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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Written statement* submitted by the Prahar, a non- governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[15 May 2017]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

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Human Rights violation of the Indigenous People of Northeast India with special reference to Assam

Every human being is entitled to all rights. Human rights are fundamental for human existence. But history shows that human rights are condemned in almost all societies. There is plethora of cases about violation of human rights in different forms.

Indigenous peoples are the sons of soil. Total population of the world around 300 million people are recognized as the indigenous people and 70% of this total population of the indigenous people are live in Asia continent. The basic rights of these native people have been violated in many ways by many factors. In this report we are going to give you a bird's eye view on the human rights violation of the indigenous people of Northeast India with special reference to Assam. Discrimination against indigenous people of Assam is maintained in a very sophisticated form. And now these people have given up their sleep for safeguard of their own identity and rights. The lives of indigenous peoples of Assam are now in turmoil. This region is rocking at present time in searching the definition of "Who are the Indigenous people of Assam".

According to the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, "People who inhabited a land before it was conquered by colonial societies and who consider themselves distinct from the societies currently governing those territories are called Indigenous people". 143 members of the United Nations along with India have signed in this declaration. But in India an opposite scenario has been practicing. Colonialism in Assam has started with the Iyandaboo treaty between the Burmese King and British in the year 1826, 24th February. Various Austric-Mangolian race tribes viz. Kachari, Bodo, Rabha, Dimasa, Karbi, Tiwa, Mishing, Chutia Deuri, Koch Rajbanshi, Mech, Madahi, Moran, Matak, Sonowal, Thengal, Ahom, Singfo, Taai Khamti, Taai Faake, Taai Khamyang, Taai Turung, Taai Aaiton etc. and Aryan-Dravidian race tribes viz. Kaibarta, Nath, Sut, Kalita, Kayastha, Brahman etc., Garia-Maria, Deshi (Austric Mangolian race Assamese Muslim) etc., Assamese Sikhs and also Naga, Mijo, Manipuri, Misi, Aka, Dafala, Khasia, Jayantia, Garo etc.; these indigenous tribes has been inhabiting under the geographical area of Assam from post colonial era. But these indigenous groups are now struggling against the black shadow of identity crisis.

From the post colonial era to till now these indigenous tribes has been facing tremendous movements whether is for safeguard of language or expel of illegal migration. Food, Cloth and Shelter- these are the basic needs of human beings. But these native groups have been consistently deprived in fulfilling their basic needs as they have been suffering all the time through imbalance. Their lives are passing through volcano like situations.

In Assam, illegal migration has becoming the leading cause of many severe issues including overpopulation, rising rates of unemployment, poverty and crime. The large scale migration has significantly changed the demographic scenario in Assam and became the important source to social, economic and political instability in Assam

Assam - a state which has been facing terrific discrimination and a number of movements aim in to achieve a range of objectives having both ethnic and territorial focus. While some of these were partially resolved, several other remain unresolved. After the independents of India to till now, numbers of acts has been enacted by the Indian Government for Assam to abate aliens viz. Foreigners Acts 1946, The Immigration (Expulsion from Assam) Act, 1950, Illegal Migration (Determination by Tribunal) Act, 1983 etc. Population of Assam increased 1971 to 1991 @52.44% and the dark shadow of Illegal migration seemed to swallow the future of Assamese people. This large demographic conversion engendered the feeling of cultural, linguistic and political insecurity, which snowed under the Assamese, conveyed a strapping touching content to their movement against illegal migrants. As the result the largest and famous movement was evoked in Assam and it was better known as (**Assam Movement**). This most powerful and vigorous mass movement lasted from 1979 to 1985. This movement was undertaken to pressure the Central Government to detect, delete and expel the foreign nationals from Assam. During this "**Assam Agitation**" 855 youths gave up their lives and became "Martyr". Finally, this mass movement was ended with the signing of the Assam accord on 1985. But in lieu of six year's long movement and lives of those 855 Martyrs, Assamese people have lost their valuable rights. According to

the Assam Accord the “**Cut of Year**” of expel of Illegal foreigners from Assam is 1971 whether it is 1951 for all other parts of India. That means, Assam has been bearing the load of Illegal migrants of these extra 20years alone. All anti foreigners acts, laws and Accords are in some extent seems like boomerang for all Assamese people. Till today the Illegal migrant problem remains unresolved. Already the “National Register of Citizens (NRC)” system in Assam is in progress in the base of 1971 as the cut of year. Illegal migrants constitute more than 30% of the total population of Assam which is a very large number in multi-ethnic Assam. In the meantime, the migrants who are Illegal as per the Assam Accord have remained in Assam and numbers have multiply along with their descendants. If this cut of year will change to the year 1951 like other states of India, many illegal foreigners may be detecting.

Recently, a committee has been constituted by the Assam Government for protection of land rights of indigenous persons of the State with former Chief Election Commissioner Hari Sankar Brahma as its chairman. It can be imagine the situation in Assam for indigenous people is became so worse that they now have to prove themselves if they are indigenous or not. They are loosing their rights in their own birthplace.

The Northeast region of India especially Assam is enriched by its natural resources like petroleum, tea, Coal and hydro-power generation. As it is rich in natural resources the state has the potential to be self sufficient for all-round development. But govt. policies so far has reflected an avoiding attitude of the govt. towards North Eastern States of India. Since India’s independence the resources were drained out of the state for development of other parts of India and Multi-National Industrial Groups only for the vested interest of corrupt political leadership.

Recently, Ministry of Home Affairs of Govt. of India issued notification that foreigner from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan who were compelled to shelter in India due to religious persecution would be exempted from the rules under the Passport Act of India, 1992 and foreigners Act, 1946 in respect of their entry and stay in India without such documents or after the expiry of those documents. Unfortunately, this Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016 was placed in the parliament on August 11. Granting citizenship on religious line is against the secular ethos and dignity of India.

Since post colonial era to till now the indigenous people has been fighting to safeguard their land, political and cultural rights. From colonial period, these peoples have been deprived culturally and socially. Their identity is at stake. Many governments, acts and policies were come into existence but indigenous issues are remaining unsolved. Their rights are ignored. The colonial period started in Assam in 1826 as we mentioned above, the native groups who have been living before colonial era should recognize as the Indigenous people of Northeast India and Assam. Many prominent organizations of Northeast India especially the United Indigenous Council has been consistently working with this severe matter.

The culture, heritage and ethnicity, language, traditions and customs of these indigenous groups are in threat Therefore we request the International community ask the govt of India and request and pressurise them for these Indigenous peoples can live a meaningful and respected lives.
