

# THE NAGA RISING

Date : 28/10/2020

## **The Prime Minister of India**

7, Lok Kalyan Marg  
New Delhi

### **Subject: An Appeal for an early and honorable Indo-Naga accord based on mutual respect**

Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi,

The Naga flag and Yezhabo (constitution) have been an integral part of the Naga national movement since its inception, irrespective of the numerous groups or factions that exist. As such, there is nothing to demand or bargain for when it comes to these national symbols as they are **inherent and inalienable rights of the Naga people**.

Perhaps, the **Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh** (RSS) would understand better the emotion behind the Naga case as it has hailed the use of its own saffron flag. **According to the RSS, the saffron flag represents "history, tradition and the supreme sacrifices made for the nation" and that it is the "embodiment of all basic elements of our nationhood."** The Nagas are expressing the same sentiment.

Nevertheless, as we put forward a case for the Naga flag and constitution to be made part of a peace agreement, **The Naga Rising** wishes to appeal to you to give due consideration of the following points.

### **The Naga Political Groups, though divided, continue to exist on the basis of the declaration of Naga Independence of August 14, 1947, and the Plebiscite of 1951.**

It is also a fact that the NSCN (IM) and the NNPGs are engaged in ceasefire and political dialogues with the Government of India because earlier accords—the Shillong Accord and the 16-Point Agreement—could not solve the Naga issue.

The question of a separate Naga flag and constitution should be seen in the context of the historical and political rights of the Naga people as these symbols are **embedded in the unique history and situation of the Nagas**, rightly acknowledged and recognized by the GoI.

Both the Framework Agreement of August 3, 2015 with the NSCN (IM) and the Agreed Position of November 17, 2017 with the NNPGs have officially **recognized the Nagas as an 'entity'** i.e. distinct and independent from the Government of India.

Add to this is the understanding reached to share sovereign powers—a point that has been consistently upheld throughout the peace process by the GoI and duly recognized by the two recent agreements signed with the NSCN (IM) and the NNPGs.

India should not see a separate Naga flag and constitution as outlandish. **For the GoI to now say that the flag and constitution cannot be officially recognized is**

**disrespectful to the Nagas.** The wide spectrum of political support to the Naga peace process through successive Indian Prime Ministers should not be undermined.

At this very important juncture when all substantive issues are believed to have been resolved, barring the question of a separate flag and constitution, ***The Naga Rising*** is of the firm belief that **India and the Nagas must look tounderstand each other's needs and aspirations as the only way forward towards a peace agreement.**

**Fighting is no longer a viable option.** Both sides cannot throw away the gains of the last two decades. The Naga masses too have invested their social capital and goodwill in the peace process and their **voice for an early peace accord that is inclusive and honorable should not be undermined either.**

If Nagas associate with India in some form of federal relationship, (understood to have been worked out in the agreed competencies), **a flag and constitution will represent the duality of the two entities already agreed upon.** It will also realise the 'special arrangement' for the Nagas that has been promised at the highest level of the GoI.

### **Naga flag can co-exist**

Based on existing law and understanding **it is evident that having a separate Naga flag is not prohibited under the Indian legal or political system.** You may consider the following:

In a 1994 case before the Supreme Court of India, S. R. Bommai v. Union of India, the Supreme Court declared that there is no prohibition in the Constitution of India for a state to have its own flag. However, a state flag should not dishonour the national flag.

For many years, Jammu and Kashmir had a separate flag due to special status granted by Article 370 of the Indian Constitution.

Also, the Flag Code of India, 2002, does not impose prohibitions on a State flag. By implication, the Code provides space for a State flag as long as it does not offend the dignity and honour of the national flag.

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has also taken the official position that legally there is no provision either for providing or prohibiting a separate flag for any state.

**The Naga flag or constitution is not a threat to India nor will it diminish India's standing as an emerging global power.** Such symbols will recognise, protect and promote the Naga identity in the cultural milieu of the Indian sub-continent.

Upon your counsel and guidance, we urge **the Naga negotiators and the GoI to work out some formulations that would recognize the Naga flag.**

By this act of magnanimity, we believe India will also gain the trust and support of the Nagas and realise its need for durable peace, stability, and security in the restive eastern borderlands.

### **Conclusion**

No other Prime Minister has been more explicit in recognizing the depth of the Naga political movement and to resolving the Naga issue than yourself.

During your visit to Nagaland in December 2014, you proclaimed the Naga nationalist slogan 'Kuknalim' three times in a public address, a gesture that perhaps underlined the

duality of India and the Nagas while also expressing your respect for the Naga people's sentiment, their history and culture.

**The Naga Rising** believes that this mutual acceptance and respect should provide the basis for peaceful co-existence of the two entities in a framework that takes into account contemporary realities.

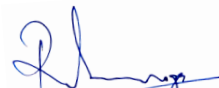
Likewise, at **the signing of the Framework Agreement, you spoke about the need to restore the "pride and prestige and self-respect" of the Nagas.**

We appeal to you to translate your well-meaning words into action by addressing Naga 'aspirations' and agreeing to a flag and constitution in the peace accord. **This is the respect that Nagas want from you and something you have already expressed in your heart.**

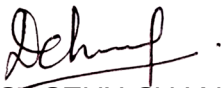
May God bless India and the Nagas.



(ALONG LONGKUMER)  
President, TNR



(JOEL NAGA)  
Secretary, TNR



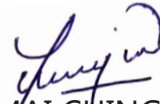
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