CHAPTER-III

ACTIVITIES OF ULFA AND RESPONSE OF STATE

3.1. Introduction:

Prateeti Barman in “Changing Perception of Freedom: Civil Society and Its Response to United Liberation Front of Assam” says, “The groups are involved in acts of intimidation, bombing, kidnapping and extortion that come under the definition of terrorism. One of such organisation, which is demanding a separate independent state, is ‘United Liberation Front of Assom’ (ULFA). ULFA was involved with ‘individual killing’ whom they thought were enemies of Assam. In the initial phase, ULFA got people’s support due to their ‘Robinhood image’ and anti-foreigners stand. They no longer hold the ‘Robinhood image’ and they have even changed their stand on immigration issue of the state.

There are some tactics of insurgent organizations such as bombing, hijacking, arson, assault, kidnapping, taking hostage, money extortion etc.\(^\text{71}\)

3.2. Social reform activities:

**ULFA’s Robin Hood image and social reformation process in Assam:**

After dissatisfaction on result of Assam movement and opposed the Assam Accord as compromised Accord in the ULFA’s Magazine, ULFA was born in the historical background of AASU as alternative organization to raise the voice against the exploitation of Assam by centre. ULFA got public sympathy from Assamese people on the issues of Assam. ULFA members had close relationship with AGP government who came to power from the platform of Assam movement organized by AASU. At that time under the leadership of Arabinda Rajkhowa and Anup Chetia initiated the membership recruitment drive and circulated the

\(^\text{71}\)Mishra, R.C., Terrorism: Implication of Tactics and Technology, Authorpress, Delhi, 2004
slogan in the rural areas of Assam like “Join ULFA”, “Asamar Swadhinata Amar Lakhya”, “Akya Biplob Mukti”, and “Baiganik Samajbad Amar Lakhya” as wall writings.

Simultaneously, ULFA’s military members took arms training and political members started social reform activities. They were at first attacked non-Assamese business groups. For creation of a clean image, they punished businessman dealing with alcohol, curbed alcohol consumption, banned sex related cinema particularly Hindi cinema, women and child trafficking etc. They called on the people of Assam to stop alcohol, gambling, Hindi Cinema, and Hindi Songs through their magazine. The corrupt people were punished at public places. They also did bank robberies at Silpukhuri and Fancy Bazar in Guwahati, Namrup and Tangla.

ULFA did some development activities like road construction, protection of dams in flood time, irrigation etc.in rural areas. They were running parallel government in Assam particularly in Lakhimpur, Dhemaji, Dibrugarh, Tinsukia, Sibsagar, Golaghat, Nagaon, Darrang, Nalbari districts. The govt. officers kept silent regarding the activities of development activities. They started agricultural firms on the basis of cooperative in Nagaon, Darrang, Sonitpur districts. In later times it was closed.

In the name of punishment, ULFA did give punishment to innocent people and collected money. These activities deteriorated the image of ULFA in later times. Besides, in some cases ULFA protected some alleged corrupt people. At the local level conflict arose between general people and ULFA.

At the initial time, the social reformation activities increased the Robinhood image and in later time the negative activities of ULFA decreased the image of ULFA in Assamese society.
Formation of Assam Jatiya Unnayan Parishad:

In 1988 ULFA formed an over-ground organization to do social reformation and development activities in the name of Assam Jatiya Unnayan Parishad through a convention at Rabindra Bhawan. The convention elected Ram Rajknowar of Naharkatia as President and Diganta Knowar of Nazira as Secretary. In the convention, Anjan Goswami of Tezpur, Dinesh Gogoi of Golaghat joined Assam Jatiya Unnayan Parishad. This convention was organized by ULFA leader Anup Chetia, secretary of ULFA. In every district the Jatiya Unnayan Parishad unit was formed and the development activities were done through the district committees. In Lakhimpur and Dhemaji districts, activities like road construction, building of houses were done by the organization at local level in flood affected areas. In these activities the officers of PWD and Irrigation department also cooperated out of national sentiment. By establishing libraries in villages, construction of temples, Club houses etc. helped in increasing the popularity of the organization. It became a strong and popular organization in the districts of Tinsukia, Dibrugarh, Sibsagar, Golaghat, Lakhimpur and Dhemaji in upper Assam, in Sonitpur, Nagaon and Darrang of middle Assam and in Kamrup, Nalbari and Barpeta in lower Assam. The people appealed to the organization for solving problems before going to any other government agency. The businessmen also gave financial support to the organization to get relief from money extortion of ULFA. At a later stage, both ULFA and Assam Jatiya Unnayan Parishad started extortion of money. Increased strength of the leaders of AJUP created problem for ULFA at a later period.

In many areas, the organization established agricultural farms e.g., the Kakani Multipurpose farm at Nagaon. This farm was maintained by Lachit Bordoloi, Pitambar Saikia, Prakash Mahanta, and Hemanta Nath which was destroyed by Army in later time. Under Nabaudita Yuba Sangha at Bokakhat an agricultural farm was running. Besides, in Darrang, Sonitpur and Sibsagar districts, many farms were running. The army destroyed
these farms on the allegation that these were giving shelter to ULFA members. After President’s Rule was imposed in 1990, this organization was closed.\textsuperscript{72}

\textit{Conflict between ULFA and URMCA:}

On 21st February, 1986 the United Reservation Minority Council of Assam later known as United Revolutionary Minority Council of Assam (URMCA) was formed under the leadership of Sabya Khasi Rabha as President, Dr. Ranuj Pegu and Debabrata Sarma as General Secretary by the patronage of Naxal leader Bhaskar Nandi. While the URMCA did organization activities in tribal areas conflict arose with ULFA particularly in Lakhimpur and Dhemaji districts. ULFA already had strong organizational basis. Difference of opinion regarding consumption of alcohol as culture of ethnic people, arose between URMCA and ULFA. Allegedly, ULFA killed some leaders of URMCA. On 3rd June 1990, in a public press meet, Dr. Ranuj Pegu said that ULFA leaders are maintaining a luxurious lifestyle. Sabya Khasi Rabha alleged that ULFA was running a terrorist rule in Assam and they are allowing foreign liquor and banning local alcohol. The URMCA leaders appealed to the ethnic people not to give shelter the ULFA members. ULFA leader Siddhartha Phukan said URMCA is the creation of Central Home Department. He also alleged against URMCA that they destroyed the integrity of Assamese people on caste, language etc. On 12 September, 1990 Ramen Pathak was killed by ULFA. On 17 August, 1991 though ULFA fired upon URMCA Secretary at his Jorhat residence, he was fortunately saved. The student leader Saurav Bora of Dibrugarh University was killed by ULFA for his anti-ULFA stand. URMCA leaders Amitav Rabha, Akhai Kalita, Mukul Bora, Krishna Saikia, Ratikanta Das, Manik Das, Krishnabahadur Chetri, Bhuban Adhikari, Barki Tuti, Premdhar Bora, and Shyam Ghose were killed by ULFA. ULFA warned URMCA that Assam is not like Bihar where

\textsuperscript{72} Nath, Manoj Kumar, ULFA, XeujiaXapon, Tezrangaltihax, Aank-Baak, Guwahati, 2013, pp. 58-60
discrimination existed on caste, creed, and language basis. Intellectual at Guwahati appealed to both groups to end the conflict. After 27 November, 1990, the conflict gradually receded.73

3.3. Violent activities:

**Bank Robberies:**

10th May, 1985 robbed the United Commercial Bank located at Silpukhuri under the leadership of Paresh Baruah with other members namely Hirak Jyoti Mahanta, Mahikanta Hati Baruah, Manoj Hazarika, Kalpajyoti Neog. They shot dead Girish Goswami, the bank manager, while he phoned the police and the guard of the bank. Mahikanta Hati Baruah drove a bus and they ran away from the place. That was the first major incident and got publicity in Assamese People.

ULFA did a successful bank robbery on 1 March, 1986 at State Bank of Namrup by a big group of ULFA. They looted 41 Lakh Rupees from the Bank. In the bank robbery Sri Putul Bora in charge of Namrup Police Station was killed. The Bank robbery was led by Paresh Baruah with some cadres of PLA. Brave Commander of PLA gave assistance to ULFA in bank robberies at initial stage.

On 3 June, 1986 at 10.00 a.m. some ULFA members led by Hirakjyoti Mahanta came to the Central Bank of Tangla and looted 41000 rupees. Later, Upen Deka, Rathin Talukdar, Gajen Bharali were arrested for involvement in the bank robbery.

On 20 May, 1987 the Union Bank of Fancy Bazar was looted 46 lakhs. The bank robbery was led by Hirak Jyoti Mahanta and Dinai of PLA. In this case, ULFA leaders Sunil Nath and Sailen Dutta were arrested and some money was recovered from the ULFA members. ULFA attained Robinhood images from these bank robberies.

