

## CHAPTER 5

### KARBI MILITANT MOVEMENT AND ITS IMPACT ON STATEHOOD DEMAND

#### 5.1 Introduction

The ethnic militants are violence-oriented group drawing membership exclusively from an ethnic group and are working for the promotion and interest for them. In Karbi Anglong perspective, the Karbi militant are the ethnic militant group considering themselves as they are working for the interest and protection of the Karbi tribe. The militants pressurized the government to resolve the statehood demand at the earliest. In the process of their extreme agitation and vociferously demand for statehood it occurred number of incidences like inter-ethnic violence, human rights violation, etc. and has great impact on the statehood demand.

The past record tells that the Karbi and other tribes living in the territory were vocally demanded for Statehood. They were unitedly pressuring the government for separate statehood or atleast implementation of Article 244 (A) of the Indian Constitution which is a constitutional commitment. But after several incidents of ethnic violence, human rights violation in Karbi Anglong, the dependency between different tribes and communities living in the territory were in suspicion. The suspicion and distrust among indigenous people living in the territory has immensely weakened the statehood demand and public assumed it as to be the handiwork of ethnic militant.

#### 5.2 Ethnic Violence and Impact on Statehood Movement

The inter-ethnic conflicts and violence are which mostly the making of ethnic militant groups belonging to different tribes and communities. Whether the ethnic militants are fighting over resources or territory it has great impact on the Statehood movement. It has brought division among indigenous tribes like Karbi, Dimasa, Bodo, Kuki, Pnar and other communities living together for decades. The ethnic violence between Karbi and Kuki tribe in 2003 was the first major ethnic feud in the history of Karbi Anglong since the district was formed in 1951. And the second major ethnic feud occurred in 2005 between the Karbi and Dimasa tribe. The Karbi and Dimasa being the largest ethnic groups did not have any conflict. The killings have increased distrust and suspicion, the intensity of the violence has baffled both the communities.<sup>191</sup> It has also

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<sup>191</sup> Asian Centre for Human Rights (ACHR), Lesson Not Learnt by Assam: *Ethnic cleansing and internal displacement in Karbi Anglong and NC Hills*, 7 August 2005, p. 22

brought enmity and antagonism with other communities who are the victims of the ethnic violence.

According to competition theory, society revolves around a struggle for scarce of resources. It argues that it is not economic deprivation itself, or at least not alone, that gets people to mobilize.<sup>192</sup> On the contrary, economic advancement of previously disadvantaged groups can result in an escalation of inter-ethnic violence. According to this view, the mere fact that groups can compete for the same resources as a result of their economic advancement may contribute to conflict. This competition will be greater when the inequalities increase both on the elite and the mass level. The assumption here is that politics is not an automatic reflection of ethnic violence; on the contrary, ethnic violence is invoked through a political struggle against situations of marginalization and inequality. The economic deprivation, political suppression and other may be the factors responsible for such violences and the most significant impact was; the tribes are facing a hard time in uniting themselves and fight for Statehood to Karbi Anglong as in the past.

### **5.3 Backdrop of ethnic violence with Kuki tribe**

The Kukis in Karbi Anglong district are minor ethnic groups who resented over the step-motherly attitude of the government. They were about 20 Kukis villages in Karbi Anglong district coming from Manipur in the middle of 1960. And the early settler of the Kukis kept a close bond with the Karbis. And the two tribe lived together peacefully in the hilly areas and maintain brotherhood attachment for decades.

The suspicion between the two tribes began when the United People's Front of Assam (UPFA) was formed in 1991 by the Kukis under the leadership of Seijang Guite and Paolun Kipgen somewhere in the hills Karbi Anglong to protect the indigenous Kukis. The ultimate aim of the UPFA was to be rooted in Karbi Anglong by creation of Kuki Regional Council in Sinhason hills within the Autonomous District Council Area of Karbi Anglong. The Kukis in Karbi Anglong problem lies not only in political dimension but even in their economic dimension too. The tribe main source of income is agriculture which has been carried out by traditional method of Jhum cultivation along Singhason, Khanbamon and Borjan range of the district.

In order to materialize the demand the militants involved in illegal armed dealing and even threatening, killing and extortion from villagers. The exact intention of UPFA was exposed on December 20, 1991 when the Village Defense Party (VDP) of Longnit under the President of Jona Sing Tokbi and General Secretary Ratan Saha, located an abandoned oil tanker from Manipur at Jangphong Atup near Longnit. The VDP members

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<sup>192</sup> Susan Olzak and Joan Nagel, *op.cit.*

recovered one Self Loading Rifles (SLR), one 9 mm pistol and 900 numbers of live bullets meant for Kuki militants from the tanker. Later it was handed over to Manja Police Station by the VDP members.

The indigenous Kukis who came to the district after the formation of United Mikir and North Cachar Hills feels that due to the recent coming of Kukis from Nagaland and Manipur, the peaceful atmosphere which exist among different tribes and communities were distorted. And thereby a feud begins in the late 1993 between Kuki and Thadou in Singhason hills where dozens of houses were set ablaze and few villagers were killed. Thereby, the UPFA lost the confidence of Kuki people living in Singhason areas and later the militant group became defunct.

The problems tiptoed between Karbi and Kuki in Karbi Anglong after Naga-Kuki violences in Manipur. In 1993 during the Naga-Kuki violence, the worst carnage occurred at Zopuii, a remote Kuki village in the hill north of Imphal in February where 87 Kuki males were beheaded in a single night by Naga militants. These ethnic violence led to nearly 1,700 deaths, thousands of displacement and destruction of property worth million of rupees. The Paites, who are ethnic cousin of the Kukis had another feud in the 1999 with the Kukis. The Paites had developed close ties with the Nagas were involved in the violence that led to hundred of death from both the tribes.<sup>193</sup>

After Naga-Kuki and Kuki-Paite violences in the 1993 and 1999 respectively many Kukis moved to Karbi Anglong from neighbouring Nagaland and Manipur for shelter. But after the violences were over many the Kukis households did not return back to Nagaland and Manipur instead settled permanently in Karbi Anglong. And there was a sudden increase of Kuki population in the district so the Karbi Students Association (KSA) and Karbi So-arlo Amei (KARSA) had lodged a complaint with the District Election Officer, Karbi Anglong district. As the Mongjang Polling Station no. 68 and at present Polling Station no. 47 voters have increased drastically from 440 to 837 and P.Taizol Polling Station no. 70 was increased from 713 to 1140 under Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council electoral roll.<sup>194</sup>

The Kukis after their relocated to Karbi Anglong they invited Kuki militants like Kuki Revolutionary Army (KRA) and Kuki National Assembly (KNA) the breakaway faction of Kuki National Front (KNF) into the district and start harassing innocent villagers of Karbi, Dimasa Nepali and even their own tribe members.

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<sup>193</sup> Subir Bhaumik, *op.cit.*, 2009, pp.142-143

<sup>194</sup> Mondol Sing Bey, *op.cit.*, p.19

After the Kuki Revolutionary Army (KRA), a Kuki militant from Manipur sneaked into the Kuki dominated areas of Karbi Anglong has created more suspicion and distrust with the native tribe. On April 26, 2003 armed with sophisticated weapon the KRA militants barged into one Ghising Nepali house and also summoned one Longkoi Bey, SGB of Mohendijua and Dhansing Rongphar. The militant demanded 'tax' to be deposited by May 28 at Kholien, Kuki village under Singhason Constituency.

The state news reported that on May 10, 2003 one Langtuk Bey was brutally tortured by KRA militants near Kholien village while going for cultivating ginger and send him back with a warning-'Karbi and Dimasa are not to come to Singhason hills for cultivation'.<sup>195</sup>

On May 23, 2003 the KRA rejoinder by Zet Kuki, Secretary, Publicity and Information Wing appeared suddenly in the media under the caption "KRA claims Singhason not for Kukis only" denying KRA involvement of beating upon non-Kukis like Boro, Dimasa, Karbi and Nepali etc. One self-styled major Colen of KRA on receiving the news visited Ghising Basti and beaten up Thangkhosei Kuki and Paohen Kuki for helping in raising fund of Rs. 500/- per household for some 'irresponsible group' which had served notices of 'taxes' to 26 Kuki villagers in the name of KRA.<sup>196</sup> In such a juncture one Sikari Lama, an ex-service man was kidnapped by KRA militants from Longnit and demanded the family members to bring an amount of Rs. 3 lakhs as ransom. During his detention he overheard the KRA militants discussing of killing him and also to take away the money. Lama somehow understood their conversation and sensing the danger he extricated from the custody. He then spur of the moment, seized the captor's assault rifles and fired at them indiscriminately. Later he absconded with the arms and deposited it to Manja Police Outpost.

In another incident on April 29, 2003 one Khoya Timung of Jari Teron Village under Manja Police Station happened to come across KRA militants in the vicinity and threatened him not to inform the Karbi villagers about their presence.

On May 26, 2003 the KRA militants armed with sophisticated weapons assaulted 12 Karbi labourers. They were asked to lined up, kneel down with face down and started charging them. Four of the victims were identified as Sarthe Lekthe (28), s/o Mukhim Lekthe, Lai Teron (25), s/o Late Pang-e Teron, Sarthe Teron (20), s/o Late On Teron of 9 mile, Rongkimi village, Manja and Julie Timung of Kamala Bagan (Rongtheso) and names of another eight victims were not known

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<sup>195</sup> The Sentinel, May 10, 2003

<sup>196</sup> The Sentinel, May, 23, 2003

The KRA militants dressed in army fatigue with sophisticated weapons suddenly stormed at Longnit bazaar and picked a tea-stall owner and a Congress (I) party worker on August 26, 2003. All these incidents and events have craftily opened up for ethnic violence between the Karbis and the Kukis tribe in the territory. It has also contributed immensely for weakening the statehood movement in Karbi Anglong.

The two hill districts of Assam have been mysteriously subjected to repeated ethnic violences where hundreds of innocent lives were taken and thousand were rendered homeless. The ethnic militant groups have created conflict situations within and between tribal communities. The ethnic conflict between the Kukis and Karbis that was started in 2003 continued till mid 2004 was the handiwork of ethnic militants. And both the Karbi Longri North Cachar Hills Liberation Front (KLNLFF) and Kuki Revolutionary Army (KRA) were responsible for the killings of innocent people in the territory.<sup>197</sup>

The concealed agenda behind the ethnic violence between the Karbis and Kukis in Karbi Anglong were: (a) Enraged over atrocities made by both ethnic militant groups (b) Non-compromising on 'tax' levied by both militant groups (c) to control over resources in the territory and (d) to check demographic invasion. The violence was instigated by both sides of the militant groups.

