

Speech of NNC president, Ms. Adinno Phizo on 67th anniversary of Naga Plebiscite

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today is the Naga Day of the 67th Anniversary of Naga Voluntary Plebiscite which took place with great enthusiasm by the Nagas in Kohima on May 16, 1951. We are thankful to God for all the time He is guiding the Naga people. Under the leadership of the Naga National Council (NNC) President, A.Z. Phizo, made everything possible for the Nagas to uphold their right in any circumstance. When a copy of Naga Plebiscite was delivered to the first Indian Prime Minister, Mr. Nehru, he was outraged. After that, an order “Dead or Alive” and put a price on Mr. Phizo’s head and sent his Armed Forces to Nagaland. Only when Mr. Phizo appeared in London, UK in 1960, Mr. Nehru was shocked and had to show that some Nagas were with him and immediately arranged the present puppet Nagaland state government with easy money.

But since the Nagas are not demanding anything from India the bargaining is not there. Nagas are living in their own country, no connection with India at any time. The first contact was in May 1947 by their representatives from Constituent Assembly came to Kohima and talked to NNC inviting to join Indian Union but NNC categorically refused. After that they produced “Nine Point Agreement” but the word “agreement” was wrong. They always wanted to show the outside world that something to compromise between India and Nagaland in all these years. The strange thing is that no honest Indian among a billion people.

It is good to see that young people are concerned about the present situation and writing about their feeling and never ceasing to desperation. The right is on our side. NNC is not a political group but it is the voice of the Nagas and keep watch the situation for the good of the people and put the people in harmony. The Governmental Executive power is vested in the Federal Government of Nagaland, which controls the nation.

At present, the Indian Government is using ‘NSCN IM’ to bring division in the country and some of them have very little knowledge about Naga history but make them agreed to have a ‘framework agreement’ more than two years ago and kept it a secret. It is not a good sign.

Briefly about Naga history with the British: When the British decided to make peace with the Nagas in March 1880, the meeting took place at Mezoma on 27 March, 1880. The meeting was cordial and the British official produced a written document. Naga representative leader, Mr. Pelhu presented a live Tragopan to his British counterpart. In the course of the meeting, Mr. Pelhu replied to them for the document and said “what you have written there we do not know but if you want to stay in our country do not disturb our way of life” and he refused to sign the document. So it became an oral agreement till 1947 when Great Britain relinquished her power in our part of the world. That lasted for 68 years with the stay of the British in part of our country. And the Nagas made a “unique history” by not signing the Written Treaty.

The Nagas never lose their identity as Nagas. During the British time also they wrote about their Naga interpreters “scratch a Naga Dobashi (Angami) you will find a Naga”. The Nagas always maintain that they are a people in this world. Calling the Nagas as “savages” and “head hunters”

were arrogant language from the white men, colonial attitude to others. Because long before the white man came to Naga country, Naga villages were stationary and well established. They were surprised to see the terrace fields well kept and canals were brought in from faraway places for the fields, and people were hospitable to strangers.

The Nagas are defending their country all these years. English word is descriptive and to use “indigenous” instead of tradition in dress and sports is misleading others. If you call ‘indigenous’ means you are not a nation, but under foreign rule.

We all know that there is no common history between Nagaland and India and therefore to term our situation as “political problem” is wrong. In Naga Voluntary Plebiscite, almost one hundred percent declared not to join India. Soon after India invaded Nagaland. Unexpected, but the challenge did not frighten the Nagas but rose to defend their country.

The war went on almost ten years from 1954–1964 till the Ceasefire Agreement was signed between the Federal Government of Nagaland and the Government of India in May 1964. Nagas are living in their own country but Indian Government still did not withdraw her army from Nagaland. Instead, repeatedly imposed the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, (AFSPA), 1958 under article 355 of Indian constitution and surrounded Nagaland till today. We know we are a small nation but a big nation bullying a small one cannot be seen worthy of its stature.

About the Naga inhabited areas, it is not a question of Naga integration that some people make it politics at present where you can lose your right. As far as Nagaland is concerned, they are Nagas and will continue to be a Naga because they are not in disputed area where others can claim it. But they are Nagas all the time. No controversy.

By the grace of God, Nagas are alive today if anyone could remember what our people have gone through in the hand of the Indian Armed Forces. They behaved like savages if not animals, yet our people carry on with our faith in God. Many died but their sacrifices bring back a normal life to our people today; that should be remembered always.

We are a nation by our own right not given to us by others. There are many nations in this world inherited from their colonial masters, but difficult to adjust with one another. We should truly become a Christian nation not by words but by action in faith.

May God Bless Nagaland. Urra Uvie (our country is ours).