

North East India Consultation Held to Protect Indigenous Peoples' Land and Human Rights



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The Centre for Research and Advocacy (CRA), Manipur, in collaboration with the Affected Citizens of Teesta, Sikkim, Borok Peoples Human Rights Organization, Tripura, and Civil Society Women Organization, Meghalaya, organized a consultation on the protection of Indigenous Peoples' Land and Human Rights from 4th to 5th March 2023 in Imphal, Manipur.

During the consultation, Mr. Jiten Yumnam, Secretary of CRA, Manipur, shared concerns about the increased targeting of the land, rivers, forests, and natural resources across North East India for dam building, energy projects, and extractive industries. These activities are being pursued without proper regard for indigenous peoples' rights and with increased financing from international financial institutions.

Other speakers included Mr. Gyatso Lepcha of the Affected Citizens of Teesta, Sikkim, who spoke about the sacredness of indigenous peoples' land, water, and rivers. Ms. Agnes Kharshiing of the Civil Society Women Organization, Meghalaya, shared her concerns about the extensive mining in Meghalaya causing massive environmental destruction and impacting people. Robin Moran, an environmentalist from Assam, shared his worries about oil exploration and mining concessions pursued without the consultation and consent of indigenous peoples.

The participants resolved that indigenous peoples' self-determined rights over their land and resources in North East India should be recognized. They called upon the Indian government to revoke plans to build hydroelectric projects, stop mining and oil exploration without peoples' consent, and stop all forms of forced eviction. The participants expressed their concern about mega infrastructure projects, high voltage transmission, and distribution, and urged the regulation of all agri-business with the involvement of corporates and international financial institutions to ensure accountability of corporations.

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