For the purposed of the present study, while interviewing the villagers it was found that many of the villagers while coming for weekly market at Longnit were stop and abused by the armed Kuki militants at Longchorso, Nokjir areas which is just 5 kilometer from Longnit bazaar under Manja Police Station. The militants even forcefully checked the bags, baskets of the villagers with gun point. The villagers were harassed on many occasions in the hand of the militants.

There were also non-alignment on annual taxes levied by both Karbi and Kuki militants in the areas. The Karbi militants imposed annual taxes to the peoples of the district as fund for the movement. On such occasion, the Kukis villager were threatened by their own armed militants group not to pay taxes to Karbi militants, instead challenge them by imposing taxes to some Karbi villages. This non-compromising attitude on taxes reached the leaders to both militant groups. The Karbi militants then convened a meeting with the village headmen on the issue and to inform the Kuki militants to stop imposing taxes on the Karbis. Both the ethnic militant groups want to show their supremacy and control over resources.

In the mean time, experiencing the massive falling of trees in the name of ginger cultivation by the Kukis of Karbi Anglong the KLNLFF called for complete banned of

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<sup>197</sup> The Telegraph, March 31, 2004

ginger cultivation in the area. This was made known to the public in their latest publication of its mouthpiece '*Hemprek Kangthim*' wherein it said that the step was necessitated to protect biodiversity and environment in the district. It also asserted that lion share of money from ginger cultivators and business gone to the hands of Kuki Revolutionary Army.<sup>198</sup> And this has added fuel to the fire of the enmities between the two tribes.

### **5.3.1 Hostility between Karbi and Kuki militants**

The fighting against the 'outsiders' started by Karbi militants in early March 1999, when the KNV and KPF merged to form the UPDS. On April 9, 2000, massacre of 11 Nepalis by UPDS cadres opened a new chapter in the campaign against 'foreigner' or 'illegal immigrant' in Karbi Anglong. Though the Karbi militants initiated fighting against the illegal immigrant the tribal communities were not harassed in Karbi Anglong in spite of the Kuki militants harassing the innocent Karbi villagers in Singhason, Khonbamon and Borjan areas.

On October 31, 2003 the KRA militants demanded villagers of Pranprilangso (Thekarajan) a pairs of cattle, dogs or 10 chickens and to be brought to Leikot Kuki village by November 1. The villagers did not any pay heed to them so the militants threatened of dire consequences. On November 2 the KRA militants abducted 35 Karbi villagers and later 18 of them managed to escaped.<sup>199</sup> The same day KRA militant killed one Lunse Hanse of Pranprilangso. His dead body was not found but his clothes soaked with blood were later recovered by the villagers. The KRA militants took 12 villagers as hostages they used small Karbi children from Pranprilangso to Sarthe Ke-ap village as 'human shield' to thwart off the Karbi militant's counter attacked on their way. The UPDS (pro-talks) faction had issued initial warnings against the KRA, saying that it would not remain a mute spectator to the 'atrocities' being perpetrated on Karbi villagers by 'Kuki militants'. Nevertheless, intra-factional politics of UPDS notwithstanding, the pro-talks faction of the UPDS has now appealed to both the KRA and KLNLF (anti-talks faction) to put an end to the hostilities and release the hostages from confinement.

On November 3 the KRA militant burnt down 7 Karbi villages in Singhason area. And hundreds of villagers flee to safer places like Tarabasa, Phuloni, Bakulia, Longnit. In retaliation, the KLNLF militants burnt down hundred of houses in Gangjang village, which is considered to be the biggest Kuki village in Karbi Anglong and many of the

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<sup>198</sup> See '*Hemprek Kangthim*' (a mouth piece of KLNLF), June 30, 2003

<sup>199</sup> Written record of Rehabilitation Committee, Karbi-Kuki clashed 2003-2004, Longnit, Karbi Anglong.

villagers were killed and dumped in the nearby fishery as informed by the living victims of the violence to this researcher.

Highly decomposed bodies of abducted Karbi youth were later recovered from a dense forest by the villagers. They were identified as Lison Hanse (19), s/o Barika Hanse of Warren Milik village, Kangbura Timung (17), s/o Asot Timung of Sarthe Ke-ap village.<sup>200</sup>

The KRA publicity secretary Zet Kuki said his organization had been restraining itself in reverence to the ‘historical relationship’ between the Karbi and Kuki communities but warned of ‘Operation Volcano’ if the KLNLF donot stop meting atrocities on the Kukis living in Karbi Anglong. The Kuki Revolutionary Army then launched ‘Operation Volcano’ against the KLNLF militants. The KLNLF militant again retaliated the Kukis militants with its ‘Operation Super Volcano’ and resolute to flushing out from Karbi Anglong.

On November 11, 2003 three Kuki children were burnt to death at Lenmol villages of Khanbamon areas when KLNLF militants set ablazed to five houses belonging to the Kuki community. On November 12, 2003 Karbi youth armed with machetes, lathis and firearm reached Manja Baptist English School and abducted four Kuki students namely-Paominthang Tuboi, Kaiminlal Tuboi, Haojakam Thangneo and Mangboi Guite from examination hall. A female student Hoishi Lunkim narrowly escaped from the clutches of the abductors. The next day suspected KLNLF militants armed with sophisticated weapon attacked a Kuki village near Polytechnic in the vicinity of Diphu. Five houses were bunt down by the militants and 3 children were charred to death. The victims were identified as Phangmi Thadou, Vahuel Thadou and Kamboi Basumatary.<sup>201</sup>

At the dawn of November 29, 2003 the KRA militants attacked Balipathar Adarsha village when the village defense party normally rings the bell. Two men standing the guard post at the Nopak Terang point between the 11 (eleven) villages and the road linking to the forest zone were killed instantly by the attackers. The firing has alerted the entire village that allowed the majority of the villagers to flee to safety. The victims were identified as Sing Tokbi alias Koi (45) s/o Lt. Sar-et Tokbi of Nopak Terang village and Kangbura Terang (21) s/o Kania Terang of Noren Terang village. The militants continue their attack to adjacent village Tokolangso. They used Molotov cocktail —to torch the 116 houses in the nearly 1 hour 30 minute attack. In the incident female child Kajor Timungpi (5), d/o Mangal Timung, blind and infirm granny Kajor Tokbipi (80), w/o Late Rongdo Terang were burnt alive. A pregnant women Rubin

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<sup>200</sup> Pratidin, November 7, 2003

<sup>201</sup> The Sentinel, November 13, 2003

Timungpi (35), w/o Mon Ingti of Nopak Terang village was strikes with machete on her stomach as she could not flee due to bullet injury at her leg. Ruketson Timung (25), s/o Moja Timung of Nopak Terang village was also shot dead by the attackers.

The following villages were torched instantaneously— (1) Lobon Kro, (2) Nopak Terang, (3) Mon Ronghang, 4) Sarthe Teron, (5) Kangbura Kro, (6) Borlai Hanse, (7) Diring Timung (Jilangso-biggest villages), (8) Senso (Long Bey) Bey, (9) Habe Bey, (10) Hori Terang and (11) Hijunglangso. The attackers consisted of 20-30 people including the villagers and led by armed KRA militants.

On November 30, 2003 unknown miscreants then burnt down an abandoned Kuki's house near TV Relay Centre (Doordarshan), Diphu but no one was injured in the incident as no family members lived in the house.

On December 1, 2003, the KRA militants with the Kuki villagers suddenly attacked a Church at Upper Ok-kehai. The attack came when the villagers were inside the Church for discussion on Jubilee celebration of the Church. The militant indiscriminately spray bullets at un-armed villagers and killing four on the spot. The victims were identified as Samuel Rongpi (25), Mon Sing Tisso (45), Bidya Rongphar (49) and an Evangelist Barnabas Phangcho (55). The attackers then torched 25 houses in Kania Rongphar, Jensing Terang, Sikari Tokbi and Kamsing Terang villages. The villagers informed the police but never reached the spot later they informed the matter to the army camp in Cement Corporation of India (CCI) quarry at Hidipi. The army took prompt action and killed the fleeing militant. The army recovered an AK-47 rifles and other indiscriminate documents from the slain militant. That was the second time the KRA militants attacked the villages under Bokajan subdivision.

On January 18, 2004, members of KLNLF swooped on the Basamili village at around 9:00 a.m. and started firing indiscriminately killing Kimboi Singson, Ngaineichong Lenthang and Koinem Singson on the spot and injuring three villagers. They also set ablazed around 14 houses.<sup>202</sup> The KRA militants killed 3 Nepali labourers on March 17 when they are working in a ginger field at Phailong.

On March 19, 2004, suspected KLNLF militants gunned down 5 Kuki villagers including a woman and 10 houses were torched at Thenbung village in Karbi Anglong district.<sup>203</sup>

On March 24, 2004, suspected KRA militants groups in Karbi Anglong district allegedly massacred twenty-four Karbi villagers. The militants raided the three Karbi villages namely Udeng Tisso, Sarpo Teron and Sarthe Engleng village, dragged villagers

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<sup>202</sup> The Sentinel, January 21, 2004

<sup>203</sup> The Telegraph, March 21, 2004



out of their houses, lined them up and fired indiscriminately.<sup>204</sup> The KRA militants then attacked Jari Teron village under Manja Police Station at around 12 noon killing 6 villagers belongs to Karbi tribe.

On 27 March 2004, Kuki armed groups attacked Karbi villages of Arlongpharla, Boha-kangtui in Deopani area under Bokajan police station and started torching houses, lobbed grenade and blocking the villagers escaped route forcing them to move upward into the jungle. The victims include Chandra Bahadur, Raju William and Joyram Kathar. Other three villagers Lindok Ingti, Ken Lekthe and Manik Lekthe, were seriously injured in the incident.<sup>205</sup>

On July 3, 2004 the KRA militants came to Nobin Tisso village of Upper Deopani under Bokajan sub-division and firing indiscriminately in the village where one person was killed and other three were critically injured. The attacker came to the village in Shaktiman truck and Maruti van and they opened fire at the house Borsing Teron, when the family members were fast asleep. Where a young boy Jiten Teron (15) was killed; his father Borsing Teron, brother Rocky Teron and a neighbour Ranjit Ingti were seriously injured in the incident. After committing the crime the attackers return to the same route.

