

Centre turns down UPDS demand for separate statehood



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The Centre has straightly rejected United Peoples' Democratic solidarity demand for separate statehood but in the same breath has informed them that there will be discussion on some of their demanded they included in their charter of demands. This was disclosed during a tripartite talk on Friday in New Delhi attended by Union home ministry officials, state government representatives and UPDS top guns. The outfit, however, asked the government how it could proceed with the UPDS charter of demands. According to information, the talks remained inconclusive and will resume in next month. Notably, since the signing of the ceasefire in 2002, the UPDS leadership has had only six rounds of talks with the government. The last such meeting was on July 26, 2006. On January 31, the outfit boycotted a meeting to extend the ceasefire. Earlier, the outfit blamed frequent confiscation of weapons, harassment, intimidation and arrests for the demoralisation of UPDS members. The outfit later set two more conditions before the Centre for the talks to resume. In a letter to the joint secretary (Northeast) in the home ministry, UPDS "foreign secretary" Klirdap Kathar said the outfit would sign a fresh ceasefire agreement only if Delhi agreed to hold a round of talks every three months until a solution was reached.. The UPDS other condition was that its demand for self-rule be included in the terms of reference of the proposed State Reorganisation body. Formed in 1999

after the merger of the Karbi National Volunteers and Karbi People's Front, the UPDS sought the "right to self-rule" for the Karbis under Article 3 of the Constitution, a special economic package for the development of the twin hill districts of Assam and a corridor connecting Karbi Anglong.

editor

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