



General Assembly

Distr.: General
25 June 2019

English only

Human Rights Council

Forty-first session

24 June–12 July 2019

Agenda item 4

Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Written statement* submitted by Liberation, a non-governmental organization on the roster

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

[03 June 2019]

* Issued as received, in the language(s) of submission only.

GE.19-10679(E)



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Critical situation of rights of Indigenous People's in India

India is country with multiple religious and cultural identities. It is duty of a democratic government to protect is people and its diverse culture from any outside or inside danger. In India, rapid communalisation has put the human rights of minorities and indigenous people's in danger.

Human rights of Indigenous People's from North east region are challenged in every aspect. The people from this region are struggling for their rights since long but the situation is worsening continuously. The indigenous people, their existence, their identity and their culture is in grave danger as it is under attack by aggressive illegal immigrants. Human rights of all needs to be protected and we uphold the same. But human rights of one community can not be put at stake for supporting the other community. Though it is not desirable to do so, it is exactly happening with indigenous people's of north eastern region of India. The issue of illegal immigrants is long battled. In recent years government's initiative to renew National Register of Citizenship data created a hope for indigenous people's. But later on, it was found out that it remains a futile hope as the process was not carried out properly. Now, it has come under attack for its supposed link with religious fundamentalism. In addition to that the previous central government tried to pass the citizenship amendment bill. This bill will result in legalising the illegal immigrants. Though it did not contribute much in solving their real problems it definitely does contribute in increasing challenges for indigenous people's. It is duty of the government to address the human rights of illegal immigrants but India is running away from this responsibility by passing the burden of illegal immigrants to north east region. Following is description of how citizenship amendment bill 2016 will add to the existing hardships faced by indigenous people's.

In the backdrop of proposed Citizenship (Amendment) Bill 2016, the people of Assam has discussed the issues of granting citizenship to the religious minorities of the illegal immigrants with various stakeholders and found that if implemented as proposed, the Assamese race will not survive its due time. The Northeast of India is much more than a mere political construct and the existence of the indigenous people's of the region and their identity, culture, economy are endangered due to unabated influx from Bangladesh. Despite constitutional safeguards and autonomous arrangements in some confined areas, the influx has changed the demography of some states in general and Tripura and Assam in particular. In general, Assam has already taken the burden of illegal migrants till 25th March 1971, through Assam Accord signed on 14th August 1985 between Government of India and All Assam Students Union (AASU). So, people of Assam has already shown its magnanimity of accepting illegal migrants as citizens till 25th March 1971.

Once again a defining moment has arrived for Assamese people as their language, culture and their very identity is at stake. Until these imminent dangers are repulsed in appropriate proportion, the Assamese race is bound to wilt. The unsolicited situation has developed as a result of the proposed citizenship (Amendment) bill, 2016, placed to the Indian parliament. The bill proposes to give citizenship, among others, to illegal Hindu immigrants. The ramifications of the bill is frightening, because, if passed into law, it would be death knell for the Assamese identity. The Indigenous people's of Northeast will be on the verge of becoming minorities in its own land and that would cause serious implications in their existence and survival, if the proposed amendment is allowed to pass through. The Indigenous people's of Tripura have become the minority community in their own homeland due to the unabated influx from Bangladesh. The proposed amendment of Citizenship Bill 2016 would make the indigenous people of Northeast into a minority community in its own land.

In view of the above, we, the people of Assam, has sought the urgent intervention of respective stakeholders of democratic institutions, organizations and the people at large to save the indigenous people's of the region , on the onslaught of such aggression, which sought to be legalized by the proposed Amendment of citizenship bill 2016. It has to be noted that the party which has secured majority votes in parliamentary elections in 2019 tried to introduced this bill previously. The efforts were unsuccessful as it failed in upper house. Now, that again the same party is power, it will surely push its previous agenda of passing

the bill. So, international support to the struggle of indigenous people's is crucial at this moment. We humbly urge the council to pay attention to this threatening situation in India.