### **5.3.2 Impact of Karbi-Kuki violence**

The Karbi-Kuki violence in 2003 has immensed impact on ethnic people of both the tribes. Due to the violence internal displacement took place in the territory. Many of the Karbi and Kuki villages were abandoned and were relocated to safer place for such unprovoked ethnic violence carried out by the ethnic militants. In the incident hundred of innocents lives were taken including children and women, thousand of the villagers were render homeless from both the tribes. The rehabilitation committee recorded that there were 7 relief camps with 1,727 Karbis families who are staying at Longnit.<sup>206</sup> And in Rongplimplam, Dillai and Hidipi areas altogether 975 Karbis families are staying in different relief camps. In the ethnic violence motivated ethnic militants, fortyfive of the Karbi villagers were killed both by KRA militants and security forces. And in Manja and other areas altogether 325 Kukis families are taking refuge in different relief camps and some families moved to Manipur, Nagaland state and N.C Hills district for safety. Altogether twelve persons belonging to Kukis tribe were killed by KLNLF militants and 6 childrens were charred to death.<sup>207</sup> And three of the Kukis villagers were seriously injured in the violence. It has also fall impact on other communities living in the affected

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<sup>204</sup> Mondolsing Bey, *op.cit.*, pp. 26-27

<sup>205</sup> The Assam Tribune, March 28, 2004

<sup>206</sup> Written record of Rehabilitation Committee, Karbi-Kuki clashed 2003-2004, Longnit, Karbi Anglong

<sup>207</sup> This data was collected from different organizations and sources including interviewing the victim's family and memoirs. Many of the Kukis families are living in the hilly terrain of the district where security forces and media person could not reach in time. Therefore great possibility of exclusion of number of persons killed in the violence.

areas where 16 Nepalese families were rendered homeless and 5 of them were killed in the violence. And the Table 5.1 shows the nature of incidents during Karbi-Kuki violence in 2003-04.

**Table 5.1: Nature of Incidents during Karbi-Kuki Violence in 2003-04**

<b>Nature of incidents</b>	<b>Karbi tribe</b>	<b>Kuki tribe</b>	<b>Other communities</b>	<b>Total number</b>
Abducted	35	06	-	41
Civilain Injured	07	03	-	10
Burnt alive	02	06	-	08
Civilian killed	45	12	05	62
Militant killed	-	01	-	01
<b>Total</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>05</b>	<b>122</b>

Source: Field Study

As the ethnic violence between Karbi and Kuki started in the month of November, 2003 the villagers could not harvest their paddy and ginger where its impact fall on to the economic condition of the people. Many of the childrens could not write their examination due to the ethnic violence. Above all the relationship between the two tribes was broken down. The demand for statehood was affected as the Kukis were afraid to come out openly and support the movement. And for several years the Kukis leaders were sidelined by the Karbi leaders in the political arena of Karbi Anlong. All these have brought distorted relationship between the two tribes. Political representation of the Kukis in Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council was not seen. The doubt and suspicion by two tribes are becoming wider and wider. The joy of having close ties and striving together for Statehood was seen no more. Therefore, the Karbi-Kuki violence also contributed for the weakening of Statehood demand made by the people of Karbi Anglong.

#### **5.4 Karbi and Bodo violence: A confrontation of militancy**

Many of the Bodos communities came to Karbi Anglong in search of green pasture from Kokrajhar, Udalguri, Darrang districts of Assam. This community belongs to the Schedule Tribe (plain) category. The Karbi and Bodos are living together for generation without any violence and hostility. But after the formation of ethnic militant groups in both the communities, doubt and suspicion always remain where sporadic violences occurred in beginning of 2005.

Before the confrontation of Karbi-Bodo militants in the district the Bodo militants are actively operating in the district where many of the innocent were harassed. The Bodo Liberation Tiger (BLT) and National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) militant mainly sneaked into Karbi Anglong from Kokrajhar, Darrang and Udalguri district of

Assam. They demanded for the implementation of Clause 8 of the Bodoland Accord of 1993 and provide Scheduled Tribes (hills) status to the Bodos living in Karbi Anglong

Following are the few incidents which led to the confrontation between Karbi and Bodo militants in the territory. On March 4, 2003 one Arup Shyam, SO in PWD department and Subhas Das were kidnapped by the NDFB militants from 7<sup>th</sup> Mile of Diphu-Manja road.

The NDFB militants in league with DHD have also tried to de-reserve the Kathangsi Reserve Forest near Dhansiri. After the reversal in Bhutan, the NDFB has seeks to establish another training ground linking Nagaland to Myanmar was engaged by settling the Bodos communities from Kokrajhar and Bongaigaon in the forest areas. The aims are to- create a bypass to foreign countries and to create a strong foothold in the district.<sup>208</sup> The Deputy Commissioner, Karbi Anglong has asked the Conservator of Forests to verify the report in the field through DFOs, and has asked him to file a report with specific comment.<sup>209</sup>

On May 17, 2003 the NDFB militants abducted one Kumar Singh and four other along with truck (NL-04A-3285 and ASN-2221) from Pathar Quarry when they went for collecting stones near Manja. Again on May 26 the NDFB militants kidnapped Shankar Shah alias Lal Bihari from Manja bazaar at gun point.

On January 19, 2005 one Khorgeswar Khaklary (Headman) of village Phuloni was kidnapped by suspected KLNLF militants for offended to pay tax demanded by them. Later Khaklary was killed near Kangthilangso under Dokmoka Police Outpost by the militants. In retaliation to that, one Kumsing Teron (28), s/o Rongmi Teron of Desoi Teron Village, Phuloni was physically assaulted by surrendered Bodo militants at Langhin Bazaar on January 20, 2005. On the same day some surrendered Bodo militants in the sequences they also assaulted Kania Rongphar (33), Babu Sing Tokbi (25), Bidya Sing Ke-ap (30) and Bura Sing Kro (35) and the victims lodged a complaint to Dokmoka Police Outpost.

All these incidents carried out by ethnic militants of both the Karbi and Bodo communities also contributed for misunderstanding and suspicion between them. Though the Bodo's communities have represented in Karbi Anglong Autonomus Council even then the trust and confidence has deeply weakened. And these have also contributed for the destabilizing of Statehood movment in the district. To bring back the past impression

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<sup>208</sup> Aaji, March 13, 2003

<sup>209</sup> The Sentinel, March 10, 2003

and environment among these tribes, besides it will need decades of hard work by dedicated and selfless leadership.

### **5.5 The spark of Karbi and Khasi (Pnar) violence**

When the United Mikir and North Cachar Hills (now Karbi Anglong) was created, Government of Assam vide Notification No. TAD/R/31/ 50/204 dated the 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1951 included the Block I and II area to Karbi Anglong. And the Karbi, Khasi and Pnar (Jaintia) tribe have been living together peacefully in the area for decades.

The Khasi (Pnars) of the Block I and II areas in Karbi Anglong have been trying to joint with Meghalaya. These areas have remained a disputed area between Assam and Meghalaya for a long time. But the friction between the Karbis and the people of the Jaintia Hills has started when the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council has issued eviction notice to the people who have been illegally settled in the forest area of Block I and II in pursuance of Supreme Court of India's order.

It has added much fuel when the Karbi militants reigned in the Jaintia (Pnar)-inhabited areas of Block I in the areas like Lamurang, Denler and Tibin harassing the innocent villagers. During the Legislative Assembly elections in February 2003, threats had been issued by the UPDS to all residents living in the bordering villages, and on February 8, 2003 the militants killed six villagers in the Jaintia Hills district these has culminated in macabre incidents of pre-poll violence. It has forced over 200 Khasi and Pnar people to leave their homes due to irksome carried out by the Karbi militants.

In the meantime one Eldrin Tisso, a student of Sacred Heart Theological College of Mawlai was burnt alive in Shillong by the Khasi's miscreants on June 9, 2005. The other three Karbis students study in Shillong were physically assaulted by the Khasis. The victims were identified as Ranjit Kramsa (18), Risim Rongpi (18) and Sujit Taro (19) of Diphu. The students were picked up from Lummari Lavila Hostel at Laitumkhray by the Khasi's miscreant.

Due to the involvement of ethnic militants and the hidden agenda of Pnar tribe living in Block-I and Block-II the situation was aggravated. However, the Government of India has instituted an inquiry committee whether people of Block-I and II to join Meghalaya or to stay with Karbi Anglong. The committee was headed by Ex-Chief Justice Mr. Y.V. Chandrasud to solve the problem of Block I and II of Karbi Anglong. Personally he visited the areas and submitted the report to the Government of India. Inquiry was based on the linguistic pattern of population in the area and concluded that

Block I and II have been inhabited predominately by the Karbi people so the inclusion of the areas to Meghalaya was out of question.

The question of Block-I and II was solved but the trust and confidence level of both the Karbi and Khasi (Pnar) was weakened because of the interference of ethnic militants groups. The Karbi and Khasi militants are active in the areas and in such a situation to bring dependence relationship between the two tribes were weakened. And the support for Karbi Statehood movement from other minority indigenous group of the territory has destabilized.

### **5.6 Backdrop of Ethnic Violence with Dimasa tribe**

The Dimasa is one of the tribal living in Karbi Anglong. The tribe is mainly concentrating in Diphu, Dhansiri, Mohendijua, Langsoli-et and other places in the territory. The Karbis and Dimasas are maintaining amiable relationship in the past. And these are the two tribes which championed the Statehood Movement in the two hill districts of Assam. Since 1960 the two tribes are unitedly pressuring the government for separate stathood to the hills areas of Assam. The two districts were given same pattern of administration under the provision of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India. But the troubles started when ethnic militants has given birth in the two sturdy tribes of the territory.

The Dima Halam Daogah (DHD) was formed under the leadership of Dilip Kumar Diphusa in 1995 after almost all the leaders and cadre of the erstwhile Dimasa National Security Force (DNSF) surrendered *en masse*. The DHD demands Dimarji kingdom comprising the Dimasa-inhabited areas of North Cachar Hills, Karbi Anglong, parts of Nagaon district and parts of Dimapur district of Nagaland. Its rival faction the Black Widow was formed by the ousted Chairman- Jewel Garlossa and was active in the twin hill districts of Assam.

The activities of Dimasa militants have grown its intensity since 2002 when they ambushed a jeep carrying ONGC engineers, CISF jawans and contract-workers near Dhansiri. In the ambushed six persons were killed and two victims belong to Karbi tribe on June 24, 2002. The militant reigns of terror were upon non-Dimasas communities living in Dhansiri area. The DHD militants even ransacked the Primary Health Centre at Dhansiri on July 2, 2002 without any proper investigation. The DHD entered cease-fire agreement with the state government on January 1, 2003.