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73 Nath, Manoj Kumar, ULFA, XeujiaXapon, Tezrangaltihax, Aank-Baak, Guwahati, 2013, pp. 61-63
**Attack on non-Assamese businessmen:**

There was long standing conflict between ULFA and non-Assamese business community since the birth of ULFA. The businessmen from Rajasthan of Marwari community and other people from Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Gujarat dominated business activities in Assam. If some Assamese people started business, the outsider business community conspired against him. This is also one of the causes which contributed to growth of ULFA. The immense influence of non-Assamese business community at Fancy Bazar of Guwahati, Tinsukia, Dibrugarh, Sivsagar towns dissatisfied the youths having nationalist sentiments. With extension of its activities and after becoming strong, the ULFA started demanding huge sums of money from these non-Assamese businessmen in different parts of Assam. Those non-Assamese who did not respond to the demand faced severe punishment. Some were killed by ULFA in many parts of Assam.

Besides, ULFA cited allegation against some political parties for anti Assamese activities. The United Minority Front formed in 1985 also faced punishment for their anti-Assamese activities by ULFA. On 17th September 1986 the leader of UMF Sri Kalipad Sen was killed at Guwahati by ULFA. This killing evoked reaction all over Assam against attack on a political party. On 1 June, 1988 ULFA killed businessmen Sri Basudev Jalan of Pathsala. On 20 July, 1988 business man of Golaghat Sri Kanhaiyalal was killed by ULFA. On 15th October, the former President of Kamrup Chambers of commerce Sri Giridharlal Harlalka was killed at his own residence of Fancy Bazar in Guwahati. On 8th October 1989 ULFA killed two persons at the Rampratap Mulchand Business Establishment of Nalbari. On 10th January, 1990 at Gandhibasti in Guwahati the President of Chambers of Commerce Sri Sankar Birmiwal killed in his own house. On 12th March, 1990 at Makum the President of North-East Hindi Language Council Sri Rajendra Prasad Singh was killed. On 9th April, 1990 at Kharajan of Dibrugarh district a member of well-known tea business family Sri
Surendra Paul was killed. It created strong reaction against the killings of ULFA. On 27th October, 2000 at Nalbari Hari Mandir ULFA fired upon Marwari businessmen indiscriminately and killed 11 Marwari people. On 17th November, 2000 seven people killed at Bihubari of Simaluguri in Sivsagar district. On 26th November, 2000 four people killed at Jagra and Kumrikata in Nalbari district. On 28th November, 2000 three Hindi speaking people were killed. Thereafter ULFA killed Non-Assamese people indiscriminately. On 7th December, 2000 ULFA killed 28 people of Bihar at Sadiya. On 12th November, 2003 at Bardubi in Tinsukia district, 11 people of Bihar killed and 7 people wounded in a brick industry by ULFA. On 18th November, 2003 at Bakshirhat of Dhubri, 5 Hindi speaking Truck drivers were killed and 7 people wounded.

**Conflict between ULFA and Tea lobby:**

The direct conflict between ULFA and Tea lobby arose when on 9th April, 1990 Surendra Paul; brother of noted Indian origin British industrialist Swaraj Paul was killed by ULFA at Kharajan in Tinsukia. Swaraj Paul pressurized central government to take action against ULFA. In the month of May, 1990 ULFA invited the heads of the tea companies for discussion regarding economic development of Assam. The Indian Planter’s Association, the main platform of tea companies discussed about the incident seriously and informed the matter before the CM Prafulla Kumar Mahanta, Chief Secretary Haren Das and Director General of Police S Subramanian Swami. The tea companies did not get help from the government and decided to sit with ULFA. On 28th June, 1990 under the leadership of noted tea industrialist Hemendra Prasad Baruah, top most officers of Tata tea, McLeod Russell, Williamson Magor, Uniliver etc. arrived at Dibrugarh and met with ULFA. ULFA was represented by Tapan Dutta. Tapan Dutta spoke about exploitation of Assam by the tea companies. The officers denied the allegations and elaborated about different welfare
activities. ULFA demanded one crore rupees from the companies. The officers promised to
discuss the matter with higher authority. ULFA demanded 3.5 cores from the multinational
comppany Uniliver. The sister company of Uniliver in India, Hindustan Liver Limited awaited
decision from its head office located at London and also informed the matter to the
Ambassador of India Kuldip Nayar in England. Though Kuldip Nayar informed the case
before Viswanath Pratap Singh, the then PM of India to take actions against ULFA, Assam
Govt. replied they were unable to take action against ULFA as there was not a single FIR
filed against ULFA. The Central Home Department wanted to declare the district of
Dibrugarh, Sivsagar, Jorhat, Nagaon and Kamrup as disturbed areas. Meanwhile,
Chandrasekhar became Prime Minister of India. As the situation worsened, the officers and
mangers of seven tea gardens under Uniliver were airlifted on 8 November, 1990 from
Doomdoma.

ULFA in Assam Politics:

There were rumors that ULFA’s support to the AGP resulted in Mahanta winning
1985 and 1996 Assembly polls. The party lost to the Congress in 1991 elections due to
ULFA’s opposition. On similar grounds, it’s lost the 1998 and 1999 Parliamentary polls, but
AGP’s own performance also a factor. Public pressure was seen to be building up against
ULFA by 1997-1998, particularly after the cold-blooded murder of Sanjay Ghosh, a
dedicated social worker who had brought hope for Majuli islanders; there was a groundswell
of anger against the outfit.

During the 1983 Assembly elections, ULFA militants declared the election “illegal”
and announced punishment for those who participated in it.

Lok Sabha elections were scheduled to take place in February 1998 in Assam. As it
was conjecture ULFA in a signed statement warned the people of Assam, irrespective of
caste, creed and religion to refrain from participating in the election meetings of any political party. The main aim of the statement was to prevent people from voting. Virtually, it was a call for the boycott of the Lok Sabha elections. It became obvious that the insurgent outfit were eager to disrupt the poll process as they gunned down Logendra Bora, a confidant of Chief Minister PK Mahanta. It was a clear message to Mahanta whose wife Jayashree Goswami Mahanta was contesting from Nagaon Lok Sabha constituency. CPI-ML candidate of Dibrugarh Lok Sabha seat, Prof. Anil Kumar Baruah was shot dead.

In a bid to keep voters indoors and enforce their poll boycott call, ULFA militants blew up a CRPF vehicle, snatched ballot boxes and kidnapped ruling AGP workers on the eve of polling on February 16, 1998. Suspected ULFA militants snatched the ballot papers and boxes of half a dozen polling stations and also gunned down five security personnel on election duty in Lower Assam’s Bapeta district. ULFA did anarchic activities on polling booth, involved in gun battle with police, abducted policeman, took away election materials and a vehicle on election duty and indulged in some other activities.

Despite the best efforts of the militants, it was learnt that one-third of Assam’s 15 million voters exercised their franchise for the 14 LS seats on February 16 and an estimated 63.62 pc votes were cast. On February 19 in re-polling in Centers and booths in Nagaon’s Hojai and Raha Assembly segments record 62.98 pc and two polling booths of Kaliabor 74.90 pc. In Jorhat 53 pc of voters were recorded in the repoll held in three booths at Thaora, Sonari and Amguri.74

The police recovered four improvised explosive devices from Nalbari and Darrang districts, both under the Mangaldai Lok Sabha constituency. Two were recovered from Baharghat in Nalbari district where a CRPF vehicle was ambushed on October 2, 1999 and two from Pakeribari in Darrang district.

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In an interview in 1985, Pradip Gogoi confessed that ULFA supported AGP in elections. Prabin Gogoi was inducted into the Ministry of Mahanta Government due to pressure of ULFA. On 20 July, 2008 Paresh Baruah confessed that PK Mahanta had given 30 lakhs rupees to ULFA from the Chief Minister’s fund. He also disclosed that transport Minister Pradip Hazarika gave 20 pistols to ULFA.\textsuperscript{75} On the basis of pressure from ULFA, AGP included the demand of self-determination in their election manifesto. Before 1996 election, ULFA attacked Congress leader Bhumidhar Barman, and killed Nagen Neog. In an article in Dainik Agradoot dated 27 November, 1997, it was published that on 25\textsuperscript{th} April, 1996 an agreement was held between AGP and ULFA signed by Nagen Sarma. Mithinga Daimary in a statement made on 16\textsuperscript{th} March, 2000, said that Sasha Choudhury and Pradip Gogoi had an agreement with AGP, and on that basis, ULFA supported AGP in the elections. On violation of the terms of the agreement, ULFA killed Nagen Sarma and attacked Biraj Kr. Sarma and Jaynath Sarma.

