

# Terrorism and Human Peace with Reference to the NE India

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## **Introduction**

Terrorism is, in the broadest sense, the use of intentional violence for political or religious purposes. It is used in this regard primarily to refer to violence during peacetime or in context of war against non-combatants, mostly civilians and neutral military personnel.

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The terms "terrorist" and "terrorism" originated during the French Revolution of the late 18th century. Terrorism is a charged term. It is often used with the connotation of something that is "morally wrong". Governments and non-state groups use the term to abuse or denounce opposing groups. Varied political organizations have been accused of using terrorism to achieve their objectives. These organizations include right-wing and left-wing political organizations, nationalist groups, religious groups, revolutionaries and ruling governments. Legislation declaring terrorism a crime has been adopted in many states. When terrorism is perpetrated by nationstates, it is not considered terrorism by the state conducting it, making legality a largely grey-area issue. There is no consensus as to whether or not terrorism should be regarded as a war crime.

## **Terrorist in North-East India**

The following groups are some of Terrorist, Insurgent and Extremist groups in North-East India.

- A. United Liberation Front of Asom (Assam) (ULFA) was formed on April 7, 1979, by Bhimakanta Buragohain, Rajiv Rajkonwar alias Arabinda Rajkhowa, Golap Baruah alias Anup Chetia, Samiran Gogoi alias Pradip Gogoi, Bhadreswar Gohain and Paresh Baruah at the Rang Ghar in Sibsagar to establish a "sovereign socialist Assam" through an armed struggle.
- B. The origin of the Kamtapur Liberation Organisation (KLO) can be traced to the attempts of certain members of the Rajbongshi community belonging to the all Kamtapur Students' Union (AKSU) to organise an armed struggle for a separate Kamtapur State. The objective of the KLO is to carve out a separate Kamtapur State comprising six districts — Cooch Behar, Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, North and South Dinajpur and Malda — of West Bengal and four contiguous districts of Assam-Kokrajhar, Bongaigaon, Dhubri and Goalpara.
- C. The National Socialist Council of Nagaland – Khaplang (NSCN-K) was formed on April 30, 1988, consequent to an assassination attempt on the General Secretary of what emerged as the rival outfit – NSCN (IM) – Thuingaleng Muivah.
- D. National Socialist Council of Nagaland - Isak-Muivah (NSCN-IM) was formed on January 31, 1980, by Isak Chisi Swu, Thuingaleng Muivah and S.S. Khaplang opposing the 'Shillong Accord' signed by the then NNC (Naga National Council) with the Indian government.

- E. National Democratic Front of Boroland (NDFB) traces its origin to Bodo Security Force, a militant group formed in 1986. The current name was adopted in 1994, after the group rejected Bodo Accord signed between the Government of India and ABSU-BPAC. The group has carried out several attacks in Assam, targeting non-Bodo civilians as well as the security forces.
- F. National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT). It seeks to secede from India and establish an independent Tripuri state, and is an active participant in the Insurgency in North-East India. According to Manik Sarkar, former Chief Minister of Tripura, The NLFT manifesto says that they want to expand what they describe as the Kingdom of God and Jesus Christ in Tripura.
- G. Insurgency in Meghalaya is a frozen armed conflict between India and a number of separatist-rebel groups which was taking place in the state of Meghalaya. The Insurgency in Meghalaya is part of the wider Insurgency in North-East India, and was fueled by demands of the Khasi, Synteng and Garo people for a separate state.

### **Significance**

In most rural areas of India's North-Eastern, oil-rich state of Assam, life comes to a halt a little after sunset. People latch their doors, and when children cry they are hushed up with the threat of army soldiers coming to shoot them. This was worse in the early 1990s, when brutal counterinsurgency operations to break down the separatist movement rocked the whole state.

The state is now yearning for peace. Previous efforts by author Indira Goswami and the People's Consultative Group to broker talks between the Indian government and the insurgents had stalled September 2006 to great disappointment. So when a new attempt at restoring peace between the insurgency and the government was taken up last month by Hiren Gohain – Assam's most respected public intellectual – millions of Assamese were looking forward to its outcome with great hope.

This newly formed State Level Convention proposed that both parties – the government and the rebels – stop the civil war and agree on "unconditional talks" for the sake of peace and negotiate "a special federal relationship", where the Assamese people would have more autonomy and control over its resources. Both parties rejected the proposals, preferring to continue the war. The decision taken by the commander-in-chief of the secessionist outfit ULFA, Paresh Barua, comes from stubbornness. If this opportunity for peace isn't ever taken, my home state will be flung into an abyss.

Already, a lot has been lost. A whole generation of thinking men who took up arms with the hope of a free Assam in 1979 have been wiped out, maimed, co-opted. Many others were almost driven into insanity during the state-wide systematic killings of rebels' relatives, allegedly by the Indian government. The secret killings of Assam remains a dark event that went almost unreported in the international press. Perhaps the Indian government can also be blamed for creating an environment unsuited to a peace process.

### **Role of Government & Peace in the North-East India**

A number of attacks in the last three months on Army and Assam Rifles convoys and posts in Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur invite focus on the deteriorating security situation in the North-East region. Tripura Peace Accord is the tripartite accord signed-in on 10 August 2019 by the Government of India, Government of Tripura and the National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT) to end the insurgency. The Government must also show resolve in keeping the lines of communication open through Nagaland and Manipur to gain a psychological upper-hand over the insurgents and to reassure the people of Manipur

that they are no longer at the mercy of anti-national elements. More and more people will support the government if they find it succeeding against the terrorists.

Yet another issue which deserves careful consideration is assigning responsibility for guarding the Indo-Myanmar border to a particular force. There have been reports that the Ministry of Home Affairs is thinking of handing over the responsibility of guarding the 1,643 km long Indo-Myanmar border to the Border Security Force (BSF), reportedly on the premise that Assam Rifles, which is presently responsible for this task, is not doing a good job of it. One does not know the reaction of the Army in this regard but some commanders may think that Assam Rifles units, if relieved of the responsibility of guarding the border, could become available for conventional war. However, the long term effect of this change will only be disastrous. With due regard to the commitment and sacrifices of the BSF, it is a known fact that the force, at least in the past, has not been able to control migration and trans-border crime across the India-Bangladesh border. Should it be given the additional responsibility of guarding the India-Myanmar border, it will need to raise many more battalions which will take many years to become effective, will have less than the optimum number of officers available and, therefore, will not be in a position to handle the added responsibility any better. Assam Rifles, composed mainly of troops hailing from the North-Eastern states, has a greater stake in managing the India-Myanmar border and should, therefore, continue to be responsible for it.

## **Conclusion**

The internal security situation in the North-Eastern states is complex. It requires people with in-depth knowledge of the terrain, society, politics and culture and history of insurgency in the region to be placed in positions entrusted with the handling of affairs. Frequent change of interlocutors, for example between Naga groups and Government of India, would not be desirable since delicate negotiations require a great degree of trust between negotiators and that can only come about with longevity of engagement. The Government must focus on concluding final peace agreements with the groups that are part of the peace process as soon as possible so that all the energies could then be applied in tackling the groups that remain intransigent.

India's 'Act East' Policy could only be successful if we develop connectivity in the North-Eastern states and permit greater people-to-people contact with the people of the ASEAN, and particularly with the people of Myanmar. Investments in the region are required for the economic advancement of the people. These would require the creation of a peaceful environment in the North-Eastern states. Finally, instead of letting turf wars decide the outcome, Assam Rifles must continue to be responsible for guarding the India-Myanmar border.

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