After the ceasefire agreement the DHD militants are moving freely with armed where on April 27, 2003 mask DHD militant armed with sophisticated weapon threatened VDPs at Manja market. The DHD militant allegedly put up the signboard with the word-

‘Dimaraji Demand Area’ in different places in Dhansiri area of Karbi Anglong district. The victims’ villagers reported that DHD militants were perpetrating atrocities on them while going for jhum cultivation, betel leaf plantation, market, etc. for not paying taxes to them.

On September 23, 2003 the United People’s Democratic Solidarity (UPDS) happened to visit Gidingpur village and come across the signboard writing ‘Eastern Dimaraji’. The UPDS then fighting for self-rule for the Karbi tribe were snubbed it, thinking that it is a mockery to the Karbi tribe by Dimasa militants as Gidingpur is not under NC Hills (present Dima Hasao) district. The UPDS photograph the signboard and brought to Diphu without any provocation and appeal the people to maintain peace and tranquility in the area. Having not found the signboard, armed DHD militants attacked Loringlangso Karbi village on September 24, 2003 at around 10:00 pm. In the attacked some of the villagers were seriously injured and admitted to Diphu Civil Hospital for treatment. They warned the villagers with dire consequences if ‘Dimaraji’ signboard cannot be displayed at the earliest.<sup>210</sup>

On October 14, 2003 the DHD militant with sophisticated weapons surrounded the Karbi villagers at 5:00 am in Doldoli area and started torturing, air shooting and rebuked them with communal provocative words and challenge the UPDS cadres. The matter was later informed to the Deputy Commissioner of Karbi Anglong through a memorandum by Dhansiri-Dillai Border Areas Welfare Society (DDBAWS) on October 17, 2003. The society seeks immediate security forces for protection of innocent lives and property in the area. They also demanded for confinement of DHD cadres or shift the designated camp as they may lead to communal violence in the near future. In the memorandum the society also seeks for high level judicial inquiry into October 14 incident, Flushing out of NDFB militant which are active in Doldoli area and immediate halting of timber smuggling by anti-social elements and stop all sorts of extortion by militants.

In another incident the DHD militant hurled grenade at a Pharmacy in Manja on December 1, 2003 injuring two salesmen. They were later shifted to Gauhati Medical College for treatment.

The Karbi villagers were at panic when they saw the DHD militants arming the Dimasa villagers in Dhansiri area. It was also reported that the DHD gave shelter to KRA militants in the area and secretly trying to attack the Karbi villages. And on December 28, 2003 the DHD militant shoot at Basir Ahmed, a local fish merchant of Diphu and injuring him critically. He was later rushed to Down Town Hospital, Dispur for treatment.

On March 1, 2004 the five DHD cadres raided Kothalguri Dimasa village in Dhansiri and started beating the innocent villagers. Later they randomly went to Sonari

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<sup>210</sup> Mondol Sing Bey, *op.cit.*, p.50

Nepali village, Longsing Timung and Longsing Kro Karbi village and assaulted the villagers without any rhyme and reason. Three cadres were in army uniform. The victim included Ratna Bahadur (58), Kangbura Timung (40), Kamsing Timung (18), Kamar Timung (35), Kangther Timung (50), Rajesh Langthasa (21), Lomit Langthasa (20), Sikari Kro (15), Babu Tokbi (18) and Longki Teron (15). One Firoj Kemprai (15), s/o Bidhan Kemprai of Kothalbari accompanied the DHD cadres. The enraged villagers then gheraoed the house of Firoj Kemprai and he accepted the fact. On March 2, a public meeting of both Dimasa and Karbi villagers was held in the house of Longsing Kro, (Village Headman of Doldoli) to avoid communal violence. An agreement was reached for identifying and producing the five DHD cadres. After the meeting two motorcycle borne DHD cadres kidnapped Jagat Kro (20), s/o Longsing Kro and asked the Village Headman of the agreement letter in exchange of the kidnapped Karbi youth.

It was also reported that the NDFB, KRA, DHD militants are taking training inside Kathangsi Reserve Forest terrorizing the Adivasi dwellers at Nohorlangso

The tension has added much fuel to Missibailam incident bordering Nagaland. The area is dominated by Dimasas and it was reported that the area were under illegal occupation by Nagas. While going for eviction, a Magistrate Dipankar Das and a policeman were shot dead by Naga miscreants on July 1, 2004. The impression then was that some Dimasa militant leaders had permitted the Nagas to settle down in the area in exchange with huge money and arms. Thereafter the Karbi leaders started viewing a section of the Dimasa leaders with suspicion and blaming them of compromising their territory.

### **5.6.1 Hostility between Karbi and Dimasa militants**

The Karbis and the Dimasas are the major hill tribes of Assam and governed by Autonomous Councils set up under the Sixth Schedule. They have been fighting for political freedom from Assamese rule for the past several decades. A tribal mass movement under the joint leadership of the Karbis and the Dimasas climaxed when a tripartite MoU was signed between the movement leaders and Government of Assam on April 1, 1995. The MoU enhanced little power to both the Autonomous Councils of Assam. But in the hill districts it ultimately failed to fulfill the aspiration of the people. The immediate fall out was the proliferation of ethnic militancy and ethnic mobilization of even smaller tribal groups that set the stage for inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic contradictions and confrontations. The ongoing violence seems to be part of the ramifications of the renewed ethnic mobilization.<sup>211</sup>

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<sup>211</sup> Tom Mangatthuthazhe, *Violence and Search for Peace in Karbi Anglong*, Guwahati: North Eastern Social Research Centre, 2008 available at [www.onlineministries.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/NESRC/Publications/Violence.pdf](http://www.onlineministries.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/NESRC/Publications/Violence.pdf)

The signing of ceasefire agreements by the Government of India with two different militant organizations namely - United Peoples Democratic Solidarity (UPDS) of the Karbis and Dima Haram Daogah (DHD) of the Dimasas had fetched great hope for peace and solution to the long-standing problems of the hills tribes of Assam. But setting up of an unguarded DHD designated camp at Dhansiri in Karbi Anglong became a controversial issue between the UPDS and the DHD. There has been a protest even from the village level and a memorandum has been submitted to the authority concern on the issue. They demanded that DHD designated camp should not be allowed to set up at Dhansiri of Karbi Anglong as UPDS never thought of setting up their designated camp at Umrongso of NC Hills though there is substantial Karbi population in the area. Simmering tensions have built up between the two outfits as well as between the Karbis and the Dimasas on the issue over the years and only a small spark was needed to ignite a full-scale violence. The authority was aware of the foreseen situation but did nothing worthwhile to shift DHD camp to NC Hills and this is how the ethnic feud erupted in Karbi Anglong.

On September 26, 2005 three dead bodies of Dimasa Auto rickshaw drivers were found with their vehicles (AS-09-4943 and AS-09-9345) nearby a Karbi hamlet of Rongkimi, about 32 Km from Diphu, implicitly suggesting a Karbi hand in the killing. In protest against the killing the Jadikhe Naishom Hasom, Dimasa Sahitya Sabha of Dimasa organizations has called 10 hours Karbi Anglong bandh and Karbi organizations supported the bandh as solidarity and appeal for independent judicial inquiry. There were no adverse reactions from both the tribes till October 2 when five members of the same family were butchered by DHD militants at Phonglangso village (Diphu-Lumding road) which is just 8 km from the district headquarter. In remonstrance against the incident the CPI (ML) and ASDC (U) has called 24 hours and 10 hours Karbi Anglong bandh on October 4 and 5 respectively. But no Dimasa organizations supported the bandh as solidarity.

On October 4 three Karbi villagers were killed with machetes at Upper Dikrong near Dillai due to which the CPI (ML) has called short the bandh to 10 hours for easy public movement. Then the situation was threatening enough for the imminent communal conflagration. But the State government upon which the 'law and order' department is vested took no action. The vicious cycle of retaliation and counter-retaliation then started which has snowballed into a worst ever carnage in the history of Karbi Anglong.

While the Chief Minister of Assam Mr. Tarun Gogoi was reviewing the situation in Diphu on October 10, 2005 the UPDS militants stormed into Kheroni Dimasa village and 63 houses were set ablaze and 5 Dimasa villagers were gunned down. And on the same day 4 houses belonging to Dimasa community were set on fire in Diphu.



Seven villages belonging to Karbi community namely Loringlangso, Jensing Teron, Kania Engleng, Ramsing Hanse, Dok Rongpi, Longsing Timung and Desoi Rongpi of Daldali and Dhansiri area were attacked by DHD militants and 336 houses were set ablaze on October 10. The DHD militants even threatened the Garo community living in Basbari village near Doldoli and panic them to take shelter in Rengma Community Hall at Diphu.

On October 12, 2005 Disagadiba Dimasa village was torched down by UPDS militants where one woman was hacked to death. The next day on October 13, 2005 several Dimasa villages were torched down in Manja area raising the number of refugees to about thirty thousand.

On October 14, 2005 torching of houses continued in Dhansiri area by UPDS militants. On October 15, 2005 the UPDS militants attacked abandoned Dimasa village in Disagadiba where 100 houses were torched. In the same day 44 houses were torched in Borjan, Mijungdisa, Thapadao villages by the UPDS militants. The DHD militant also attacked Langtuk Terang village of Doldoli area where 3 persons were seriously injured and 5 women were found missing. Torching of abandoned villages continued unabated by both the UPDS and DHD militants.

On October 16, 2005 the UPDS militants fell upon Dimasa villages at Hojaiपुर and torched down 51 and three villagers were killed. The DHD militants also set ablaze Mansing Tisso, Dola Engleng and Sarthe Singnar village in Langmili area. Suspected DHD militant also lobbed a grenade into the resident of Longsing Teron, editor Thekar (a Karbi daily newspaper publishing from Diphu).

On October 17, 2005 at around 6:30 am two Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council buses (AS-09-4748 and AS-09-3896) were seized by DHD militants at Charchim of West Karbi Anglong and 50 innocent passengers mostly Karbis were hacked to death and later burnt down the buses into ashes. The armed militants soon after entered Prisek Village burnt down six houses and killed five villagers. Two bodies were found in a heap of ashes in the village. The militant then attacked the adjacent village Charchim and burnt down 77 houses and killed seven innocent villagers. On the same day 45 houses of Jayram Tisso village, near Longsoli-et were set on fire by the unknown miscreants. The repercussions of violence now extended to the western part of Karbi Anglong where the irate mob then put ablaze 30 houses at Hanlokrok Dimasa village and another 25 houses at Deramukh Dimasa village.

