

Northeast Women Peace Congregation concludes



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Women in the region of Northeast [India](#) are excluded from decision making structures and are discriminated due to cultural, patriarchal structure and customary laws. Northeast [India](#) currently has seventeen peace talks but no women in these peace talks. In 2014 general election, only 62 females have been elected constituting more than 11% share in the 16th Lok Sabha. Of the total of 466 seats in the assemblies of eight northeastern states, only 24 (5.15 percent) are women. Of the 60-member assembly in [Arunachal Pradesh](#) and [Manipur](#), there are two and three female legislators respectively. Assam has 14 women MLAs among 126 elected representatives while [Tripura](#) has five women lawmakers in the 60-member house.

Women [leaders](#) across the eight states of Northeast [India](#) and youth survivors of violence congregated on 24 & 25 August [2016](#) at Second Northeast [India](#) Women Peace Congregation in Guwahati, Assam for consultative meetings on ensuring absolute participation of women in peace process, peace talks and decision making forums, ensuring protection of violation of women [rights](#) in conflict for bringing the much needed peace and development in the region.

In the words of the Convener of this historic women peace congregation, Binalakshmi Nepram, "Northeast [India](#) Women Peace Congregation is a historic event which brings together women [leaders](#) from all across Northeast [India](#). These remarkable women through their words, deeds and action will bring the much needed peace in the Northeast Region. Speaking at the historic event, Roshmi Goswami, Chairperson, FST highlighted the significance of UNSCR 1325 and CEDAW and stated that government needs to value women [as](#) peace builders and support the cause is necessary for it to work well. She added, "A [National](#) Action Plan on Women Peace and Security will only works if there is a commitment of resources and a reasonable budgetary allocation by the Government".

“Women from [8](#) states converged here to find ways for peace and sharing experiences and stories with each other and I hope this will bring sustainable peace in the region” said Neha Naqvi, Project Coordinator, Welthungerhilfe.

Neidonuo Angami, Founder Member, Naga Mother’s Association shared personal stories of the inception of Naga Mothers and their struggle and achievement in bringing peace in [Nagaland](#). She said throughout their journey they have received immense support from to society.

Lourembam Nganbi, Meira Paibi Leader from [Manipur](#), narrated the inspiring movement of Meira Paibi of Manipuri women for fighting human [rights](#) violation in [Manipur](#). Further she said, “Women’s participation in peace building is very high but decision making is quite low and negligible in [Manipur](#). Only 5% of MLAs are women. Manipuri society is still male dominated. Women have many qualities which are suppressed by men & hence importance of having women in decision making”.

Rose Mangshi, [President](#), Kuki Women Union spoke on the role played by women of [Manipur](#) in bringing peace in [Manipur](#) during ethnic clashes and divide in [Manipur](#). She said, “In such darkest times, women in [Manipur](#) came in solidarity for discussions dialogues and reconciliation to bring peace in [Manipur](#).” [Prof](#) Lalneihzovi, Mizoram University stated that women in Mizoram are developed but not empowered [as](#) the participation of women in decision making foruis negligible and the need for proper reservation of women in such foruShe said, due to lack of accountable mechanism women and gender issues are not seen at central [policy level](#) to include women in peace and security process. So unless and until political [leaders](#) will show positive approach towards women’s issues situation will not change.

Pratibha Brahma, Member of [North East](#) Research & [Social](#) Work Networking (NERSWN), Bodoland, Assam shared her contribution on how women of Bodoland work together in reduction Gender Based Violence and Peace Building in Conflict Situation in the region.

Tanushree Hazarika, Managing Director of Eclectic Group said; “Peace and empowerment are directly co-related. When there is peace, there is better environment for women to pursue their goals. Women in [India](#) form a minuscule percentage of legislators and bureaucrats. So, this kind of programmes can play a big role in bridging that gap”.

Kanchan Sinha, working for government of [Tripura](#); mentioned about crime [against](#) women in [Tripura](#) and said that [as](#) per official report crime [against](#) women is 88% in [Tripura](#). The common phenomenon is to blame victim for rape. Incidents like Nirbhaya take place in [Tripura](#) on every alternate month. Practice of killing women in the name of witchcraft is very common. Jaynie Sangma, a social activist from [Garo Hills](#), [Meghalaya](#) narrated horrifying tales of police atrocities towards innocent civilian in [Garo Hills](#). She told that she was jailed there for two and half months along with her husband and son and her son’s friend was also killed in judicial custody.

