

UNITED NATIONS
COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Sub-commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Human Rights
21st Session of the U.N. Working Group on Indigenous Population.



Item no. 6(a): **Co-operation with other United Nations in the sphere of
Indigenous issues.**

Statement by:
Muanpuia Punte,
Zo National Students' Federation (ZONSF)
Respected Chairperson,

Thank you very much for giving me the floor.

First of all, I would like to introduce the people and the organisation I represent. My organisation is Zo National Students' Federation (ZONSF). Which covers some parts of ~~the~~ Bangladesh, Burma and India where the Zo indigenous people are living under administrative division. The Zo indigenous people are very unfortunate that they are divided into three international boundaries, which I mentioned above by the colonialist and the problem does not, ends there. The Zo indigenous people living under Burmese administered area are again sub-divided into four administrative blocks such as, Sagaing Division, Magwe Division, Chin State and Arakan State and also the same thing happen to them those who are living under Indian administered area are again sub-divided into four separate administrative blocks such as, Assam, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura, states and as a result of which, became a minority in those countries.

The situation that I have mentioned above has created a lot of hardships and adverse effect on the standard education of the children and youths of ZO indigenous people. There is no institution for higher studies in any of the Zo inhabited areas of Burma, Bangladesh and in Tripura state of India. In the absence of colleges and such higher studies, majority of the indigenous Zo students of those areas have to go for higher studies far away from their native place so as to pursue their studies. Amongst the Zo inhabited areas, Mizoram is the only one with its own university, and that too was established only in the year 2001. Even the aforementioned university is without a single Medical college nor Technical college.

Further, I would like to highlight the hardship and disturbances faced by the Hmar community who belongs to the Zo indigenous people. Due to the recent ethnic violence between Hmar and Dimasa communities under the Assam state of India, many houses were set a blaze and many families of Hmars and Dimashas fled for their life. Most of the Hmar families get selter in the states of Manipur and Mizoram, as a result, many indigenous Zo children and youths were in no position to continue their studies. Unfortunately for these two communities, the Assam state government. has till date failed to control the situation and even appears to be uninterested in solving the problems as it is remains almost a **silent spectator**. The situation and condition of the violation of the Human rights ^{and} the refugee problems regarding this

ethnic violence had been reported to the United Nations Commission of Human Rights by the Zo Re-unification Organisation (ZORO) too.

Above all, I would also like to highlight that drug addiction has invaded the youths and students of Zo indigenous people in large scale. But as the youths from poor backgrounds, they go for cheap and easily accessible pharmaceutical products. This probably would be unbelievable for the rest of the world. The better well-to-do youth also go for heroin and every delinquent youth has become mixed up in a chain of addiction which has by now culminated to the spread of the most dreaded diseases of AIDS, thereby rendering the Zo indigenous people into deteriorating condition each day. This has created a very bad atmosphere especially for the youth and students who are still in the process of learning.

In the light of all the vexed problems faced by the children, youth and students of the Zo indigenous people, it is an earnest appeal to various United Nations bodies such as, UNESCO, UNICEF, WHO, UNAIDS, etc. for their kind attention and co-operation in handling these various problems faced by the children, youths and students of the Zo indigenous people and thereby support ZONSF.

Thank you all for your kind attention.