On October 18, 2005 at least 71 houses were burnt down by the militants at Ekorani and Alturam Dimasa Village under Manja Police Station. Several houses belonging to Dimasa in Bhelapara, Waijungdisa, Rongjamir, Satgaon, Disagisim and Huripur were burnt down into ashes. The vengeance continue by both of the tribes in the ethnic feud where on October 20, 2005 about 50 Dimasa houses in Khejorbon Dillaji,

Kalko and Kerala Singh were set on fire and 19 houses in Koka and Khesari Dimasa villages in Hojaipur areas. The next day the villagers and security forces found nine unidentified bodies from Hojaipur area.

On October 22, 2005 a group of 40-50 armed UPDS militants attacked Belaram Dimasa Village which is 4 kilometers from Bakalia and Joydhan Phonglosa and Chompa Thausen were seriously injured in the attacked.

On November 2, 2005 unknown miscreant stop a Public bus (AS-02-5103) and killed 2 Dimasa at Sorsori near Diphu town and on the same day the house belonging to Subhas Difusa was also set ablaze at Rukasen at the heart of Diphu town. The UPDS militants again attacked Dimasa village at Nilapur and burnt down some houses. The DHD militants on November 3, 2005 open fire a passenger bus at Mohendijua with sophisticated weapon and injuring one.

On November 16, 2005 an organization called Self Rule Demand Committee-People's Guard (SRDC-PG) served a 'Quit Notice' to the Dimasa people living at Amlapatty and threatened of dire consequences if they fail to leave the town at the earliest.

On November 17, the miscreant also burnt down the houses of Bhaigyalal Jigung and Harilal Barman at Beltola and Lorulangso respectively. Two Karbi youth were killed by DHD militants on November 21, 2005 while going for looking their crops and belongings at Langmili.

On November 29, 2005 the UPDS militant attacked Gidingpur, Hapjan area of Dimasa village and burnt down 50 houses and killed 2 villagers.

On December 1, 2005 the UPDS militant made a grenade attacked to the house of Padma Maibongsa at Valley View who is the President of Jadikhe Naisom Hasom (the Dimasa apex body) but no one was hurt in the incident.

And on December 9, 2005 the miscreants set ablazed 3 houses belonging to Dimasa community at Ganganagar of Tumpreng area. In spite of heavy security forces deployed in vulnerable areas the militant had gun down the headman of Kheroni Dimasa village which is just 3 km from Manja on December 13, 2005. He was fired at by a three member group of militants.<sup>212</sup>

### **5.6.2 Impact of Karbi-Dimasa violence**

In the whole episode of carnage carried out by the ethnic militant groups of UPDS and DHD with some possible helped from villagers in 2005 was irreparable losses to

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<sup>212</sup> Mondolsing Bey, *op.cit.*, 2010 pp. 64-68

lives and properties. Both the tribes were badly affected socially, economically and politically. The two tribes are demographically larger in number than other indigenous tribes living in the twin hill districts of Assam. Since the formation of APHLC for separate hills state in 1960 the two tribes are working hand in hand to free themselves from Assam. And when the Autonomous State Demand Committee (ASDC) was in power from 1986, Karbi and Dimasa along with other linguistic minority groups of the hills are vocally demanding for implementation of Article 244 (A) of the Indian Constitution for several decades. But the situation changes when the two tribes having their own ethnic militant groups are demanding the statehood separately. The Karbi militant demanding a separate homeland for the Karbis with a definite territory while the Dimasa militant too demanding a separate homeland for Dimasa tribe including part of Karbi Anglong. All these have brought hostility between the two warring ethnic groups in the two hills district of Assam.

The violence that broke out between Karbi and Dimasa in 2005 was one of the worse conflicts in the history of Karbi Anglong. Many of the innocent were killed and thousand of people were rendered homeless. The nature of incidents during Karbi-Dimasa Violence in 2005 is given in Table 5.3

**Table 5.3: Nature of incidents during Karbi-Dimasa violence in 2005**

<b>Nature of incidents</b>	<b>Karbi tribe</b>	<b>Dimasa tribe</b>	<b>Other communities</b>	<b>Total number</b>
Civilian killed	81	17	02	100
Civilian injured	04	02	-	06
Houses burnt	464	513	-	977
Grenade attack	01	01	-	02
Civilian abducted	05	-	-	05
<b>Total</b>	<b>555</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>1090</b>

Source: Field Study

Different writers on the ethnic violences and arms conflict in Karbi Anglong always bonded, control of resource as the root cause. The fact is that the ethnic violence which shook the state of Assam in 2005 between the Karbi and Dimasa ethnic militants is not a fight for resources. But it is an assertion of supremacy over their land and protection of its people. The ethnic militants are violence oriented groups which are trying to protect the interest of their ethnic group at the cause of other. Due to the ideological differences and internal organizational divergence, the Karbi-Dimasa violence has brought great impact on the statehood movement. Aftermath of the violence both the tribes are in suspicion for further course of joint Statehood movement. The leaders of both the tribes are trying their best to restore back the broken relationship which once filled with doubts and suspicions. The Karbis and Dimasa tribes have refrained that the violence which took place in 2005 was not by the ethnic people but between the ethnic militant groups and the civilian are just facing the brunt.

Out of the 32,871 displaced persons in Karbi Anglong, 5,600 are Dimasas, 25,602 are Karbis and 1669 are other communities. According to the statement provided by the District Administration, there were 79 camps respectively 57 in Karbi Anglong, 7 in North Kachar Hills and 15 in Nagaon district (Hojai).<sup>213</sup> The below given Table 5.6 shows the total numbers of camps and inmates during Karbi and Dimasa violence 2005.

**Table 5.3: Total numbers of camps and inmates during Karbi-Dimasa violence 2005**

District	No. of Relief Camps	No. of Camp Inmates	Adult Male	Adult Female	Minor Male/female	No. of inmates who left for home	Person died in camps
Karbi Anglong	57	36555	11570	10914	14071		8
NC Hills	7	2135	631	777	727	550	1
Hojai(Nagaon)	15	5326	1302	851	3137		
<b>Total</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>44016</b>	<b>13503</b>	<b>12542</b>	<b>17971</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>9</b>

Source: Deputy Commissioner Office, Diphu (2005)

### 5.7 Human Rights and Karbi Militant Movement:

The North-Eastern states of India have been witnessing gross human rights violations as most of the ethnic militant groups in the region indulge in violence and bloodshed on the pretext of self-determination or separate statehood. Unfortunately, the Karbi militants also evoke a kind of situation in the name of self-determination not spontaneously sanctioned by the civil society. The militants in Karbi Anglong were also responsible for grave violations of international humanitarian laws especially by targeting the innocent civilians. They even targeted the police and armed security forces in order to spread terror and bring fear psychosis among the mass public. In June 2000, members of the UPDS carried out attacks against Hindi-speaking farmer in Hamren sub-division of Karbi Anglong.<sup>214</sup> The study revealed that, the different militants' group presence in the district was responsible for ethnic violence in Karbi Anglong. They were behind the two major ethnic violence between Karbi-Kuki in 2003, Karbi-Dimasa in 2005 and minor ethnic violence between Karbi-Khasi (Pnar) in 2003, Karbi-Bodo in 2005. Where hundreds of innocent were killed and thousands rendered homeless. Beyond that there were uncountable sporadic human rights violations meted out by them. Thus demand for self-determination or separate statehood supported by militancy continues to create a serious socio-economic and socio-political problems resulting in mass violation of human rights in the district. It is ironical that those people who claim the human rights of self-determination refuse to respect the human rights of the individual of the civil society.

<sup>213</sup> A Brief status of Relief Camps and Distribution of Materials during ethnic violence in Karbi Anglong district as on November 30, 2005 issued by Office of the Deputy Commissioner of Karbi Anglong, Diphu

<sup>214</sup> See, Report of Fact Finding Team into Incidents of Human Rights Violations in Karbi Anglong District in Assam, Guwahati: Lachit Bordoloi, 2002

On May 27, 2005 three civilians were killed and three others were seriously injured when the members of the KLNLF ambushed their vehicle at Silveta under Bakulia police station in Karbi Anglong district. The civilians were plying their vehicle on the road during a bandh called by the militant group in protest against the killing of its General Secretary, Harsing Timung. On the May 30, 2005 the militant fire at a vehicle plying along National Highway-39 near Deopani where a 7-year- old girl Y. Mangaleima, daughter of Prof. Y. Jayachandra of Manipur was killed and his spouse was seriously injured. The KLNLF claimed responsible for the duo incidents.

Armed with sophisticated weapons the militants abducted two Karbi youths from Bamuni area namely Joysing Terang (35) and Lilaram Rongphar (35) on the March 18, 2009. They were the members of local political leaders of Rongtara. And they were untraced after their abduction.

In Dolamara, Mohen Ingti (45) a Congress (I) leader was shot dead by Karbi militants on January 27, 2011. He was the Secretary of Karbi Jutang Chingthur Amei (KJCA) - a Karbi Cultural Organization.

On the June 8, 2011, the Karbi militants group shot death Narendra Killing, a promising political leader of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council. The incident took place in his own resident at Nambar Adarsh Sarthe Killing Village under Bokajan Police Station. The PSO and Home Guard too received bullet injuries during the incident.

Langtuk Killing, Congress (I) leader of Korkanathi constituency was shot death by militants at Chirplak Rongpi village under Dokmoka Police Station on October 22, 2011. Heavily armed Karbi militant arrived at the spot and inquire for the Congress (I) leader after an altercation the militant shot him death in front. He was the President of Korkanathi Mondal Congress Committee. On that fateful day, he went for mobilizing the public for participation in the '*Jana Jagaran Yatra*' programme organized by District Level Congress (I) Committee.

It can be mentioned here that, in the course of Karbi militant movement for separate statehood many of the innocent lives were taken. Their guns and bullets were meant for their fellow Karbi not on the Indian troops. And it was a question where every Karbi has been asking, Why the Karbi militants movement for statehood is so destructive? The movement has brought immense loses to the lives and properties of the masses. Due to the massive human rights violation section of the peoples living in the territory are not sympathetic to the movement.

## 5.8 Human Rights and Security Forces in Karbi Anglong

The Human Rights violation committed by security forces in the name of counter-militancy is not a new mania for North Eastern states of India. Since Armed Forces (Assam and Manipur) Special Powers Ordinance was promulgated by the President on May 22, 1958 a special powers have been set to the members of the armed forces in disturbed areas in the State of Assam and the then Union Territory of Manipur. Later the Ordinance was replaced by the Armed Forces Special Power Bills. By endorsement of such a bill it gave strengthening to the state apparatus more specifically, the military forces, para-military forces and police forces to go beyond the boundary of Human Rights. These were clearly seen even in the state of Assam when '*Operation Bajrang*', '*Operation Rhino-I and II*' took place where hundreds of innocent persons were killed, harassed and molested by the so called security forces.