**Major killings by ULFA**

Among the violent activities carried out by ULFA, most notable are the selective killing of civilians and paramilitary forces. The incidents of killing started on 7\textsuperscript{th} April, 1981 when Parthsarathi, IAS, Upper Assam Commissioner was killed in his own office. On 15\textsuperscript{th} March, 1983, Kesab Saikia, nephew of Hiteswar Saikia was killed by ULFA. In 1986, ULFA killed Kunti Konwar, the elder sister of Hemaprabha Saikia wife of Hiteswar Saikia and Rup Rekha Knowar the aunt of Hemaprabha Saikia were killed at Mesha Garh in Nazira on 21\textsuperscript{st} January, and Ex-Minister Tankeswar Dihingia was killed at Sivsagar on 19\textsuperscript{th} February. On 29\textsuperscript{th} August, ULFA killed former Chief Councilor Debajit Choudhury at Golaghat. On 17\textsuperscript{th}

\textsuperscript{75} Assamiya Pratidin, 23rd April, 2001
September Kalipad Sen, the leader of United Minority Front was killed by ULFA at Guwahati.

In 1987, the most notable killings were on 8th January when Rajiv Rajknowar, the Jorhat district Vice President of Youth Congress and son of Forest Minister Dina Rajkhowa, Congress activist Ranjit Baruah, on 16th September, Dulal Bhuyan at Tezpur, on 21st June, K P V Ramamurthy, Senior Public Relation Officer of Oil India at Duliajan, 26th June, Dilip Kumar Chaliha, Chief Personnel Officer of Hindustan Fertilizer of Namrup, on 22nd July, Kanhailal Kalowar, noted businessman of Golaghat and his son Keshab Lal Kalowar, on 1st August, Rakesh Paul, Assistant Tax Commissioner at Tinsukia and on 15th October, Giridharlal Harlalka, President of Kamrup Chamber of Commerce at Fancy Bazar in Guwahati was killed by ULFA.

Dinesh Kalita, former member and Organizing Secretary of AASU was killed in Nalbari on 4th April, 1988. Ramsagar Tiwari, Inspector of Telephone exchange was killed at Palashbari on 24th November, 1989.

During 1990, ULFA killed Sankar Bir Mittal, Chairman of Kamrup Chambers of Commerce on 20th January at Guwahati. Biju Mazindar and his two body guards were killed by ULFA at Sivsagar on 22nd January. In March, Lekhan Lahan, former MLA at Lakhimpur on 2nd and Utsabananda, Congress activist of Gohpur on 13th was killed. On 9th April, Surendra Paul, noted tea businessman of Dibrugarh was killed.

Ganesh Dube and Bikash Dube were killed at Guwahati on 30th April, Ruhiteswar Saikia; brother of Hiteswar Saikia was killed on 23rd July. Daulat Singh Negi, SP of Dibrugarh was killed on 29th July. The President of youth Congress was killed at Mangaldai on 4th August.

ULFA killed the DSP of Nalbari at Mukalmua on 21st January, 1991. On 6th February, Om Prakash Sarma at Pengeri of Tinsukia and Hari Sarma at Dipila of Sipajhar
were killed by ULFA. On 10th February, AASU leader Kumud Hazarika was killed. On 24th July, Raju Das, Bhabesh Dutta, Pradip Thakuria, Nakul Das, Kanak Das and Mohammad Yusuf were killed for spying on behalf of police in Nalbari. Journalist Kamala Kalita was killed by ULFA on 9th August. A five year girl Sabnam Kalita, daughter of Lachit Kalita, a congress worker was killed while Lachit Kalita was attacked by ULFA on 13th August. Congress leader Khagendra Nath Basumatary and RSS leader Promod Narayan Dixit was killed on 16th August. Former Secretary of AJYSP was killed at Guwahati on 8th September. Abducted T S Raju and P. P. Srivastava were killed on 8th September and 19th September respectively. On 24th December, the President of Darrang district Congress Committee, Pranati Baruah was killed.

In 1993, Raimond Pator, Dulu Pura Kayastha and Gopi Kakati at Morigaon, Jagiroad and Nagaon respectively, were killed by ULFA on 26th January. On 15th March, SULFA leader Purnananda Buragohain was killed. DSP Ajoy Barman was killed by ULFA on 16th May. On 1st September, SULFA leader Jogesh Chandra Deka was killed by ULFA at Baihata Chariali. On 26th December, ULFA attacked the police station of Jajori in Nagaon and killed 4 police personnel.

Director General of Assam Frontier Tea Company Rameswar Singh was killed by ULFA on 15th February, 1994. Additional Police Superintendent Rohini Khanikar was killed at Guwahati on 12th December, 1994.

In 1995, ULFA killed Ujjal Barman, son of ex-minister Ramani Barman on 24th June, 8 police personnel at Chaygaon on 1st August and on 31st December, attacked the convoy of Health Minister Dr. Bhumidhar Barman and killed three persons.

During 1996, Lachit Kalita, Secretary of Youth Congress of Assam was killed on 19th January. On 13th March, Bimol Bhuyan, ex-Professor of Cotton College and Special advisor
of CM was killed by ULFA. On 25th April, Congress candidate Binu Chetia was killed by ULFA at Margherita. On 28th April Lt. Col. of Army Debendar Tyagi was shot dead by ULFA at Kamakhya temple. On 5th May, Cooperation and Rural Development Minister Nagen Neog was killed by ULFA at Golaghat. SP of Tinsukia, Rabikanta Singh was killed by ULFA on 16th May.

On 17th May, Executive Editor of Pratidin who was also leader of MAAS, Parag Das was killed at Rajghar in Guwahati. On 27th July, one DSP of Assam Police was killed at State Zoo at Guwahati. On 2nd August, the 7th Assam Police Battalion’s Assistant Captain K Singh along with two body guards were killed by ULFA at Dhubri. On 19th August, in three separate attacks 13 army personnel were killed by ULFA. Sudhir Kumar Dev, Director General of Crimes Investigation Branch was killed at Lachit Nagar on 21st September.

SULFA leader Upen Deka was killed at Sarumataria, Guwahati on 11th January, 1997.

During 1998, Dibrugarh Lok Sabha Candidate Anil Kumar Baruah from CPM party was killed by ULFA at Joypur Naharani Gaon in Naharkatia on 11th February; AGP leader Jatin Singha was killed at Bongaigaon on 26th August; B K Doley, Economic crimes investigation branch Superintendent of Police was killed at Guwahati on 21st September and SULFA leader Diganta Baruah was killed at Guwahati on 3rd December.

On 11th May, 1999, 7 army men were killed at Nagaon by ULFA. On 24th September 1999, Dr. Pannalal Aswal, Dhubri Lok Sabha candidate of BJP was killed. On 2nd October 1999, Revenue Minister Jaynath Sarma’s convoy was attacked by ULFA and four persons were killed.

During 2000, PWD Minister Nagen Sarma and four persons were killed by ULFA at Bahjani in Nalbari District on 27th February. ULFA killed 10 non Assamese people at Hari Mandir of Nalbari on 27th October and again on 17th November, ULFA killed 7 Hindi
speaking people at Bihubari of Sivsagar. This continued on 26th November when ULFA killed 4 non Assamese Hindi speaking people at Kumrikata in Nalbari district and 28 Bihari people were killed by ULFA on 7th December at Sadiya.

In 2nd January 2001, SULFA leader Abinash Bordoloi and two persons were killed at Nalbari.

Eleven Hindi speaking people were killed by ULFA at Bardubi in Tinsukia district on 22nd November, 2003.

There was a lull in the killings during 2004-2006. In 2007, 6 Hindi speaking people were shot dead in Dibrugarh and Tinsukia on 15th May. Abducted P C Ram was killed on 30th June and on 10th August, 11 Hindi speaking laborers were killed at Dalamara in Karbi Anglong.

**Bomb Blasts/Attacks with rocket launcher:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Date and location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>16th August: The bomb blast was done at Choudhury Cinema Hall and killed one employee and wounded some people.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>16th January: Dhanjit Hazarika, the Commander of Kamrup district was killed by grenade explosion at Jyoti Nagar of Guwahati.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>12th April: At Sunkuriha in Nalbari district 8 army were killed by ULFA though bomb explosion.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>7th January: OC of Gohpur police station Trailokya Dadhara was killed by ULFA through bomb explosion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>6th August: Two armies were killed by ULFA while attacked on CRPF Camp of Kalaigaon through rocket Launcher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>8th June: ULFA attacked on the convoy of C M Prafulla Kumar Mahanta at Maligaon by bomb explosion.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8th August: A Brigadier along with two army officers was killed at G S Road of Guwahati.

1998

4th August: MLA of BJP Sambhu Singh Malla along with 9 persons was wounded at Fancy Bazar through grenade explosion.

24th August: Three persons were killed through a bomb explosion at Guwahati Railway Station.

1999

7th March: Usha Court of Guwahati was attacked with rocket launcher.

2004

15th August: 17 people including students killed at Dhemaji in bomb blast by ULFA.

2006

5th November: 14 people died and 52 people wounded in the bomb blasts at Fancy Bazar and Noonmati.

2007

4th February: Car bomb exploded at Panbazar police station of Guwahati.

