

Violence Erupts in Garo Hills, Meghalaya, Amid Election Tensions



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TURA, Meghalaya - March 11, 2026: Tensions surrounding the upcoming elections to the Garo Hills Autonomous District Council (GHADC), scheduled for April 10, have triggered violent clashes in the West Garo Hills district of Meghalaya, leaving two people dead and several others injured. The unrest has also resulted in widespread vandalism and arson in several areas of the district.

The tensions stem from a controversial notification requiring candidates contesting the council elections to possess valid Scheduled Tribe (ST) certificate documentation. The rule has effectively prevented many non-tribal residents—particularly Bengali-speaking Muslims living in the plains belt areas such as Chibinang and Phulbari—from filing nominations.

Violence began escalating on March 9 when former Phulbari MLA S. G. Esmatur Mominin was allegedly assaulted by protesters while attempting to submit his nomination papers in Tura. The incident reportedly prevented him from participating in the election process.

Following the incident, mobs vandalized shops and set fire to several structures, including a market area and an office of the Garo Students' Union. Clashes were also reported between protesters and security forces. Police initially resorted to blank firing to disperse the crowds, while mobile internet services across the district were suspended for 48 hours beginning March 10 to prevent the spread of misinformation.

The situation further deteriorated in the early hours of March 10 in Chibinang, where security forces opened fire to disperse violent mobs and unlawful assemblies during curfew hours. According to reports, one person died due to police firing, while another succumbed to injuries sustained during clashes between tribal and non-tribal groups. Several others were injured in the violence.

Authorities imposed a 24-hour curfew across West Garo Hills, later extending restrictions in certain areas until March 13 under provisions of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita.

The unrest has largely been described as stemming from tensions between tribal and non-tribal communities over representation in the autonomous council. Tribal groups have supported the ST certificate requirement as a measure to safeguard indigenous Garo interests in the council, while non-tribal residents argue that the rule discriminates against long-term inhabitants and violates constitutional rights.

In response to the deteriorating situation, the district administration requested assistance from the Indian Army. Army columns were subsequently deployed to conduct flag marches in sensitive areas, including Chibinang, Tikrikilla, and Phulbari, along with nearly 37 surrounding villages. Additional security personnel from the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and the Rapid Action Force have also been deployed.

Officials said the situation remained tense but largely under control as of Wednesday morning, with security forces maintaining a strong presence and enforcing curfew measures to prevent further violence.

References

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- [4] <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/tension-meghalaya-why-garo-hills-council-elections-deaths-curfew-10575101>
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Social media references (for context only):

X post on demographics and violence location:

<https://x.com/viprabuddhi/status/2031407627784302603>



Army deployment video mention (from The Meghalayan Express):

Referenced in X posts like

https://x.com/Bartholomew_46/status/2031422053417628051

Arson-related video (general curfew/arson context, no confirmed masjid visuals): <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/9fgYNbONNbA> (titled "Curfew imposed in Meghalaya West garo hills")

BREAKING: Indian Army landed in Tura & West Garo Hills.

Following a day of intense violence and arson, 5 columns of the Indian Army have arrived to conduct flag marches. The situation reached a breaking point today after clashes left 2 dead and multiple vehicles/structures...

pic.twitter.com/dhGQCrKtdV

— Bartholomew J Basumatary (@Bartholomew_46) [March 10, 2026](#)

A massive protest against illegal immigrants from Bangladesh happened today in Garo Hills of Meghalaya.

My Q is who allowed Bangladeshis to infiltrate in the first place? And how could Miyas settle in ST majority Meghalaya?

Will [@meipat](#) explain to the world?

Will she remain... pic.twitter.com/3SV0Zd7B1e

— JJohnnymetei (@JohnnyMeetei) [March 10, 2026](#)

Curfew imposed, Army deployed

Violence spreads from Chibinang to Tura, Williamnagar

Tura, March 10

Flag march conducted as tensions rise over GHADC nomination row

Widespread violence and arson rocked Garo Hills on Tuesday, prompting authorities to impose curfew in Tura and across West Garo Hills district. The government deployed the Army, which staged flag marches in Chibinang—the worst-affected area where two people died in a group clash on Monday night.

The unrest began in Chibinang's plains belt region and quickly spread to district headquarters towns of Tura and Williamnagar, with incidents of arson, vandalism, and clashes reported from multiple locations.

The violence erupted after clashes between groups from two communities in Chibinang, amid rising tensions over the participation of non-tribal candidates in the upcoming Garo Hills Autonomous District Council (GHADC) elections. Tensions had been simmering for weeks, with several Garo protest groups opposing non-tribal participation. The situation escalated after former MLA Esmatur Mominin was allegedly assaulted at the Deputy Commissioner's office in Tura while attempting to file his nomination papers.

Protests from Mominin's home region led to arson attacks on shops and a student



union office, triggering further clashes that left two people dead. An entire stretch of Chibinang market was destroyed in the violence.

Curfew was imposed across the district, including Tura, and internet services were suspended for 48 hours starting Monday night.

On Tuesday, unrest spread to Tura as protestors assembled outside the DC office to prevent non-tribal candidates from filing nominations. Clashes erupted with security forces over unverified reports that candidates had taken shel-

ter in the police station, with stone-pelting reported.

By afternoon, violence reached Tura bazar, where certain places of religious significance were vandalized. Later, mobs attacked and set fire to two religious-related sites in Williamnagar, looting shops. A similar incident occurred in Dadenggre civil sub-division, where half a dozen stores were vandalized.

With local security stretched, the government deployed five Army columns, three CRPF companies, and one anti-riot Rapid Action Battalion

company, along with Assam special forces. The first flag march took place in Chibinang on Tuesday afternoon; a similar march is expected in Tura on Wednesday.

The district administration convened a peace meeting with religious leaders, senior citizens, and civil society representatives, including the Mothers' Union, urging communities to maintain calm, avoid escalation, and restore normalcy. Officials also asked residents to refrain from spreading rumours as security forces worked to contain the situation.

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