Even in Karbi Anglong such callous acts were committed by the armed forces that were deployed by the government to provide security to the common people. The security forces on several occasions perpetrated brutality on the innocent public without any valid reason. In the name of good governance or counter-militancy- fake encounter, custodial death, cases of assault, unlawful detention, mutilation, rape, etc. were widely carried out by the security forces. State administration became incapable to maintain its internal disturbances instead considered it as law and order situation. The most distressing part is that, the government continues to be silent spectator and the victims in many cases did not get justice. The important point here is that if there is no difference between the militants and the security forces, then the people are basically living in an awning world. Human rights violation in the district perpetrated by security forces in the name of counter-militancy in Karbi Anglong district are stated below:

On November 4, 1997 the security forces pick up one Hori Terang s/o Late Kondor Terang of Sedeng Terang Village, Bakulia. He was given third degree torture and later died in police custody.

In the name of search operation for Karbi militants innocent villagers of Hidipi and Rongmongve were detained and physically tortured by an Indian Army based at Misa Camp on March 26, 2002. The victims were identified as (1) Chandrasing Lekthe (35), s/o Habe Lekthe of Village Pator Phangcho, Hidipi and (2) Hemari Singnar (38), s/o Late Murchon Singnar of Lunse Timung village, Rongmongve. Later they were handed over to state police and booked under Arms Act Howraghat Police Station case no 112/02 of U/S 387 IPC.

On April 2, 2002 the army again arrested two Karbi villagers namely- (1) Khelan Kro (32), s/o Late Singnot Kro of Tim-hem Athoi village, Rongmongve and (2) Dorsing

Singnar (18), s/o Late Kamar Singnar of same village. They were brutally tortured and later handed over to the Howraghat Police.

The UPDS General Secretary, Horen Bey and other top leaders of pro-talk were arrested by Army at Vothatlangso on June 6, 2002 and were later handed over to the police after brutally thrashing them. One the same day, one Semson Terang, member of UPDS (pro-talk) was killed by army for moving out from designated camp.

The army attempt to rape three Karbi girls namely -Rojoni Timungpi (14), D/o Borsing Timung, Kache Hansepi (16), D/o Longsing Hanse and Kungri Ingheepi (15) students of Hawaipur Girls' High School on June 19, 2002. The incident occurred when the army from Bamungaon Camp (Lanka) went to Dikhlem Karbi village in pretext of apprehending militants but attempted to rape the three students. The army put guns on their forehead and after forcing them to take off their clothes they molested them. Meanwhile they arrested one Babu Engleng (20), s/o Sarthe Engleng photograph with the arms supplied by the army to marque him as Karbi militant and took him to the army camp. The villagers in protest against the attempt to rape case and atrocities meted on innocent villagers *gheraoed* Kheroni Police Station and Mailoo Police Outpost. In support of the villagers initiative the ASDC party sponsored 12 hours Karbi Anglong bandh. In order to covered their faces of their shameful act, security forces then seized Registration Certificate of about 50-60 auto-rickshaws and detained them in police station for forcing them to ply during the bandh.

In the name of counter-militancy operation by the security forces massive human rights violation were reported from different corners of the district. On July 5, 2002 an aged man Ramsing Hanse (60), s/o Late Khelan Hanse and his son Robiram Hanse (35), of village Hidiso were arrested by the army based at Misa Camp. Initially the duo was made porter by the army in the anti-militancy operation. The army personnel asked them to carry rations upto Army based camp, Kuthori but later handed over to Jakhalabandha Police Outpost. The innocent villagers were charge-sheeted with having recovered a pistol and 3 live ammunitions from their possession.

On August 1, 2002 at around 3 am, the Army took massive operation against the militants in Kongjuk Athoi under Bakolia Police Station and ransacked the house of one Monsing Lekthe of Langtuk Terang village. They destroyed the households' properties on which they could lay their hands on including certificates and documents. Later they arrested the three villagers- Sarthe Terang (45) his two sons Babu Terang (20) and Khorsing Terang (18). Security forces also seized money from the following villagers — Rensing Teron (LP School teacher) Rs. 8000/-, Moniram Lekthe (GB), Rs. 800/-, Bhaiti Lekthe, Rs. 700/- and Dhansing Teron (LP School teacher) Rs. 100/-. In the raid 16

villagers were brutally assaulted by the security forces. The victims are Dhansing Teron (30), s/o Late Monsing Teron, Dhansing Inglang (60), s/o Late Sarthe Inglang, Baliram Terang (30), s/o Sarpo Terang, Sarthe Inglang (30), s/o Late Sarthe Inglang, Gulap Ingti (27), s/o Sairam Ingti, Madhuram Lekthe (16), s/o Sarthe Lekthe, Bijoy Inglang (20), s/o Hemari Inglang, Hemari Bey (16), s/o Rongbong Bey, Babu Teron (18), s/o Late Mensing Teron, Longsing Bey (30), s/o Late Sarmen Bey, Bhaiti Teron (14), s/o Late Mensing Teron, Hemari Teron (30), s/o Late Bor Teron, Sarthe Lekthe (50), s/o Late Bajong Lekthe, Sarsing Bey (39), s/o Rongbong Bey, Dorsing Lekthe (20), s/o Sarsing Lekthe, Khorsing Bey (20), s/o Rongbong Bey.

In another incident on August 1, 2002 the security forces have arrested 5 villagers from Bomrui Adarsha village under Bakolia Police Station. The victims are Babu Singnar (25), s/o Sarthe Singnar, Deben Singnar (16) a student, s/o Sarthe Singnar, Babu Singnar (28), s/o Late Sarmen Singnar Mangalsing Timung (12) a school student, s/o Late Longsing, Joyram Singnar (14) a school student.

On August 9, 2002 army took combing operation on Karbi militants in Bhoksong area under Duar Amla constituency and a villager Romesh Ronghang was picked up, locked him in army camp and was forced to do manual work. He was physically tortured to get information where about the Karbi militants. Another person Simanta Rongpi (LP School teacher) was also picked up and tortured him the whole night on the same day. On August 10, 2002, he was allowed to go limping back home with unfastened jaw. The army has been routinely beating up peoples irrespective of age or gender forcing villagers to flee their homes. On August 16, 2002 one Mansing Teron, s/o Late Lunse Teron of Kongkat village and another Krishna Teron, s/o Late Ranjit Teron of Borgaon were picked up by the army since then both were reported missing.

The army conducted surprise raid in the villages of Lawrence Terang, Langherang and Tarabasa on October 6, 2002 at about 1:30 am and arrested three villagers without any arrest warrants or orders. The victims are Julius Rongpi (20), s/o Longki Rongpi, Sarsing Ingti (53), s/o Late Borli Ingti, Edward Terang (35), s/o Bidyasing Terang. These innocents' villagers were severely tortured at the time of arrests.

The security forces raided the house of Ke-ap Tisso, Vice Chairman, UPDS (Pro-talks) on July 14, 2003 at 6<sup>th</sup> mile and killed his ailing body guard Anong Teron (25) at point-blank. The incident has raised questions among public regarding the intention of the security forces and the state police by this sort of stage-managed killings.

In the name of nabbing militants the security forces raided a village at Langmili on August 13, 2003 and raped 4 Karbi girls including a woman. The victims are Noril



(Nishel in medical report) Terangpi (12), d/o Manuelson Terang, Phina Ingtipi (45), w/o Andrew Terang, Junaki Beypi (15), d/o Jewel Bey and Renuka Singnarpi (13), d/o Ramsing Singnar. One of the rapists was identified as Nipumani Bora. It was reported the local media that, Noril (student of Class-II) had just returned home from her examination in a village English LP School of Kirilongjon. When she was about to enter her house two security men came chasing after her. Then she hurriedly went inside the house to escape by jumping through the window of the backside but the security men overpowered her and raped her. The other waiting security men dispersed the villagers, arresting some persons and the group also molested the other two girls. As per the victim statement, Phina Ingtipi was molested on the village road.<sup>215</sup>

On January 30, 2004 at around 6:30 am the security forces conducted a combing operation against Karbi militants in Deithor area where 5 villagers were arrested namely Khoiyasing Langne (40) Mojari Killing (38), Robinson Killing (22), Barim Langne (30), Jiten Teron (20). They were brutally tortured and force them to give the information of where about the militants are hiding.

Army took a molestation spree in the name of counter-militancy at Tharverongthom village in Upper Deopani on February 1, 2004. The army assembled all the male members and locked them up in Moikang LP School at 10:00 pm. And from 10:30 pm they carried out the molestation binged in the village. The victims were identified as-Homsera Lekthepe (12), d/o Kangbura Lekthe, Kadom Rongpipi (15), d/o Sing Rongpi, Rubin Ingtipi (20), w/o Dorsing Lekthe, Phudang Ingtipi (25), w/o Biren Lekthe, Kache Ingtipi (25), w/o Menson Hanse, Phudang Killingpi (26), w/o Mohori Ingti. Later they arrested two villagers namely -Jameson Tisso (32), s/o Ram Tisso and Siva Tisso (28), s/o Sar-et Tisso from Ram Tisso village without any grounds.

On February 2, 2004 while the Army were hunting against Karbi militants one Khorsing Terang, s/o Men Terang of village Sambheti was arrested without any arrest warrant. He was later lodged in District jail Diphu. On the same day one Babu Rongpi (23) s/o Longki Rongpi, of Sarthe Rongpi Village under Manja Police Station was picked up by the Army camped at Manja Sugar Mill. And till today he was found missing and his family members were not informed where victim was lodged or he was killed in cold-blooded.

In another incident, the army in gypsy and truck came to Eragaon village under Bokalia Police Station at around 8 pm and whisked away one Hemai Timung (50), (village headman) on March 2, 2004. And his mouth was covered with piece of cloth to avoid any alarm. Another Kolom Terang (33) of the same village, loitering in the village

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<sup>215</sup> Thekar, August 14, 2003

road was also picked up. The womenfolk then raised an alarm prompting the gathering of about 300 villagers. Pitched battle ensued forcing the army to let Kolom Terang free and forcing army men to leave the village without losing any time.

The next day in a spontaneous reaction of frequent such army arbitrary arrests, about 1000 villager gheraod the Bakolia Police Station. Initially the army officer denied any such arrest but later admitted the detention of villagers. The army had forcibly picked up at least 50 Karbi villagers to guard the camp as security against any possible mob attack. Superintendent of Police, Karbi Anglong reached the spot at around 3 pm instead of dousing the situation started arresting the Karbis villagers including children. In the tussle with the policemen one Basa Hansepi (25) received head injury; Daman Ingti (22) received critical shoulder injury; Kensing Terang (24) with glass cut on the leg and Rajesh Timung (27) with baton injury. All the victims were treated in Bakulia 30 bedded Hospital. Later Basa Hansepi and Daman Ingti were arrested by police and put them in their custody.

