

# NAGALAND'S VERSION OF NRC TRIGGERS CONCERN

Relevant for: Indian Polity | Topic: Indian Constitution - Features & Significant Provisions related to The Preamble, Union & its Territories and The Citizenship

An apex body of Naga tribes has asked the Nagaland government not to be hasty with the exercise to prepare the Register of Indigenous Inhabitants of Nagaland (RIIN), seen as a variant of Assam's National Register of Citizens.

The Nagaland government has reportedly been trying to revive the RIIN exercise that was launched in July 2019 with the stated objective of preventing outsiders from obtaining fake indigenous certificates for seeking jobs and benefits of government schemes.

## Three-member panel

The State government had formed a three-member panel headed by retired bureaucrat Banuo Z. Jamir for "examining and advising" on the implementation of RIIN. But the exercise was suspended following protests from community-based and extremist organisations.

The Naga Hoho, the apex tribal body that had objected to the RIIN in 2019, has reacted to the State government's alleged bid to implement RIIN with a tentative timetable for different stages of the updating process.

"The issue of RIIN should be handled with utmost care as it could have unforeseen and dangerous implications for the Nagas as a people," the Naga Hoho said.

The State government had tasked the RIIN committee with determining the eligibility criteria to be an indigenous inhabitant, authority to authenticate claims of being indigenous, place of registration as indigenous inhabitant, the basis of claims of being indigenous, and the nature of documents that will be acceptable as proof.

The Naga Hoho said it was apprehensive of "dreadful consequences" if the "advocates of RIIN" implement the process with December 1, 1963 – the day Nagaland attained statehood – as the cut-off date. This date is likely to exclude Nagas who have come from beyond the boundaries of Nagaland.

According to the Naga Hoho, Naga tribes living in Assam, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh in India and in Myanmar have a legitimate claim to their ancestral homeland.

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