injustice and gross violation of human rights that have been perpetuated by the Indian government forces during these twenty years of Boro struggle for survival as a distinct people where more than 7000 innocent Boro People' Lives were lost, and to focus on the recent development of peace process between the National Democratic Front of Boroland and the government of India in a bid to resolve the Indo-Boro political conflict.

Mr. Chairperson, in order to realize the long cherished aspirations of the Boro People and to find an amicable solution to the prolonged resistance movement through the meaningful and peaceful dialogue, the National Democratic Front of Boroland has entered into the cease-fire truce with the government of India with effect from the 1St

June 2005 which we appreciate and support as it has brought about the conducive atmosphere to pave the way to a meaningful political solution.

In all seriousness, the peace loving organizations including Indian Confederation of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples(North East Zone), All Boro Peace Forum and All Boro Post Graduate Youths' Federation have been closely observing that the NDFB with a true spirit of the ongoing peace process to have a negotiated settlement of the Indo-Born political conflict is seen to be engaged in holding several consultative meetings with the civil society and various peoples' organizations in order to create a scope of better understanding and participation in the peace process.

However, it is a matter of serious concern that instead of engaging seriously in the peace process, the Government of India has been adopting a step motherly attitude and treatment to the peace process as no progress has been made in this direction till today, for which it is facing a near dead-lock situation. Further, the Government of India is seen to be engaged in the destructive activities to jeopardize the peace process by adopting repressive measures against the NDFB and other Indigenous revolutionary groups , thereby violating the spirit of the cease- fire agreement.

Mr. Chairperson, to cite an example of the violation of Ceasefire Ground Rules and Human Right abuses perpetuated by Indian forces, on 25th April 2006, Dwithun Muchahary, one of the NDFB members was shot dead brutally by Assam Police at Sapotgram in Dhubri when he was participating in a democratic movement protesting against the conspired and arbitrary arrest of eight members of the NDFB members by the Assam Police in Guwahati on 22nd of April 2006 on a false allegation of extortion. On 27th of June, 2006, two NDFB cadres, namely, G. Sanjwophu and H. Shanti, were brutally killed in a broad day light without any provocation in the district of Karbi Anglong in Assam, India. Besides, the random and arbitrary arrests of the NDFB cadres till date has numbered not less than 128 including the arrest of six cadres just three days ago.

Another serious matter concerning the cease fire is, despite repeated appeals made by the concerned party and the civil society to disclose where about of the forced disappeared members of NDFB including B. Erakdao, the publicity Secretary of concerned organization during Operation All Clear in the territory of the Kingdom of Bhutan in December 2003, the government of India remained tight lipped causing much apprehension in the minds of the Boro People about the sincerity on the part of government of India in finding amicable political solution.

The other issues that seriously concern us are the continued and increasing militarization of Boro territories by the government of India and other agencies with evil design to intimidate Boro and other Indigenous Peoples that create fear psychosis and confusion among the Indigenous Peoples. Again, the continued and increasing un-abated influx of illegal settlers of non Indigenous Peoples in Boro land & territories with the support and encouragement of the government in order to make Boro and other Indigenous Peoples minority in its own land is threatening the very existence of the Boro and other Indigenous Peoples.

Mr. Chairperson, we therefore urge the UNWGIP for the following recommendations:

- Support the on going Indo-Boro peace talk and recommend the Indian government to ensure the recognition of human rights and respect Boro Indigenous People's right to self determination, which could be the only key factor in finding a meaningful conflict resolution.
- That the Working Group on the Indigenous Populations intervene to ensure tq-av~rjl the right to information by ascertaining the where about of the forced disappearances of NDFB members during the so called Operation All Clear in the Kingdom of Bhutan in December 2003;
- That the Working Group on the Indigenous Populations calls upon the Indian government to ensure to abide by the cease fire ground rules and Immediately stop harassing innocent Boro People in the name of counter insurgency;
- That the Working Group on the Indigenous Populations calls upon the Indian government to urgently develop an effective mechanism to ensure to check the on going un-abated influx of non Indigenous Peoples in the territories of Boro and other Indigenous Peoples in the region;
- To ensure the free, prior and informed consent in all proposed development programmes affecting the Boro and other Indigenous Peoples' land and territories in the region.
- To develop an urgent mechanism to recover the alienated lands of Indigenous Boro Peoples from the hands of the non indigenous peoples in Assam and to ensure the restoration of all the Tribal Belts and Blocks created for safeguarding the Indigenous Boro and other Tribal Peoples in the region,

Thank you Mr. Chairperson for you kind attention.

Sincerely Yours,

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2. Bhramon Baglari, Advisor, All Boro Peace Forum.

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4. Sabda Ram Rabha, Secretary, ICITP-NEZ