The security forces raided Balijan Terang village in Bakulia area on March 6, 2004. Apparently they are searching for innocent villagers namely- Arthem Timung (35), Joysing Bey (47) Mangal Teron (30), an LP School teacher, and Gulap Tokbi (36), an irrigation employee.

On March 24, 2004 the police arrested Bhupen Terang -a school boy at Diphu and kept him in their custody. He was severely tortured and tormented by security forces which led him to custodial death after being produced in Diphu DC court on April 4, 2004. The local media reported that, Bhupen, along with two of his companions, had gone to shoot birds with an air-gun. While his two companions were allowed to go scot free, the police picked up Bhupen and was detained.<sup>216</sup> On the strength of the report of the boy's death in police custody Justice S.N. Phukan took suo moto cognizance and issued notice to the Superintendent of Police of Diphu to submit a report on Bhupen's death to the Commission by May 3, 2004.

The Assam police (Black Panther) have tortured the innocent villagers at Doldoli area on July 30, 2004 in the name of counter-militancy operations. The victims included Jiten Hanse, Mensing Timung, Joysing Bey, Jameson Bey, Sing Dera, Bura Engti, Dhiren Marak and Dorsing Bey of Longsing Timung village. The innocent villagers were not given any medical assistance in spite of grievous injuries on their bodies.

On August 21, 2004 one Rameswar Hokai died in Police custody after massive physical tortured. The infuriated villagers then thronged into Ulukunchi Police Outpost

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<sup>216</sup> The Arleng Daily, April 5, 2004

after the incident. The scuffles occurred when the police fired in the air to disperse the group of people at the outpost. Later they fired at the protestors where two villagers were killed and the victims were identified as Sing Puma (40) and N Lumpai (45). After the incident, another death body belong to Tiwa community was found from the nearby paddy fields who had sustained injuries the police firing.<sup>217</sup>

On September 21, 2004, the police raided Eragaoon village of Bakulia area at around 3 a.m. and shoot at a villager Suniram Kro (31) and injuring him grievously. They also arrested 11 innocent villagers without any arrest warrants and produced them in Diphu Court in the name of nabbing Karbi militants.

During the CRPF made a search operation against the Karbi militants on November 3, 2004 one Bhaiti Tokbi (25) of Chirikangnep village was shoot at while returning from his ginger field. The same team arrested two petty vegetables seller Kiran Terang (19), s/o Sarthe Terang and Poresh Terang (22), s/o Sing Terang. Later they took them to Ramsing Chinthong village and arrested two more youth Babu Ingti (25) and Harsing Hanse (30). Again towards the daybreak, the marauding CRPF was accompanied by the arrested villagers and took custody of the village headman Langtuk Ingti (45) and Dilip Milik (22). These arrests were made without any warrants; the bullet ridden villagers were also not provided any medical aid by security forces.

The army has picked up four persons from Silim Ingti (Rongmongve) and Bordeka villages in a search operation on January 30, 2005 against Karbi militants. The victims are Dhaniram Terang (28), a petty shop-keeper and his elder brother Sing Terang (42) of Silim Ingti village, Kanchan Das (45), a petty shop-keeper and Jamin Teron (30) of Bordeka village. The army also ransacked the house of one Daktor Kathar including their barn at Rongmongve.

The Assam Rifle jawan identified as Gautam Tamang (29) has raped a minor girl Hanri Teronpi (12), d/o Dilipson Teron near Taralangso on February 8, 2005. She hailed from Tarabasa Taro village to Diphu for her schooling. A medical test has confirmed that she was raped repeatedly after being sedated with sleeping pills. Additional Superintendent of Police (headquarters) Mukul Saikia said the accused has 'confessed' to his crime. An FIR was lodged by the girl's family at Diphu Police Station but surprisingly no justice was given to victim's family. The girl was rescued the next day while the jawan was trying to whisk her away to Dimapur.<sup>218</sup>

On the January 21, 2009, Deben Ronghang s/o Pangti Ronghang and Bidya Ronghang s/o Khelan Ronghang of Langlokso, Sikari Ronghang village were killed by

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<sup>217</sup> The Telegraph, August 22, 2004

<sup>218</sup> The Telegraph, February 10, 2005

Rajputana Rifles. On that fateful day, the duo innocent youths were on their way to Samelangso market to sell betel-leaves. And the Rajputana Rifles intercepted them and labeled them as militants. They were taken to the nearby Baptist Mission School building and were killed mercilessly. Then the villagers told the family members to inquire about the incident. They hurriedly went to the army camp but were not entertained. And they denied having anything to do with the two missing youths. Instead the family members were sends to Dokmoka CRPF camp for further information. Later on the January 22, 2009 it was learnt that both the bread earners of the family were killed. In connection of the incident, the District Magistrate of Karbi Anglong Mr. A.R Sahu directed Syed R. Ali, Addl. Magistrate to conduct an inquiry. The Magistrate has summoned a numbers of local leaders of Korkanthi constituency to appear before his chamber on the May 20, 2009 to provide concrete evidence about the incident leading to the death of two innocent Karbi youth.<sup>219</sup>

On February 9, 2009 another heinous crime was committed by the Indian Reserve Battalion (IRBn) posted at Ramnagar under Bakolia Police Station. The IRBn Havilder Nurrudin Ahmed Hazarika took his service rifles and fired indiscriminately on the innocent villagers where Parboti Teronpi (15) a student of Phongloket High School was killed. Before she was killed the IRBn personnel took her to their camp and molested her callously. Her father Chandra Sing Teron (35) and four other villagers Homsera Teronpi (17), Phulmati Hansepi (14), Amphu Tissopi (14) and Kasang Ternagpi (25) were critically injured.

The security forces were responsible for killing of civilians in dubious encounters. The inability to make distinction between civilians and armed militants was highlighted in another incident. On April 11, 2009, a Karbi priest name Burasing Ingti (45) of village Tekelangjun was shot dead in front of his resident by the Red Horn Division of Rajputana Rifles stationed at Samelangso. The innocent Karbi priest was having his morning prayer in a small courtyard temple. As soon as he came out from the temple he was shot from point blank range. Later the army declared that he was killed in the encounter. According to villagers report, the army convoy reached the village on that morning in search of KLNLF militants.

The security forces also indiscriminately used fire arms in Karbi Anglong district. On the June 1, 2009 designated UPDS camp at Upper Deopani was attacked by the 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Guards Regiment of the Garhwal Rifles stationed at Hanjanglangso. The UPDS claimed that two of their cadres Weljohn Terang (22) and Thengkur Ingti (22) were

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<sup>219</sup> Written Submission to Mr. Christof Heyns, United Nations Special Rapporteur on Extra Judicial, Summary or Arbitrary Execution by KHRW, Guwahati, March 28, 2012.

killed. The dead bodies were brought to Shantipur Police Station. And three of their cadres Ningkur Terang (25), Angtong Ronghang ((25) and Sahid Timung (22) were taken into their custody without any arrest memo or warrant. As per their ceasefire agreement such unprovoked attacked cannot be taken by the security forces. The UPDS also claimed that five of its cadres Dhoni Ingti (26), Sanjiv Rongpi (22), Akash Tisso (23), Danthai Terang (21) and Ningding Timung (26) were missing since the attack.

And on the April 16, 2009 one Seku Alam, a BSF personnel raped a minor Karbi girl Hunmili Teronpi (9), d/o Hemari Teron at Jerikindeng under Kheroni Police Station. It was reported that, the BSF personnel entered the house to buy some drink and raped her. On hearing the incident about 300 villagers gheraad the house and resorted to pelting of stones wherein the BSF personnel got minor injuries.

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has held an encounter by Assam Police in which two suspected militants of KLNLF were killed on May 19, 2010 as ‘fake’<sup>220</sup> Based on material and record placed before it, the commission has found several loopholes in the police theory of a genuine encounter and has held the incident as a grave violation of human rights. It has even issued ‘*showcause notice*’ to the State Government as to why the Commission should not recommend monetary relief to the next of kin of victims Chandra Tokbi and Ananda Teron. The Assam Police has intimated to the Commission that, two militants identified as Chandra Tokbi and Ananda Teron was killed in an encounter under Bakolia Police Station of Karbi Anglong district. The Commission after thorough examination found that, the Police version showing bullet fired during the encounter from weapons recovered from the militants was not corroborated by an independent report from a ballistic expert. There was also no report from fingerprint expert to indicate that the weapons recovered had fingerprints of the victim or gunshot residue was taken from victims’ hand to indicate that they had fired the weapons. The fact that the weapons had not been properly and individually sealed after the incident meant that their value as evidence was dubious. There was no proof that either of the two victims has fired from the weapons because the police did not conduct the essential test. The Commission also doubts about the genuineness of the encounter as no night vision devices were recovered from the slain militants nor did the police team carries any. The autopsy report of Ananda Teron established that his left leg had fractured with the dislocation of femur. The Commissions doubted that a man with this sort of injury would not be on a hilly terrain to engage in an encounter with the Police.

The villagers of Borpung Valleys under Shantipur Police station are the worst affected of security forces atrocities. The area is the safe haven for the militants due

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<sup>220</sup> The Telegraph, July 5, 2013

inaccessible road and hilly terrain. It came to light that, on July 8, 2010, the Army meted atrocities on the innocent villagers in the name of anti-insurgency operation.

In Namkhi Gour village under Dolamara Police outpost a teenager name Rakhai Gour (13) was killed on December 8, 2011 by CoBRA unit jawan of CRPF which was station at Khatkhati, Karbi Anglong district. On that fateful morning the boy was going for jogging as a daily routine, as soon as the CRPF spotted the boy they shot at him indiscriminately. And his death body was dumped in the nearby field.

The social, student organizations in the hill districts of Assam has been fighting for the excessive human rights violation meted by the security forces. Even the Karbi militant group (KLNLF) has raised a storm by imposing an unprecedented length of general strike in the hill districts of Assam on the human rights violation and brutality by armed forces by emulating the Armed Forces (Special Power) Act, 1958. They demanded for immediate withdrawal of the AFSPA from the state. The people of Karbi Anglong demand for immediate scrapping of the AFSPA, which perpetuates a colonial legacy and subjects the people of all over the North East region to state repression.<sup>221</sup>

## **5.9 Chapter Summary**

Militancy is now became a regular phenomenon in many states of North-East India. In the process of nation-building the country are facing gigantic task of accelerating the economic growth but also the responsibility of closing in all the groups and sub-groups inside the nation. The internal conflicts and violences have caused a serious threat to the integrity and hampered the growth of unified states in the country. In all these states internal conflict or confrontation could not be brought under control by usual show of force or even by the ruthless action of the security forces. The military might was not the decisive force in such struggles.

