

Tripartite talk on districts creation held



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The crucial tripartite meeting on the pressing demand of rollback of creation of districts by the United Naga Council (UNC) was held at Senapati district headquarters on Tuesday.

Ministry of [Home](#) Affairs (MHA) Joint Secretary in-charge of NE, Satyendra Garg chaired the tripartite talks involving the Centre, [Manipur](#) government and UNC, the apex social organisation of the Nagas in [Manipur](#).

This time the tripartite dialogue was upgraded to political [level](#) by the Ministry of [Home](#) Affairs (MHA) with the hope to find a solution where all sides can win.

UNC has strongly protested creation of districts, especially Kangpokpi district, after allegedly bifurcating “Naga ancestral land” by the previous [state](#) government headed by Okram [Ibobi](#) Singh.

The Naga body has the contention that the then [Manipur](#) government had failed to take stakeholders into confidence while creating the new districts.

It has also maintained that the [Congress](#) government did not consult the Hills Area Committee before taking the decision to create new districts that encroached upon the “ancestral land” of Nagas. It says the creation of districts was an attempt to divide the Naga people.

Under Article 371 (C) of Indian Constitution, the Hills Area Committee must be consulted on matter relating to the tribal people.

But [Manipur](#) Chief Minister N Biren Singh recently said in the [state](#) assembly, “The [Manipur](#) government is not considering any reversal of the decision on the creation of districts.”

The United Naga Council (UNC) had hoped that the August 11 tripartite talks must come up with a solution to the district creation issue. The negotiation aimed at finding a mutually agreeable solution to all concerned.

On December 9, 2016, the previous Okram [Ibobi](#) Singh headed [Congress](#) government issued a gazette notification creating seven new districts by bifurcating seven of the [state](#)'s existing nine districts, taking the number of districts in the [state](#) to 16.

Okram [Ibobi](#) Singh had stated that the creation of new districts was officially for reasons of administrative efficiency.

The 139-day long blockade call enforced by UNC to protest the district creation was lifted in March after negotiations initiated by the BJP government after it took office in [Manipur](#). The Naga body had hoped that the creation of the districts will be rolled back through talks.

Meanwhile, as the talks began at Senapati on Friday, thousands of people in Kuki-dominated Kangpokpi district took to the street demonstrating against any attempt to roll back of the newly created Kangpokpi district.

Kuki Students' Organisation (KSO), Sadar Hills submitted a memorandum to Prime Minister [Narendra Modi](#), Chief Minister Nongthombam Biren Singh, MHA Joint Secretary through the Chief Secretary of [Manipur](#) RR Rashmi explaining that the previous government had created Kangpokpi district for reasons of administrative convenience.

The memorandum expressed opposition to UNC's demand of rollback of district creation. Kangpokpi civil society is apprehensive about the demand by UNC that it could alter the current status quo of Kangpokpi.

The meeting started at 11 am in [DRDA](#) Hall, Senapati headquarters. The [Manipur](#) government in the meeting was represented by Additional Chief Secretary [Home](#), Dr Suresh Babu, [Tribal](#) Affairs Minister, N Kayisii, IFCD Minister, V Hangkhalian, [Education](#) Minister ThRadheshyam Singh and IPR Commissioner K Radhakumar.

UNC [President](#) Gaidon Kamei, General Secretary S Milan, All Naga Students' Association [Manipur](#) (ANSAM) [President](#) Seth Shatsang and Naga Women's Union [President](#) Asha Wungnam represented UNC in the talks.

UNC reiterates stand

Talking to journalists before the tripartite talks began at the venue, UNC [President](#) Gaidon Kamei expressed dismay [over](#) the recent statement by CM Biren Singh in the House. The Chief Minister had stated “The [Manipur](#) government is not considering any reversal of the decision on the creation of districts.”

Gaidon warned that the [state](#) government should not repeat such kind of statement in future.

He said, “We want a workable solution. If somebody is trying to hijack the ‘peace process,’ we will not be responsible for any kind of eventuality thereof.”

The following were agreed in the talks:

United Naga Council (UNC) appreciates the Government of [Manipur](#) for complying with the 19th May Agreement of conducting the talks at the political [level](#), while expressing resentment on some developments.

In terms of the agreement of the 19th March, 2017 talks to redress the grievances of UNC in respect of the creation of new districts, the Government of [Manipur](#) will initiate appropriate steps in right earnest in this regard.

The next round of talks will be held in September next.

Both [state](#) government and UNC agreed upon to mutually respect the agreements signed in the previous talks to avoid any provocative actions till the dialogue process is taken to its logical end.

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