Parvati Thausen, a resilient woman from [Dima Hasao](#), Assam told that she has faced gender discrimination since her [birth](#) and had taken strong initiatives to [fight against](#) women [rights](#) violation. She took active part in women led peace and conflict transformation with warring ethnic communities in [Dima Hasao](#) District of Assam. Sitara Begum, [Muslim](#) Women [Leader](#) from [Manipur](#), in her statement said that all women present in the room are [leaders](#). She said that women have to come out in the physical sphere. [Education](#) of women is equally important. Finally she said everyone has to walk together for all round development; Speaking on the present status of women in Sikkim and the need for

participation of women in decision making, Deyang Dolkar Gyatso, [President](#), Bikstang Heritage, Sikkim, highlighted the emergence of girl's [education](#) in Sikkim and stressed on the urgent need for women to come to the forefront in the decision making process to make progress in the society.

Rosanna Lyngdoh, [Impulse NGO](#), speaking on human trafficking she told that around 80 percent of trafficking is done for sexual purposes and rest of for bonded labour and [India](#) is the hub for the trafficking. In the region of Northeast [India](#), we share international borders with [Bangladesh](#), China, Nepal, [Myanmar](#) and Bhutan. These are the source of transit and destination point. The region is facing lot of conflicts everyday and due to these women and [girls](#) are trafficked every day. To combat trafficking, there is need to work together whether it is government agencies, civil societies, or media houses.

Rebina Subba, Member, State Women Commission [Meghalaya](#) emphasized on the need for formulation of [state](#) specific action plan on women peace and security. Sabrina Iqbal said that Assamese [Muslim](#) women are not seen in public spheres or peace and negotiable process just because of power sharing. She also added that men [don't](#) want to women in decision making or formal politics and deliberately they oppose women to be in such kind of forum. She emphasized religion has been used a convenient tool to subjugating women. Sangeeta Baruah, senior journalist, shared that this is very wrong that national media does not cover enough stories from remote areas of Northeast [India](#) related to women issue.

Agnes Kharshing, [President](#), Civil Society Women, [Meghalaya](#), said that the [state](#) is responsible to end violence [against](#) women but [state](#) is not doing this. Crimes [against](#) women are everywhere in Northeast [India](#). The women empowerment is the need of the hour and it can be done

together by supporting each other.

Aminul Islam, MLA, [Dhing](#), said that it is the duty of men to ensure women's [rights](#) and security. 'When we hear instances of brutality [against](#) women, we feel embarrassed. In the eyes of Allah, all men and women are equal' he said. Ravikant Singh, [President](#) of Doctors for You spoke about how the dangers [against](#) women and [girls](#) during disaster can be mitigated. Dr. Samrat Sinha, Associate Professor, Jindal School of International Affairs emphasis on the need for children's agenda on [National](#) Action Plan on Women Peace and Security. A young survivor of violence, Sandeep B Sangma, an [engineering student](#) from Garo Hill, [Meghalaya](#) testified for the first time on how he was assaulted and framed by police. There was also the harrowing story of Archana, a woman who had lost her son in a bomb blast in [Gossaigaon](#), Kokrajhar, spoke about how people in Northeast [India](#) get less [compensation](#) compared to other parts of [India](#).

The event saw participation of [over](#) 200 participants including [policy](#) makers and government officer, women and youth survivors of violence, academicians and journalists. The Citizen's [National](#) Action Plan that was developed and submitted to Union Minister of State for [Home](#) Affairs Kiren Rijiju in September 2015 was released on that day by the women [leaders](#) and a Policy Briefing on Women in decision making.

A 20 point Resolution was adopted known [as](#) "Assam Declaration" for Women Peace and Security at the two day Peace Congregation held on 24th and 25th August [2016](#):

The congregation acknowledged that 272 ethnic communities comprising of 40 million people live in the [8](#) states of Northeast [India](#);

1. The congregation acknowledged that 272 ethnic communities comprising of 45 million people live in the [8](#) states of Northeast [India](#). Appeal to all ethnic groups, communities in Northeast [India](#) to rise above the greater common goal of peace and prosperity in the Northeast.
2. 90% of Northeast [India](#) consists of [Indigenous](#) populations. Efforts to be made to protect [indigenous](#) people's [rights](#) and land [rights](#). Government of [India](#) must look into the issues of Northeast region squarely in the face and make a sincere effort to find a political solution to the violence in Northeast [India](#).
3. Recognition of women role in peace processes and ensuring the participation of women [as](#) decision makers in peace negotiations and present and post conflict reconstructions.
4. All women to work on a shared vision, through re-establishing relationships, networking and interacting with other [workers](#) in the regional, national or international [level](#).
5. Call upon the Government of [India](#) for the adoption of Citizens [National](#) Action Plans on Women Peace and Security which was submitted to the Minister of State for [Home](#) Affairs, Shri Kiren Rijiju. The congregation also resolved to submit the [National](#) Action Plan to Smt. Meneka [Gandhi](#), Union Minister of Women and Child [Development](#)
6. Appeal to non-[state](#) and [state](#) armed groups to end human [rights](#) abuses [against](#) civilians, including killings, the use of threats,

extortion, and reprisals [against](#) individuals.