The different militants' organizations operating in Karbi Anglong have posed a threat to the peace and security of the territory. Due to their presence the public are facing the brunt. The innocent villagers were tortured, kidnaped and even killed for no reason. The violence between the different tribes occurred in Karbi Anglong is the clear paradigm. Almost all the violences in Karbi Anglong have the hands of militants' organizations in one way or the other. In a multicultural world altercation and disagreement is common but the civilians never go for such a heinous crimes that the district has experienced for the past two decades. During Karbi-kuki, Karbi-dimasa

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<sup>221</sup> Approach paper and resolution of seminar on Human Rights held in Karbi Anglong under the aegis of Karbi Anglong District Journalist Association and Diphu Press Club on November 20, 2004.

violence hundreds of innocent was killed and thousand were rendered homeless. In 2005 alone there were 75,000 internally displaced peoples in the district.<sup>222</sup> The existence of different ethnic militants' organizations led massive human rights violations in Karbi Anglong. It also posed serious problems in the economic development of the district.

In the name of counter-militancy or combing operation the innocent civilians including women and children were always targeted by security forces. Many of the women and children were abused, molested and raped by them. The security forces even go for 'fake encounter' and 'secret killing' but the culprit never get punished. Sometimes the culprit was let scot-free which is a matter of injustice to the part of the victims. The insincerity on the part of authority has mounted a suspicion by the Karbi tribe on occassionally. Its fact that, the security forces operate not only against the militants, but even to the civilian population in the area. The atrocities meted may generate sentiment and anger against the government and its forces. Hence, operation by the security forces may make the otherwise neutral civilian population an ally of the militants. So deployment of security forces in such a condition of militancy sometimes accentuates the problems. The counter-militancy measures may therefore be oriented from the standpoint of civil administration. Large-scale human rights violation can be seen in the district by both militants and security forces, robbing peoples of their dignity and contravention of the basic principles of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights. Hence, violation of human rights may sternly deal with according to the laws of the land and the spirit of the UN principles irrespective of such violations whether it was inflicted by the militants or security forces.

The Karbi militant movement and the aftermath consequence in the district is mass support for peace as they have experience series of violences. The violences has aggravated serious wound in the mind and hearts of the peoples. Killing, extortion and bandh was the order of the day which paralysed normal lives, education, and socio-economic development in the district. The violences also gave signal to the government of their strength and resources to alter any situation. This has led the government to talks with the Karbi militants and accordingly Suspension of Operation (SoO) was signed with both UPDS and KLNLF respectively. After several years of armed movement in the district the people want them to come publicly to join the mainstream for peace and tranquility in the territory. And the masses resolved to support the peace talks between the militants group and the government.

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<sup>222</sup> See, A Written Submission to Mr. Christof Heyns, United Nations Special Rapporteur on Extra Judicial, Summary or Arbitrary Execution, submitted by KHRW, Guwahati, March 28, 2012.

After the UPDS has signed a ceasefire agreement with the Government on May 23, 2002 an open relationship between the pro-talk militant leaders and Public have seen in the district. Then the UPDS leaders called for a Public Consultative Meeting on April 24, 2006 at Inglongcherop Community Hall, Diphu to discuss the matter with the Karbi leaders. In the meeting representatives from civil societies, political parties, students' organizations and intellectual group appealed the UPDS leaders not to go back to the jungles but to continue talks with the Government. And to settle for Autonomous State under Article 244(A) of Indian Constitution or whatever is possible under the circumstances. Thus, UPDS were made mandating that, the restoration of peace in the trouble-torn district at the moment was more important than the indefinite pursuit of armed struggles. The UPDS negotiating team has done it best to achieve the highest level of autonomy with economic packages for the people and rehabilitation packages for the cadres. As per the assertion of the negotiating team members no support were extended by the elected members of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) in the course of peace talk with the government.

The Social and Political leaders of the district had an exclusive discussion on January 5, 2010 at Diphu on the ongoing talks between UPDS and Government of India. The members in the discussion feel that, there should be an umbrella organization which will unite all the social, youth, literary and student's organizations of the district irrespective of tribe, caste and communities. The umbrella organization will work for the peace and prosperity, and thereby presurized the government to solve UPDS demands for peace and development in the hill district of Assam through conferment of political power. The umbrella organization resolved to raise same voice in the case of peace-talks between KLNLF and Government of India.

The Karbi leaders and social workers like Elwin Teron, Dharamsing Teron, George Millik, Upen Ingti, Bernard Rongphar and Dr. Mansing Rongpi has rendered their selfless service in negotiating UPDS demands with the government. Elwin Teron was the main spokesmen of the UPDS negotiating team, also the man behind forming People's Alliance for Peace Agreement (PAPA) in January, 2010. PAPA was formed by 56 fronts' organizations of political parties including students; women, cultural, literary organizations of different communities in Karbi Anglong. This umbrella organization of all communities has been mobilizing popular opinion across Karbi Anglong by holding massive public rallies to put pressure on the government for an early, constitutional and guaranteed peace accord. The alliance has its first meeting on February 25, 2010 at Dimasa Club, Diphu to pressurize the government for alacrity talks with UPDS. The alliance re-allocates portfolios to fifteen members which includes Rensing Bey, Mrinoy Teron, Boloram Thapa, Rani Rongpipi and Nilambar Rongpi as Vice-President, Hidhinath Rongpi (Spokesperson), Padma Maibongsa (Publicity), Dharam Sing Teron



(attached to General Secretary), Wojaru Mukrang (Central Co-ordinator), Jagat Sing Engti (Organising Secretary), Tung-eh Nongloda (Treasurer), Robindra Rongpi (law and order), Jotson Bey (Organising Matter), Wecome Teron (Research and theoretical network), Bharat Kumar Timung (Ethnic Community Affairs) and Bhaskar Phangco (Office Secretary).

The first ever meeting of PAPA under the theme ‘Mass Assembly for Self-Rule’ with 56 fronts’ organizations was held on January 11, 2010. The meeting was attended by different ethnic organizations irrespective of tribes, caste, communities and political affinities of the district and to show their support for the talks between UPDS and Government. Thousands of people raised their voices in the same tune for peace in the land. The UPDS leaders like Longsodar Senar, Ke-ap Tisso, Sai Ding-eh, Wojaru Mukrang, Nanda Terang, Lengbat Engleng and other official attended the mammoth gathering. Political leaders like Jagat Sing Ingti, MLA, Hiddhinath Rongpi, Chomang Kro, Nilambar Rongpi, Bhaskar Phangcho, Rensing Bey, George Millick and other prominent leaders from both Social and Political have joined the mass assembly. In the Mass Assembly programme Elwin Teron, General Secretary, ASDC and leader of UPDS Negotiation Team challenged that,

*‘The mammoth gathering shows that people of Karbi Anglong are hungry and legitimately needed for self-rule and today is the day we can our commitment and pressurize the government of our grievances. Let’s support the peace talks between the UPDS and the government as our demand is always fastened to self-rule or separate statehood. During tripartite talks on December 15, 16 and 17, 2009 we affirmed of our political demands to the government. They (government) should atleast implement the provision given in Article 244 (A) of the Indian Constitution. And below that we will not accept.’<sup>223</sup>*

The people are dreaming for the early solution to the militancy problems in the district. It has been a great issue which needs immediate research and solution to the militancy problems. When the KLNLF declared a unilateral ceasefire on December 31, 2009 many of the students and social organization came forwards to support the peace initiative made by KLNLF. As a mark of their support to peace road different organizations and general public welcomes the Karbi militants on February 7, 2011 with garlands, flowers, Karbi scarf and music. The people have much hope for peace and tranquility in the territory as the major Karbi militant group of the district has shunned the path of violence. The Somindar Karbi Amei (SKA), Karbi Employees Association (KEA), Karbi Un-employed Youth Association (KUYA), Karbi Cultural Society (KCS),

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<sup>223</sup> Speech of Elwin Teron, leader of UPDS Negotiation Team during the ‘Mass Assembly for Self-Rule’ programme held at KASA Stadium, Diphu on January 11, 2010

Karbi Lammet Amei (KLA) came forward to support the peace talks with the KLNLF. The Kuki National Assembly (KNA) and Kuki Students' Organisation too support the declaration and appeal the Union Home Minister to witness the arms laying down ceremony and initiate talks with the KLNLF at the earliest. The Langlokso Arat Pangri Amei Diphu (LAPAD), All Tiwa Students Union (ATSU), Mathonlai Tokkhra (Tiwa Sahitya Sabha), All Tiwas Women Association (ATWA) even extend their full support for peace accord with the Karbi militants group to fulfill the long standing demand of the people. The Karbis living outside Karbi Anglong were also glad on the unilateral ceasefire agreement made by the KLNLF. The Barak Valley Karbi Students' Association (BVKSA) sends their paramount regard and hoping to see peace return in the trouble torn district.

In an extensive interview with the Chairman of KLNLF (now Ceasefire) Mr. Pong Dilli at Diphu camp for the purpose of this study it was learned that, in the genesis there was not much mass support but later the public understand the aims and objectives of the movement and extend full support except few elite class of the society. Their support to the movement was rarely seen but this limitation has no bearing affect on peoples' aspiration.

The Karbis are not a warlike tribe but can adopt any violence movement if the Karbis' demand is not met. This has proved out by the UPDS and KLNLF who shook the state of Assam for the passed two decades. The militant's leaders clarified that, 'now we laydown arms for the sake of peace in the district but will never surrender our demands. Arms struggle and by keeping aloop from the government will never solve the registered demand of the people's aspiration as it has to be solved politically. So we are coming out from the jungle and abort the path of violence to negotiate with the Governement'.<sup>224</sup>

In a multi-ethnic society like Assam, violences and conflicts are bound to arise and these conflicts point out the society's fault lines and areas that needs rectification. Against this backdrop, Assam has witnessed persistent inter-ethnic conflicts on the line of communal and religious by marginalized minorities or expression of grievances by different militant representing their groups because of the denial of certain rights accruing to them. The greater the sense of justice, fairness and equity in a society the more that society will enjoy stability, harmonious co-existence, sustained growth, loyalty, unity and national integration. This will invariably reduce to minimum extent if not entirely the menace of militant movements.

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<sup>224</sup> The Arleng Daily, February 8, 2011