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Events in Ukhrul and the Democratically challenged Government

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under [ARTICLES](#) 24 days have passed since the assassination of Mr. Ngalangzar Malue, an Autonomous District Council member of Ukhrul district, and civil society organisations have condemned it. Secondly, 23 days have passed when the Police Commando (MPC) and Indian Reserved Battalion (IRB) raided the Public Liaison Office of the National Socialist Council of Nagalim (NSCN-IM) and arrested 8 cadres who were present in the office. Further, on the same day, 144 CrPC was promulgated and imposed in and around Ukhrul District Headquarters swarming with armed forces of the state.

The act of killing and the response of the Government of Manipur (GoM) have been condemned by the Naga civil society organisations. Why?

An act of cowardice

No one has come forward to claim the unfortunate killing of Ngalangzar Malue which makes one to conclude that it was nothing else but a senseless act of people/organisation who simply does not understand the value life. Such action cuts deep into the sentiments of the community and affects the sense of peace and security of the people. Therefore, the cowardly act was condemned.

Turning the public into its enemy

The response of the government to this incident is unfortunate and strange. Taking away freedom of movement and disrupting normal life of the public by imposing 144 CrPC, the government appears to be indirectly accusing the public of being a party to the killing. Instead of taking the public on its side, the government has turned the public into its enemy by accusing and punishing them. Such actions can only be taken by a government that is highly motivated by its own vested interests!

Undemocratic government

The manner in which the armed forces stormed in and swarmed the Ukhrul HQ in 13th July and subsequently suspending civil and democratic rights of the public is nothing but martial

tactics employed by the GoM. Such deliberate actions of creating fear psychosis and trauma is waging psychological warfare and increases trust deficit between the people and the government. The government and the district authorities till date have not been able to explain their action. No democratic institution can behave in such arbitrary manner with total lack of accountability to the people. The GoM is answerable to the people, or else, it is nothing but an authoritarian regime in disguise. Such martial behaviour and suspending the freedom of movement of the public by the state should be condemned by all who value democratic rights and norms. The GoM simply has created a situation that has no logical explanation.

Further, the provocative statement by Lt. Gen (Retd) N.K Singh, Chairman CFMG and Mr. Gaikhangam, Home Minister of Manipur is totally uncalled for and disrespectful of the political initiative that has been under taken by the Government of India (GoI). Whether there is a dispute over the area of ceasefire coverage, or whether one holds a different opinion over the ongoing peace talks, the fact is that there is an official peace talk going on, and they are morally bound to show respect. This is the minimum that is expected of a democratic government. Whether it is a case of crime, or whether it is an issue of having divergent views on the talks, those who are in authority of the state very well know that there are established mechanisms, procedures and ethics governing ones action. Simply blaming on the ceasefire coverage area is to justify the martial action of GoM and take the issue out of context. Does it mean that if there is no ceasefire or peace talks going on, the GoM can use such martial tactics and suspended the democratic rights of the public be suspended without logical explanation for so long? Are the public in Ukhrul district HQ under threat? Or has anyone threatened public tranquility in the district? It is only an invention by the GoM!

Furthermore, it comes at odd when the Director General of Police (DGP) Mr. Sahid Ahmed gives out a statement on 31st July justifying their plan to deploy additional security forces in the hill districts. Is it not odd that the DGP is calling the agitators to come to the negotiating table? What about the so-called GoM? Or is he calling on behalf of the GoM? The fact is that it was not an issue for negotiation—the situation and the issue were created by the GoM. There would have been no issue if the public were not penalised by the state and performed its duty according to the rule of law and by respecting democratic norms and principles.

It is high time that the GoM rectify its action by withdrawing 144 CrPC and restore normalcy. The GoM should also apologize to the public and retrospect its action to become aware of what is expected of leaders in a democratic setup.