26th May: 7 people died and 18 people wounded at the blast of Athgaon in Guwahati.

Source: Manoj Kumar Nath, ULFA.

3.4. Maintenance of Links with foreign countries:

ULFA’s first major contact with the Kachins came in 1986 when Paresh Baruah travelled to North-Western Myanmar through the eastern edge of Arunachal Pradesh, along the little-travelled road to Khonsa in Tirap district. The Kachins agreed to give training to the ULFA men and women, but at a steep price. The money raising spree that ULFA embarked upon till late 1989 can be partly seen in this context, the need to pay their trainers and suppliers. In 1988, the Kachins demanded about one million rupees, then worth about 60,000 US dollars, for arms they proposed to sell to the ULFA fighters. To meet the demand, the ULFA planned and executed several daring bank robberies in Guwahati and elsewhere. They raised a total of 4.2 million rupees through robberies and extortion from local businessmen.
and sent their contribution amounting to one million rupees to the KIA. When the demands got bigger, ULFA started looking elsewhere for assistance. During that time ULFA also took training at NSCN camps of Khaplang headquarters. ULFA had relationship with the Khaplang group that later separated ULFA from the Muivah faction. Munin Nobis was picked to tap the Afghans, the Pakistanis and Bangladesh intelligence officials.

In 1988, Munin Nobis made the organisation’s first effort to internationalize their campaign. Nobis travelled in 1988 to Karachi with a Bangladeshi businessman, who was well-connected to the political-military establishment in Dhaka as well as to the Pakistanis, hoping to establish contracts with Pakistani intelligence (ISI), Nobis apparently returned from Karachi without meeting anyone from the Pakistan intelligence because his businessman friend was too cautious and unable to reach his contracts.

In the following year, Nobis went again to Karachi to meet ISI. Indian intelligence officials say that this account is partly true. But they believed that ULFA established contract with the Pakistanis in Dhaka first, which was obviously easier than taking a chance in a strange city in a new country.

While the Indian Government prepared its crackdown against ULFA in 1990, its top political leadership and one senior army commander was in Pakistan, having flown there on a Bangladesh Biman flight. Met by ISI agents at the airport, the men were taken from Karachi to Islamabad and kept at a safe house. They were then taken to Peshawar, headquarters of several Afghan mujahedeen groups. The meetings at Peshawar included one with Gulbuddin Hekmatyr, the chief of the Hezb-i-Islami, which was patronized both by the Pakistanis and the Central Intelligence Agency and several Arab nations in the fight against the then Soviet-backed regime. ULFA delegation included Arabinda Rajkhowa, Hirakhyoti Mahanta, Pradip Gogoi, Anup Chetia, and Manoj Hazarika. All except Rajkhowa took intensive training
conducted by Pakistani operatives who lasted nearly a month in strategy, tactics, counter intelligence, disinformation and use of weapons.

The next to travel to Pakistan was a two man team, Paresh Baruahand Sunil Nath. In September 1991, the two men landed in Islamabad. At home, operation Rhino, that was to devastate ULFA’s ranks, was to begin. Baruah and Nath were difficult guests: they refused to take basic training. Baruah said to Nath that enough is enough. Let’s go home. The Pakistanis were keen for a large-scale operation in Assam that would use high-powered explosives and strategic attacks on top officials and politicians as well as strategic locations, such as oilfields and government buildings. Baruah and Nath refused, ‘This is not like Afghanistan, you cannot repeat that experience here,’ they told the ISI agents. The Pakistanis were surprised. ‘We have run such big operations as in Afghanistan, your campaign is small compared to that,’ the Assamese were told.

Paresh Baruah and Sunil Nath explained that in a resource-strapped state such as Assam, millions of people depended on the local government for jobs and economic security. ‘Major attacks on the government property will alienate us from the people and they will turn against us, not the government,’ Nath told the Pakistanis. But Pakistanis made two clear points: do not fight the Indian Army: it is too strong. Disrupt communications and economic targets, such as oil pipelines and gas fields, create chaos and pave the way for a general uprising against the government. The ULFA leaders tried to explain that they were confident of taking on the army but reiterated their opposition to the major strikes advocated by Pakistani because their loyalty as Assamese came to the front.

Later, several ULFA men confessed that thinking they could tackle the Indian Army was foolhardy. That realisation set in after the army’s onslaught with Operation Bajrang and Operation Rhino in 1990 and 1991.
**Bangladesh:**

ULFA remained dormant till 1986 except for recruiting its cadres between late 1983 to early 1984, establishing contract with Kachin Independence Army (KIA) and the Nationalist Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) in the year 1986 for training and processing arms. Subsequently, the outfit shifted its training camps to Bangladesh. ULFA’s training camps have been functioning in Bangladesh soil since 1989. Its main training camps are located in Mymensingh, Jaintiapur, Jaydepur, Adampur, Bhanugach, Sri Mangal and Maulvi Bazar, all located along the Indo-Bangla border. Bangladesh has long been the preferred hideout of the ULFA. This neighbouring country is very convenient for them to operate from their camps in Dhaka, the Chittagong Hill Tracts and the Cox’s Bazar area.

In an interview in 1999, the then Chief Minister of Assam, Prafulla Kumar Mahanta accused the Bangladesh government of aiding and abetting ULFA militants. “In Bangladesh, the Army, an influential section of the clerics, a former Jute industries minister with considerable political influence, the paramilitary forces and other officials are aiding and abetting ULFA” said Mahanta.⁷⁶

Documents seized by the security forces and interrogations of some arrested militants reveal that the Defense Forces Intelligence (FDI) of Bangladesh had also trained ULFA cadres in Sylhet district. But things changed a little after the Awami League came to power in Bangladesh with Sheikh Hasina as its head. First, there was a crackdown on the arms and ammunition being shipped into the country by the insurgents. Their accounts in various banks in Bangladesh were frozen. Also the top leaders, staying in the country, were asked to leave.

Meanwhile a significant incident happened in Bangladesh. ULFA general secretary Anup Chetia alias Golap Baruah was arrested from Central Dhaka’s posh Elephant Road area on December 31, 1997. Anup Chetia and the ULFA Chairman Arabinda Rajkhowa were

earlier arrested from a posh south Calcutta guest house on November 18, 1991 along with two others and were produced before a Guwahati Court.

According to the Home Ministry sources the ULFA re-established some of its camps in Bangladesh at Majidi, Mymensingh, Rangpur, Khulchari, Bhairab Bazar, Jayantipur, Shri Mangal, Jaydepur and Adampur. Due to some pressure on them, ULFA has been forced to shift a key camp near Phukapthong towards Tshelingkher lying in North-Eastern direction near the Arunachal Pradesh border and also, move towards South Western Myanmar bordering Chittagong Hill tracts of Bangladesh.

According to information made available by the Myanmar Govt., 10 ULFA militants were in operation. India was somewhat relived that Bangladesh was sincere about not allowing its soil to be used by rebel like ULFA. But some lower-level functionaries, particularly in Bangladesh police administration, were not seriously following the govt. instructions.

Begum Khalida Zia’s party, BNP, has let it be known in no unambiguous terms that it supports ULFA’s struggle for freeing Assam from India’s “colonial rule”. The BNP has a large following which may also deter at least to some extent, the Bangladesh govt. from taking stern action against the ULFA. The easy availability of Bangladeshi passport is another boon for the militants.77

In 1999, Bangladesh Home and Post & Telecommunications Minister, Mohammad Nasim in a brief meeting with Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee at a high level meeting expressed their commitment to further strengthen the bilateral relation between the two friendly neighbouring countries, exchanged views on presence of ULFA and other issues.

On December 5, 2009, the Chairman and the Deputy Commander-in-chief of ULFA fell into Indian custody. A large crackdown against ULFA in Bangladesh has significantly assisted the government of India in bringing ULFA leaders to talks.

**Pakistan’s role**

Pakistan’s Inter-services Intelligence (ISI) also provided training to around 200 ULFA militants in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

In a statement, the Assam CM P.K. Mahanta said that his government was in possession of enough proof that the Pakistan High Commissioner in Dhaka was in touch with ULFA leadership. It also provides ULFA with passports in the names of Muslims to facilitate their frequent travel to and from Karachi, from where they would be covertly taken to guerrilla training centres.

Revealing confessional statements of top militants like ULFA vice Chairman Pradip Gogoi, the CM said that the Assam police was in the possession of copies of ULFA Commander-in-Chief Paresh Baruah’s Bangladeshi passports obtained fraudulently with the help of Pak Embassy officials in Dhaka. One of these was in the name of Kammaruddin Zaman Khan.\(^7^8\)

Akash Bora, a surrendered ULFA presented a letter accusing ULFA of becoming pawns in the hands of ISI and indulging in large scale-extortions.

The Government of India accuses ULFA of maintaining links with the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) of Pakistan and waging a proxy war on their behalf against India.

