

**PRESS RELEASE**

**11/05/2009**

**STOP ETHNIC VIOLENCE IN NC HILLS DISTRICT**

The Indian Confederation of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples North East Zone (ICITP-NEZ) is deeply concerned with the continued violence particularly the growing ethnic violence in the North Cachar Hills District in Assam, India since March 20,2009.

ICITP-NEZ having absorbed the experiences of the violence-affected communities clearly understood that extremism of any group and violence is highly detrimental to well being, co-existence, brotherhood, solidarity and peace of a society and therefore we strongly condemn the violence that occurred and would like to appeal to all sections of people to refrain from indulging in acts of violence.

The present violence is a clear signal of conspiracy hatched out by some vested interest criminal groups of people who have senselessly and brutally killed 15 innocent villagers, injured seriously more than 30 and burnt down houses and properties of over 200 families belonging to Dimasa and Zeme Naga Indigenous Peoples. Unfortunately the perpetrators have stooped so much so that they did not spare even the women and ninety years old villagers to create hatred and misunderstanding between Dimasa and Zeme Indigenous Peoples in the district with an evil intention to destroy the age-old emotional integration between Jeme and Dimasa Indigenous Peoples only to serve and achieve their narrow vested interest.

We are of firm opinion that this heinous act of violence will not benefit any one but will definitely injure the solidarity movement and emotional integration of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in the region and will adversely affect Indigenous Peoples' effort to strengthen their solidarity towards their long-term goal of self-rule/determination. It is a clear act violation of Human Rights by narrow-minded selfish motivated self-styled actors who neither want to live in peaceful co-existence nor allow others to live in peace. They are simply criminals and their act should be denounced by all section of people who also deserved isolation and exemplary punishment under the rule of law. This act of barbarism is a crime against humanity, which has no place in a pluralistic democratic set up.

Fear and insecurity is prevailing in all sections of the people in the district and people have lost confidence in authority and therefore, confidence rebuilding measures need to be taken up immediately by civil societies belonging to all communities.

We strongly demand the government of Assam to:

1. To institute high level enquiry in to the violent incidents of NC Hills and arrest and punish the perpetrators involved;
2. To enhance security measures in the areas where possibility of violence exist through visible presence and movement of unbiased security personnel;
3. Take urgent steps for safe and secured return and rehabilitation of affected people initiated by creating a congenial atmosphere;
4. To pay adequate compensation to the victims and provide humanitarian aid as per the relief code of the government to all affected families as deemed necessary by the communities themselves;

We also appeal

5. The media to portray a clear and restrained picture of the events to prevent rumours and misinformation which may heighten the prevailing tension;
6. Government and Civil Society to actively come forward to create conditions for peace and harmony across the state so as to prevent such out break of violence in near future.

Sincerely Yours,

Jebra Ram Muchahary  
President, ICITP-NEZ

Sabda Ram Rabha  
General Secretary, ICITP-NEZ