

Northeast Indigenous Organizations Condemn FIR Against Lawyer, Oppose Siang Dam Project in Arunachal Pradesh



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Three prominent Indigenous rights organizations from Northeast India — the Centre for Research and Advocacy (CRA), Manipur; Affected Citizens of Teesta (ACT), Sikkim; and Borok Peoples' Human Rights Organization (BPHRO), Tripura — have issued a strong joint statement in solidarity with the Adi people of Arunachal Pradesh. They condemned the recent filing of an FIR against human rights lawyer Ebo Mili and called for an immediate halt to the ongoing Pre-Feasibility Report (PFR) survey for the controversial 11,000 MW Siang Upper Multipurpose Hydroelectric Project (SUMP).

The organizations criticized the Government of India for proceeding with the survey without obtaining the free, prior, and informed consent of the local Indigenous communities, a violation of both constitutional safeguards and international human rights norms. They also denounced the December 2024 notification by the Arunachal Pradesh government authorizing the deployment of Central Armed Police Forces in Siang District to aid the dam survey, labeling it as a clear act of militarization.

"This is a blatant attack on democracy and the rights of the Indigenous Adi people," the statement read. "The dam poses grave risks to their land, forests, livelihood, culture, and identity. It threatens displacement, ecological destruction, and increased disaster vulnerability, including downstream flooding in Assam."

The joint press release also highlighted broader environmental risks, including the region's seismic vulnerability and the impacts of climate change, citing past disasters like the 2011 earthquake and the October 2023 glacial lake outburst that breached Sikkim's Teesta III dam.

The organizations demanded:

- The immediate withdrawal of the FIR against Ebo Mili.

- A halt to all survey activities for the Siang dam.
- Demilitarization of the affected areas.
- A genuine dialogue process with the Adi community.
- Exploration of sustainable development alternatives that respect Indigenous rights.

The statement concluded by urging the Indian government to prioritize the long-term interests and survival of the Indigenous peoples of Arunachal Pradesh over destructive mega-projects.

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Assam Times Staff. editor@assamtimes.org

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