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**Role of Bhutan**

The ULFA chose the jungles of Bhutan for setting up camp because it is easy to cross over to Bhutan through jungle and hilly terrain. It was also closer to their traditional stronghold in Nalbari district.

The Bhutanese government is wary of taking action against the militants lest they should join hands with the leaders of pro-democracy movement of Bhutan. ULFA militants began taking refuge in Bhutan since the beginning of 1997. With top-ranking insurgent leaders, more than twenty camps were operating from the Bhutanese soil. The exodus to Bhutan increased after New Delhi’s relations improved with Dhaka. India’s request to flush out militants from Bhutan met with the lukewarm response. It is learnt that Bhutan has indicated that political dissident, Ronghthong Kunley Dorji, who had led demonstration against the Himalayan Kingdom, and was in India, should also be extradited.

ULFA’s camps were located in Bhutan mainly in Sandrup Jongkhar, a district in South Bhutan that borders Assam’s Nalbari district. The ULFA general headquarter was barely 18 km from Sandrup Jongkhar, in the forest of Deothang area. Six more militant camps were located in the region. According to govt. estimate some four thousand ULFA militants were based in Bhutan in 1997. However, unconfirmed Indian reports indicated that ULFA, along with other militant groups run more than 30 camps in Bhutan. Militants were being imparted training in Bhutan.

Bhutan’s top police officials met in Thimpu in the first week of July, 1997 to review the security situation in the area bordering Assam, which was thick with the ULFA militants. On July 5, 1997 in the 78th session of the Bhutan National Assembly, after three days of deliberation on the ULFA infiltration inside its territory, passed a resolution empowering the government to use the Army against militants, if they do not respond to pleas of peaceful withdrawal. According to reports appearing in Kuensel, the Bhutan govt. run weekly, the
Royal Bhutan Army (RBA) deployed nearly 4000 officers and soldiers along the Assam-Bhutan border from Kalikhola to Daifam.

On April 22, 1999, CM Mahanta had expressed concern over the involvement of the Bhutan govt. with the militant outfits of Assam, particularly ULFA. Mahanta had stated that the response of the Bhutan Govt. to request of dismantling the ULFA camps had been very unsatisfactory. Funds of the ULFA are being transferred through diplomatic baggage of Bhutan govt. officials to Bangkok, Dhaka and other places.

A Royal Bhutanese Embassy Spokesman told the Hindustan Times that the National Assembly had been discussing this issue since 1997, as it not only posed a security threat to Bhutan but also harmed its relations with India. In the National Day address, the King threatened to use force.

**Role of China:**

The outlawed group was said to be looking to China for shelter following mounting pressure from both Burma and Bangladesh, in turn pressured by India. The outfit’s top commander, Paresh Baruah, was believed to be near the Sino-Burmese border looking for an alternative position for a hideout. Indian police and intelligence officials said there could be as many as 50 ULFA militants holed up in China’s Yunnan Province led by the group’s Lt. Partha Jyoti Gogoi.

**3.5. Response of State: Counter Insurgency Operations**

By and large, the response of state to ULFA has been militarist rather than political. Authoritarian methods have been introduced into the fabric of everyday life, especially in
those parts of Assam that are seen as ULFA strongholds. The Indian response of stateto some of the intractable ethnic insurgencies in the North-East may be charted as

a) Divide the rebel organisations and use the renegades to control them.

b) Corrupt the public image of the insurgent leaders by providing them luxurious lifestyle when they come out for talks.

c) Play for time in the name of negotiation.

d) Physically eliminate family members of rebel cadres.

e) Develop and help counter-insurgency forces.

f) Field maximum state power with police and army.

g) Appoint retired army generals, police chiefs, and intelligence chiefs as governors.

h) Enforce draconian undemocratic laws.

i) When battle fatigue sets in, impose an accord, the provisions of which will be hardly implemented.

Tactics straight out of the four principles of Arthashastra of Kautilya, Sham (political reconciliation), Dam (monetary inducement), Danda (force) and Bhed (split) have been amply applied in dealing with the insurgents in North-East more than anywhere else in post-colonial India. In modern context, the Indian state has offered political negotiations and some concessions but nothing that would jeopardize the integrity of the State which is Sham, liberal doses of the development funds from the centre in New Delhi or Dam; military campaigns whenever needed, or Danda; and RAW and other secret agencies have been masters at executing splits within the rebel movements or Bhed which have led to factional infighting and surrenders.

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79 Baruah, Sanjib, India against Itself, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999
There are many laws as response to militant activities such as

- Disturbed Areas Act, 1950
- Armed Forces Special Powers Act, 1958
- Unlawful activities (Preventive) Act, 1967
- National Security Act, 1980
- Terrorists and Disruptive Activities Act, 1987
- Prevention of Terrorist Activities Act, 2002

Dinesh Kotwal traces the genesis and growth of insurgency, especially that of the ULFA, in Assam. The insurgency can be ascribed to mainly to three factors: (1) Lack of proper integration of the North-Eastern region with the Indian mainstream. (2) The demographic profile of the region and (3) hijacking of the intractable issues by the extremist forces. He draws attention to the spurt of violence by terrorist organizations against the non-Assamese residents in Assam especially by ULFA. He stressed that violence against civilians is a sign of desperation of the terrorist organisations.

Force alone cannot root out insurgency and no political solution is possible till the insurgents are made to realize that they cannot have their way with the gun. Stage for political negotiations would follow the use of force.

For successful CI operations the following points are to be followed:

- An effective intelligence network.
- The operations of various security forces involved must be well coordinated to avoid duplication and wastage of resources. The state police and para-military forces must play their role in these operations and not be reduced to secondary positions.

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82 Kotwal, Dinesh, The Contours of Assam Insurgency, Strategic Analysis, Vol. 24(12), March 2001
83 Kotwal, Dinesh, Assam in Flames, Strategic Analysis; Vol. 24(10), January 2001
• A unified Command set-up has proved a success in the recent years. It must be headed by an appropriate political leader.

• Politics and political interests of parties and individuals must not intrude into the scene. No undue harassment/excess against the locals.

• The police must get new weaponry and better radio sets.

Insurgents are known to be flush with funds, with some of their leaders ensconced in luxury hotels aboard. When the state gets weak; the insurgent outfits collect large amounts through taxes, ‘voluntary’ contributions, coercion and intimidation, and plain robbery. In the recent decades, the nacro-trade is filling their coffers. Worse still; the politicians, bureaucrats, contractors, and the wealthy are known to pay security money to the terrorists. In some areas, the insurgents are reportedly running a parallel government. To check this, the government must ensure safety of its citizens and employees through effective governance. Then comes the time to win the battle of minds, first of its own people and then of those gone astray.

The central government became more active to meet the serious situation in this area and for its development. The North-Eastern Council was founded in 1972 to oversee development in the region. The main initiatives by the Central government are detailed below:

Ban on terrorist organisation: The central government passed the Illegal Activities (Restriction) Act 1976 and banned a number of terrorist organisations. These include two main organisations United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) and National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) in Assam.

Armed Forces (Special powers) Act 1958 (amended in 1972): Assam was declared to be disturbed and sensitive by the government of India because these areas were prone to terrorism.

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Bhushan, Chandra, Terrorism and Separation in North-East India, Kalpaz Publications, Delhi, 2004
**Deputing Protection Forces:** The Central Government has deputed Central Para Military Force in the areas influenced by terrorism, for the help of civil Government.

**Peace Talks:** The Central Government is firm on the principle that violence of any type for any reasons shall not be tolerated. The government believes in resolving the problems and thereby bringing peace, stability and development. Under the principle the government has kept its doors open to all militant groups. But some terrorist organisations did not show any response to the talks under the framework provided by government.

**Reimbursement of expenditure on Defense:** Assam has been facing terrorism for long time. Naturally they are required to spend a lot on maintaining peace and civil defense. This, in turn, badly affects their exchequer and developmental works are thereby affected.

**Modernisation of Police Force:** Condition of the police force in Assam is pitiable. The state government does not have sufficient funds to improve it. The terrorist organisations on the other hand have plenty of modern arms and weapons, better than those with police force. Looking to this the central government is implementing a plan of providing 100% grant of the expenditure on modernisation of police force. This plan includes provision for arms and ammunition, equipment, vehicles, communication equipment etc. An amount of Rs 35.63 crores was given to North-Eastern states during 1997-98; Rs 12.48 crores in 1998-99; Rs 65 crores in 1999-2000 and 86.86 crores in 2000-2002.

**Surrender of Terrorists and their Rehabilitation Policy:** The Central Government prepared and started implementing a plan of 100% grant on surrender and rehabilitation of terrorists. Misled youth and defamed terrorists caught in the net of armed forces are encouraged to surrender. But they are required to promise that they would not participate in any more in terrorist activities. Only the armed terrorists were allowed to surrender. The plan was primarily implemented for a year. A social organisation was permitted to run a rehabilitation camp with the help of armed forces. Professional training of their liking or interest was
provided to these terrorists. A stipend of Rs 2000 and recently, Rs. 3000 per month is paid to Pro-talk ULFA. Assistance in getting employment opportunities to them was also provided. Petty criminal cases filed against them were withdrawn.