7. The Congregation appealed to respond to sexual violence [against](#) women in conflict zones by using the metaphor declaring “War on Rape” following UNSCR 1820.
8. [8.](#) A Northeast Women Forum for Peace and Mediation (NEWFPM) to be established to provide platform to all women in conflict areas of Northeast [India](#). A subsequent Northeast Peace Fund to be created to support this endeavor.
 - a) Relief, rehabilitation, trauma and psychosocial centers and survivors assistance to all. Teaming up with supportive men and people from all the other genders to [fight](#) any form of human [rights](#) violation [against](#) all people. A database of lawyers, nurses to be created for this purpose.
 - b) The Congregation also resolved to ensure a collective struggle on the upcoming women’s Reservation Bill in the [Parliament](#).
 - c) A common platform to emancipate women to reclaim spaces at public areas.
 - d) Northeast women need to be technologically empowered.
 - e) Set up Women Support/Shelter Centers in each of the [8](#) states of Northeast [India](#).
9. The congregation also acknowledged that women from Northeast [India](#) have been absent from [Political](#) Decision Making since the past 60 years. [As](#) a result a draft manifesto on Women in [Political](#) Decision Making: Effort for All [India](#) Women [Political](#) Party (AIWPP) was also adopted.
10. To end all forof repressive laws such [as](#) Armed Forces Special Powers [Act](#) ([AFSPA](#)), impunity and discrimination. Justice Verma

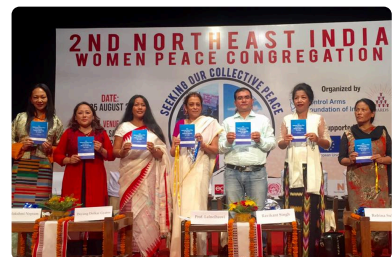
Committee report to be given precedence which calls for repeal of [AFSPA](#) for the safety and security of women in conflict zones.

11. To implement [Bezbaruah](#) Committee Report recommendations of formulating an All [India](#) Anti-[Racial](#) Law, to end [racial](#) discrimination [against](#) all people of this country and within the Northeast.
12. Northeast is prone to grave human-made and natural disasters. A resolution for gender- sensitive disaster management programmes for all communities to be formulated.
13. “[Arts](#) for Healing” to be promoted in conflict zones of the country in the form of collective songs of peace for the country be composed, inclusion of theatre, music, poetry, films, folk songs, comics and [dance](#) to be emphasized upon.
14. A database of orphanages to be created to prevent violence [against](#) children, trafficking of children, child abuse, child soldiers. To look into the matter of child [welfare](#) in conflict areas.
15. To be [alert](#) and respond to addressing political, economy of violence. To address ardisarmament, [drugs](#), and women trafficking in [India](#)’s Northeast.
16. In accordance with the Nirbhaya Fund of Central Government, call for establishment of 105 Rape Crises Centers in [8](#) Northeast States of [India](#) i.e. one for each district of the [8](#) states.
17. There is a need to examine deployment of specially designed 'stability units' to build coherence between the security, socio-economic development and public safety needs of disturbed areas.

Demilitarization, de-weaponisation of Northeast from IEDS, cluster bombs and small arms for the safety and security of its people.

18. Call for each [state](#) in Northeast for [State](#) Action Plan on Women Peace and Security.
19. A call for Government of [India](#), Ministry of [Development](#) of North Eastern Region/ Northeastern Council to make people aware of the Schemes made for people of Northeast.
20. Peace education to become a part of school curriculum from a young age. The ethos of peace has to be embedded in minds of students from a young age to build a peaceful society and a peaceful nation.

The event was convened by Control Arms Foundation of [India](#) in collaboration with [Manipur](#) Women Gun Survivors Network (MWGSN) and local partners such as Char and Rural [Development](#) Society, Doctors for You and Northeast [India](#) Women Initiative for Peace with support from EU and WHH. We are very thankful to our partners who supported us for this event. Please find some attached photographs of the event. Kindly give credit to CAFI archive.





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