Construction of Border Roads and Fencing along the border: Work of construction of road and fencing along the Bangladesh border joined with Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram was started by Central government. This is a part of Assam agreement and aimed at restricting the entry of Bangladesh infiltrations in Indian states. A high level committee under the chairmanship of central home department secretary is appointed to see the progress to complete by March 2001. This committee again made a provision of Rs. 1334 crores for completing the remaining construction of 797 kilometer long road and fencing along 2429.5 km long border to be completed by December 2007.

Strategic initiative with bordering nations: The central government received a report that the terrorist organization ULFA is in contact with neighbouring nations i.e. Myanmar, Bangladesh and Bhutan.

On counter-insurgency strategy in the state, Kotwal advocates fighting terrorism at village level, with the active cooperation of the local population; at the operational level the troops should be reinforced and intelligence gathering strengthened and fine-turned. Kotwal suggests eliciting the active cooperation of the neighbouring countries to fight the menace of terrorism in the state.\textsuperscript{86}

The state is constrained by both insurgency and counter insurgency activities. Impacts are penetrating in almost all fronts of private as well as public life of the people. Kautilya in the Arthashastra has said that internal troubles are more serious and should be put down promptly.\textsuperscript{87}

\textsuperscript{86} Kotwal, Dinesh, Assam in Flames, Strategic Analysis; Vol. 24(10), January 2001.
Military offensives against ULFA by the Government of India

Operation Bajrang:

On 26th November, 1990, 30000 soldiers led by Ajoy Singh mobilized against ULFA. On 27th November, 1990, President’s Rule was imposed in Assam, the state government was dissolved and the ULFA was banned. Under the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958, Assam was declared as disturbed areas and Army operation codenamed Operation Bajrang was started. The army started operation first at Lakhipathar and later at Saraipung. Simultaneously, the operations were conducted in Dibrugarh, Sivsagar, Lakhimpur districts. ULFA was aware of the onset of army operations, because before its start, Paresh Baruah directed the cadres to vacate Lakhipathar and others camps on 17th November. Except some minor arms, books and furnishers, the army could not gain any major achievements. At the Lakhipathar camp fifteen dead bodies were found in mass grave on 5th December, 1990. The dead bodies were identified as Debu Choudhury, Dimbeswar Gogoi of Tinsukia; Rana Goswami, Radheshyam Lahati, Giyasuddin Ahmed of Doomdoma. At Darranga forest of Nalbari and at Garehagi of Biswanath Chariali, many more dead bodies were found. These people were suspected to be killed by the ULFA due to their involvement in anti-social activities. Documents found in the raids mentions that ULFA’s Deputy Commander in Chief Ratul Kotoki and leader Moni Gogoi were given death penalty by ULFA. ULFA leader Jiten Gogoi was also given death penalty by the organization but he challenged its punishment. He later resigned from the organization. During the time of the army operation, ULFA’s Chairman Arabinda Rajkhowa, Commander in chief Paresh Baruah and Publicity Secretary Siddhartha Phukan went to a safe place at Arunachal Pradesh. The Army was accused of committing rapes during the operation. On 9th December, 1990 ULFA sent a memorandum to the Secretary General of United Nations to stop the atrocity upon Assamese society and to support the demand of sovereignty of Assam. On 19th December, 1990 Indo-Burma
Revolutionary Front was formed at Head Quarter of NSCN as common platform. The Operation Bajrang was declared closed on 19th April, 1991.

**Operation Rhino 1&2**

The Operation Rhono-1 was operated on 15th Sept, 1991 and ended on 30th January in 1992 and Operation Rhono 2 was operated on 15th Nov, 1992 and ended on 13th January 1993.

On 30th June, 1991 Hiteswar Saikia took charge as Chief Minister of Assam. Within 24 hours of taking over charge, on 1 July ULFA kidnapped 15 government officials of different departments. They were S K Tiwary, IAS, Additional Secretary, Government of Assam, Rajani Das, Deputy Director Civil Supply, Mriganka Mohan Das, Additional Deputy Commissioner of Darrang, Assistant Hareswar Sarma, Chief Geologist of Oil and Natural Gas Commission Bholanath Jaiswal, Senior Engineer C R Mahanti, Deputy General Manager Narendra Sarma, S S Gupta, Assistant Engineer T S Raju, R P Srivastava, Krisan Paul. Russian Engineer Sergei Greisanko was also kidnapped by ULFA. ULFA demanded release of jailed leaders who were arrested during the Operation Bajrang. On 6th July, ULFA Publicity Secretary set a deadline of 9th July for the arrested ULFA leaders (Maina Bora, Anirban Hazarika, Ranjan Phukan, Hemanta Gogoi, and Sailen Dutta) to be released. If the Arrested leaders were not released, then Greisanko and Bholanath Jaiswal would be killed. ULFA leaders numbering 324 were released from different jails of Assam on pardon. On 10 July, 1991, Bholanath Jaiswal was released by ULFA, but the Publicity Secretary declared that Greisanko died in a clash.

ULFA again demanded release of 24 ULFA leaders in exchange of four kidnapped persons. On 13 July, 1991, these 24 ULFA leaders were released from jail. ULFA released four kidnapped persons Mriganka Mohan Das, Hareswar Sarma, Moha Das and Dasarath Pandit. There after ULFA demanded release of ULFA leaders who was arrested in
Meghalaya, Bhaskar Baruah and Manoj Hazarika, in exchange of two abducted persons T S Raju and Krishna Paul. At that time T S Raju was killed.

On 15th September 1991, Operation Rhino started again. In the operation on 19th September, 1991 the kidnapped person P P Srivastava was killed by ULFA at Senpukhuri Gaon of Dibrugarh. The Operation became strong and there was no alternative way for to release the abducted persons. On 16th December, 6 kidnapped persons were released. In the operation many top most ULFA leaders were arrested and killed. ULFA leaders Megha Phukan and Anirban Hazarika were killed on 30th October in an encounter at Narayanpur. ULFA Secretary Anup Chetia and Vice Chairman Pradip Gogoi were arrested at Calcutta on 18th November and 21st December. On 17th December, 1991 ULFA Chairman Arabinda Rajkhowa declared ceasefire. On 31st December, 1991 ULFA’s deputy commander the hard line leader Hirak Jyoti Mahanta was killed and ULFA’s Publicity Secretary Siddhartha Phukan and Foreign Secretary Kalpajyoti Neog were arrested. ULFA Chairman Arabinda Rajkhowa sent a letter and desired for peace talk.

During Operation Rhino, Army was able to achieve a surprise, leading to a great success. In the Bag: 431 hard-core cadres, including 46 top and middle-rung leaders, besides 299 supporters and trainees. Army destroyed 16 ULFA camps, recovering huge quantities of arms and ammunition and some important documents. The Army landed Rs. 5 crore in cash and 32 gold bars, some of it certainly from the nacro-trade - fruits of illegal transactions. The records showed purchase of weapons and equipment: automatics at Rs. 50,000 apiece, pistol at Rs. 40,000, and VHP radio set at Rs. 45,000.

Army launched a civic action drive, to win back the hearts and mind of the people. An Infantry brigade organised an Army Samaj Seva Mela at Naharkatia, 80 km from Dibrugarh, in August 1994, providing medical facilities in various disciplines to the people at their doorsteps.
**On Golden Bird:**

Joint operations, code named ‘On Golden Bird’, launched by the Indian and Burmese Armies (April-May, 1995). As a result of major engagements in the Chimtuipui and Champhai sectors of Mizoram borders, 52 ULFA and PLA cadres were arrested and 45 killed.

**Unified Command Structure (1997):**

To ensure cooperation between the security forces fighting the insurgents and the Intelligence agencies, a unified Command Structure was set up in 1997. (GOI-MHA-No-T-7/NS/97 on 4 January, 1997 and 16th January, 1997, No PLA271/95/223 on 24 January 1997 w.e.f. 20 January, 1997. Order to be reviewed at the end of three months.

The following committees were constituted:

1. **Strategy group:**
   
   Chief Secretary, Govt. of Assam - Chairman
   
   GOC / Chief of Army Staff 4 Crops
   
   Inspector General (Operations)
   
   CRPF, BSF
   
   Senior most representative of RAW
   
   Joint Secretary (home and political) is the convener

2. **Unified Headquarter:**

   GOC 4 crops of the army and the Directorate General of Police (Assam)
   
   Brigadier General of 4 Crops
   
   IGP Operations
   
   IGP (SB)
   
   BSF and CRPF
   
   Representative of SB and RAW
3. District level co-ordination committee (six members): Commissioner of division as chairman, DC, SP, representatives of army and para-military forces, intelligence agency.

**Operation All Clear:**

*The Operation All Clear* Started on 15th December, 2003, at 8.30 a.m. The areas covered are Eastern part of Bhairabkunda in Sandrup Jongkhar in South Bhutan to Phutshiling and Frontier part of Assam-West Bengal and Northern part of Bhutan. The main parties involved: Bhutan Royal Army, Indian pedestrian Army, Air force, Para military force. All total 6000 of Royal Bhutan Army were joined in the operation against ULFA and other outfits.

In 1999, the Union Home Minister said that the centre had formulated a special scheme, having an outlay of Rs. 285 crores, for modernization of police forces of North-Eastern states. Joint efforts were made for strategic counter-insurgency by Assam police and other neighbouring states.

**Efforts at Political level:**

On January 3, 1999 Assam Chief Minister Prafulla Kumar Mahanta announced the extension of the “safe passage” offer till January 17 after 257 militants opted for the same between December 21 and New Year’s Eve.

As part of anti-insurgency measures, the Governor of Assam offered “safe passage” in April, 1999 on the occasion of Bohag Bihu, the first month of the Assamese New Year, made again in the beginning of November on the occasion of Deepawali. The offer came at a time when the Army was planning to strike hard. The Chief Minister also announced a “millennium offer” to ULFA cadres allowing them to visit their families during December 21-31, 1999. The belated offer came after carefully assessing the positive impact of similar offers made by the Governor. It is reported that parents of Paresh Baruah and Arabinda Rajkhowa were urging Governor of Assam, General Sinha to allow their sons to visit them.
Though the central leadership of ULFA was not very keen about the “safe passage” offer, a large number of rebels contracted the Army and the police in this regard.

The process of integration and lack of development has generated the subjective sentiment of the relative deprivation of ULFA in the region, and that in turn has created an objective material condition for ULFA. It is necessary to evaluate the contribution of different parties for the growth and perpetuation of violent activities to further their own electoral prospects.

In certain cases, political parties ensure the longevity and perpetuation of the insurgent movements for their own political security and survival. It is well known that the possibility of a negotiated settlement was bright in early 1990s as a result of several rounds of talks between central government and the ULFA. But the move was allegedly sabotaged by ruling party under Hiteswar Saikia, since they feared the settlement might oust them from power as indeed had happen earlier consequent to Assam Accord in 1985.

Analysts assert that had an accord been signed with the undivided ULFA, the insurgency problem in Assam would have been solved once for all. Any agreement signed with a section of a movement has never been successful. The ruling elite at Guwahati engineered a vertical split in the ULFA through large-scale surrender and followed the policy of divide and rule to further their own political fortunes. They brought the movement down to such a level that it could remain under control but did not put an end to it. It was obviously aimed at perpetuating its presence to ensure their indispensability in state politics.88

In Assam, if PK Mahanta was accused of being soft on ULFA, the Congress was blamed for creating BdSF to counter the AGP.89 Over the years, insurgency movement in Assam seemed to be characterised by killings, extortions, rapine, money-laundering et al. It is mindless violence all the way, perhaps actuated by the lust for power and naked ambition. It

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89 The Times of India, 26 January 1997
is no surprise that presently in large measure the militancy came to be sustained by money power alone. They have found ingenious ways to ensure that cash keeps flowing, filling their coffers: nacro-trade, cuts and commissions from contractors, selective taxes levied in their areas and extortions. “The ruling politician, government fund as their contributions into the kitty of the militant outfits. Insurgency never seems to be short of money”.

The then Assam Chief Minister PK Mahanta’s ambivalent attitude on setting up of the Unified Command to ensure better coordination between the central forces and civil authorities was publicly commented upon. This is what a reputed national daily wrote, editorially castigating him for his dubious ways to sideline the real issues: “Centre’s decision to launch joint operations was long overdue. It would have done well for Mahanta and his party if he had taken charge of the United Command instead of leading an all-party delegation for talks with the Central leaders on ‘law and order’ situation in Assam-essentially a state subject. His equivocal attitude in dealing with the insurgency in the state is an embarrassment for Mahanta as he is also a member of ruling coalition at centre”.

The phenomenon of surrender by ULFA ultras really started during the Saikia tenure (1991-96). ULFA had gained strength during Mahanta’s first stint (1985-1990), and became notorious for killings, abductions and extortions by the end of 1980s. Moreover, they had no reasons to surrender in this period; after all, they were half-brothers of AASU/AGP. Their excesses in the tea gardens had led to Mahanta’s dismissal in November 1990 and Saikia knew it. On taking over in July 1991, he started working on it and shrewd as he was, he achieved early success, creating factions within ULFA. With Saikia announcing amnesty in March 1992, Sunil Nath, ULFA’s Publicity Secretary, led over 3,500 youth over ground. Operations Rhino had broken its back and ULFA was pushed to the wall. It was a prize moment that Saikia got the ULFA cadres released from Army custody. ULFA had as yet not

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lost its sheen accruing from an ideologically-driven movement and made up its losses quickly
through a vigorous recruiting drive and returned to its violent activities with a renewed vigor.

But in spite of the setbacks, Saikia did not give up, garnering even larger successes in
the following years, through liberal terms offered to the surrendered rebels: a cash incentive
of Rs.50,000 and a loan of Rs.200,000 per head. By end-1995, 4,860 ultras had surrendered,
of which 4,015 had chosen to avail of the incentive scheme.

The extravagant surrender package did not prove a success and it was “misused and
exploited by certain non-genuine persons, in connivance with some smart operators,
including politicians and officials”.

In particular, bank loans advanced to the SULFA were hardly paid till 1998. The
Corps Commander of Army at Tezpur suggested in August 1998 that “the first two batches,
totaling 210 militants, who recently came over ground, must be given jobs in the Central
Security Forces as promised”. On 2 April 1990, Union Home Secretary BP Singh announced
the new rehabilitation package that included cash incentives for militants surrendering with
weapons. It was to start with the two batches of 400 and 150 militants “who had surrendered
recently”.

SULFA did create problems at times, but “it seemed to be the only hope for the nation
to do business with the still powerful ULFA”, went one line of thinking. The cease-fire
observed by ULFA during the festive season of Bihu in April 1999 was in response to an
appeal made by the SULFA leaders led by Sunil Nath, who had surrendered in March 1992.
It turned out to be the first positive sign of peace in the bloodstained saga of a long-running
militancy in Assam. More heartening was the news that ULFA was in touch with the Centre.
GOC4 Corps at Tezpur, Lt Gen DB Shekhatkar, told the press at Guwahati that “a Top ULFA
functionary had contacted him on 14 April, and if they take one step for peace, Army would
take four.” Besides suspending its operations, Army also sent gifts to the kin of some top
ULFA leaders. Army also announced on 16 April that as a goodwill gesture, the troops had been ordered to allow safe passage to the ULFA militants who came unarmed to meet their kin during the Rongali Bihu. Gen. Sinha, Governor of Assam, also promised a safe passage during the Bihu and Diwali (7 November 1999). Mahanta did one better announcing a “millennium offer to the ULFA cadres”, allowing them to meet their families between 21-31 December, 1999.

ULFA leaders were not keen to sit with Mahanta, who asked for tripartite talks; they wanted to talk to the Centre only. “They opened a line of communication with New Delhi in June 1999.” Later, the government officials reportedly met ULFA leaders outside India for informal talks; Arabinda Rajkhowa in London, and Paresh Baruah in Karachi were in direct contact with Home Ministry officials.

The reasons ULFA showed interest in talks were:

- People were losing respect for it.
- A spate of armed surrenders since mid-1998 possibly unnerved the leadership, compelling it to clutch at the BJP’s offer.
- ULFA’s close liaison with the ISI and its support for Pakistan during the Kargil War made it extremely unpopular.
- It was under tremendous pressure from public, Army and Government; and
- Bangladesh and Bhutan had possibly taken action against ULFA cadres who were in camps and hide-outs on their soil.

There was certain disillusionment discernible among the lower ranks, as indicated by certain events. The surrender by 22 activists, some with AK-47s and led by Sargent Maj Khirod Gogoi in August 1999 at Joysagar in Sivasagar district was significant. Gogoi said they returned to the mainstream, realizing that “attainment of Sovereign Assam was impossible. Leaders are only interested in mortgaging the state to the ISI and Pakistan. They lived
luxurious lives while the cadres were forced to lead a life of hardship”. But it is obvious that no forward movement was discernible till the end of 1999, even though some initial contracts were made during the year and some informal talks were held. Two relevant stories from a respected daily are excerpted below to indicate the realities of life at that stage.

“Pressure is mounting on ULFA leaders from their armed ranks to start a dialogue. In Nalbari, many ULFA extremists were planning to surrender. Apparently to prevent this, some middle-rung activists were summarily executed by the outfit a few days ago. Gunning down of a prominent AGP leader yesterday at Barama in Nalbari district is believed to be a warning to the party not to encourage surrenders.”  

“18 ULFA cadres have deserted the outfit, come over ground, and are seeking ‘to live freely’. The process of disillusionment with the ULFA started long ago, but the killing of the PWD Minister, Nagen Sharma, at Nalbari on 27 February, was the breaking point.’”

ULFA’s leadership reiterated in October 1993 its demand for an independent Assam outside the Union of India. After re-working its philosophy and rejuvenating its cadres, it started working from its sanctuaries in Bangladesh. It was this period that ULFA created and reveled in its image of Robin Hood, robbing the rich to help the poor. The image, actions and ideology gained in popularity and a constituency for some time. But it started losing people’s respect and sympathy when its cadres launched on a course of mindless violence May 1996 onwards. It suffered further decline when a popular social activist like Sanjoy Ghosh was killed next year.

Towards the end of 1990s, its image stood tattered for several reasons:

- The robin Hood was dead;
- Youth’s enthusiasm to join ULFA flagged

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91 The Hindu, 11 September 1999
92 The Hindu, 25 March, 2000
• Lack of funds

• Lavish style of living enjoyed by its leaders, ensconced in 5 star hotels abroad, their children studying in expensive colleges in these countries, and people seeing the pictures of these leaders wallowing in luxury and affluence splashed on the pages of the dailies; and

• The success of the CI operations by security forces. To repair the dented self-image and to restore the sagging morale of their cadres, the leadership decided on an expedient short-cut. Discarding their ideology and ideals, they launched vicious attacks on minorities to divide the Assamese society.

As for SULFA cadres, they were intelligence assets in the initial stages, during 1993-95 periods. Then came the time when they were a cause of serious concern to civil and military authorities, becoming a law unto themselves. They indulged in looting, extortion and even killing to settle personal scores, all made possible since they had been allowed to retain their arms for reasons of personal security. But things became really dangerous with the ULFA-SULFA clashes, which were not unexpected, as SULFA were the main source of intelligence on their former colleagues. The fratricidal clashes assumed horrendous dimensions in the late 1998 with 25 ultras from both sides fell to one another’s bullets during the two months period of the year, mid October- mid December. Some analysts thought the government/SF were encouraging these clashes, which had started when ULFA felled Tapan Dutta in the heart of Guwahati on 10 August 1998. He was a prominent Dibrugarh businessman and a SULFA activist who had surrendered in 1998 and had been accused by ULFA of misappropriating huge amount of the outfit’s funds. The SULFA retaliated by killing relatives of top ULFA leaders. In August itself, Arabinda Rajkhowa’s brother and five relatives of ULFA’s Publicity Chief were done in.
Surrenders during 1998-2000:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>24 July: 51 at Thakurbari</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14 August: 133 at Mariani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31 December: 36 at Dispur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>21 January: 159 at Tamulpur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25 May: 102 at Nagaon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16 August: 178 in total, at nine different locations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>1-14 March: 14 senior cadres at the Zonal and Anchalik levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27 March: 13 senior functionaries of ULFA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 April: 436 at Sivsagar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14 August: 242 at Guwahati</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Yearly Surrender of ULFA Cadres: Official Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000 (Till October)</td>
<td>1186</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table below indicates the payment for each weapon/equipment handed in by the surrendered rebel, under “give up and gain” criterion.

Cash for Surrendered Arms (1998)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weapon/Equipment</th>
<th>Payment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rocket launchers</td>
<td>25000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sniper Rifles</td>
<td>25000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assault Rifles of AK 47, 56 and 74 series</td>
<td>15000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pistols/Revolvers</td>
<td>3000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rockets</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hand/Rifle Grenades</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remote Control devices</td>
<td>3000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IED</td>
<td>3000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RDX etc. per kg.</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
By end 2000, ULFA seemed to have reached at a certain crossroad in its quest. It had its highs and lows during this journey. Its first test came in November 1990 during Operation Bajrang but it escaped with minor losses since it was able to get advanced information of it. But it was not so lucky during Operation Rhino, launched in September 1991, suffering grievous losses consequently. But the crafty leadership earned a reprieve when Saikia Government, in power since mid-1991, ‘forced’ or ‘persuaded’ the Army to suspend operations against it on a mere “assurance that it would abide by the Indian Constitution and abjure violence”. But it then took advantage of the situation, regrouped and rethought its strategy. In May 1992, Rajkhowa announced that “ULFA never committed itself to talks on Indian’s terms.” By end of the year, it was ready to fight again. But then it was defeated not by the might of the Army, but by “the guile and shrewdness” of Hiteswar Saikia. In 1993, he had lured close to 5000 ULFA cadres, perhaps majority of its strength at that point in time, into surrendering to join the mainstream. The main reason for that singular success might have been the fact that large part of the cadres then was fresh recruits enlisted during the suspension of Operation Rhino in 1992. This time again, ULFA was able to make up its losses quickly, and re-launched on its violence trajectory. Subsequently, it grew in size and strength, with the hardline leadership expanding its base of operations from Upper Burma to Bangladesh, and still later to Bhutan.

Through skilful negotiations, it strengthened its ties with other such outfits in the North-East. Expectedly, at a certain stage, it struck an equation with the ISI, becoming a bigger headache for India. Some analysts assert it is totally under the thumb of ISI. Forsaking the moral high ground claimed on the strength of its ideology, the desperate leadership unleashed the vicious killings of the non-Assamese Hindi speaking people, to divide the society on communal lines and then to regain the support of the ethnic Assamese. This was
the re-orientated ULFA, sans ideology, sans nationalistic philosophy. The October-December 2000 orgy of violence was meant to convey a message to the government: ULFA was well and alive, and back in business. This was the route chosen for immediate gains and immediate attention for itself.

In November 1999, Paresh Baruah called up newspaper offices in Guwahati, and voiced his demand for an UN-supervised plebiscite in Assam on the question of sovereignty, outrightly dismissed by the Government as preposterous. The timing of demand was ill-considered, coming as it did within a month of the Lok Sabha poll (September-October 1999) in which 70 percent of Assam’s 1.4 crore voters had exercised their franchise in defiance of ULFA’s call for its boycott. This was Assamese way of expressing distaste and disapproval of ULFA’s support for Pakistan during the Kargil war earlier in the year. During 1999 and 2000 years there were any move for talks between the Government and ULFA.

In another interview, cited by the Indian Express on 15 January 2001, ULFA dropped first two of the three demands listed above and it was ready to discuss the issue of sovereignty alone. Paresh Baruah said “this stand has been conveyed directly to the PMO in December 2000”. The Centre’s pre-condition that ULFA must give up violence before the talks start was not acceptable to Baruah. On 16 January 2001, at Guwahati, G K Pillai, JS, NE in MHA, offered unconditional talks to ULFA. So did Home Minister L.K. Advani at a public meeting at Nagaon on 5 February 2001, but asked the “banned outfit to lay down arms”.

Secret Killings of ULFA family members

During AGP led government under Prafulla Kumar Mahanta, a number of family members of ULFA leaders were assassinated by unidentified gunmen. With the fall of this government following elections in 2001, the secret killings stopped. Investigations into the killings culminated in the report of the “Saikia Commission”, presented to the Assam
Assembly November 15, 2007. The report provides details about the killings, which were organised by Prafulla Kumar Mahanta in his role as the Assam Home Minister, and executed by the police, with cooperation from the Indian Army. The actual killers were surrendered elements of the ULFA, who would approach their targets at home, at night, knocking on the door and calling out in Assamese to allay suspicion. When the victims answered the door, they were shot or kidnapped to be shot elsewhere. Even the elder brother of Paresh Baruah, Dinesh Baruah was picked up at night from his house by unidentified Assamese boys along with army with weapons, and later his body was found lying near a cremation centre in Chabua. ULFA’s Publicity secretary Mithinga Daimary is the worst victim of the secret killing episode losing five members of his family. There were more than 400 cases of secret killings in Assam, out of which, 55 were in Kamrup district.

According to some reports in the print media, the Prafulla Kumar Mahanta government carried out these killings under pressure from L.K.Advani (the then Home Minister of India in the BJP led NDA government) who became furious at Mahanta for failing to curb the growing popularity of ULFA among the middle class and the student populations. Critics often claims that, fearing the imposition of President’s rule by the Centre due to the degrading law and order situation in the state, Prafulla Kumar Mahanta had little option other than accepting L.K.Advani’s ultimatum on going on an all-out war against the ULFA and its sympathizers.

On secret killings, there were four commissions of enquiry instituted as follows:

1. Justice Safiqul Hoque Commission- in 2000
3. Justice S.N. Saikia Commission- on 16 August 2005

Justice (Retd) K.N. Saikia Commission
K.N. Saikia Commission listed 400 secret killings in Assam and during the investigation 55 secret killings victim family members were applied for justice among there were 33 cases listed in Kamrup district. (Memo No.DJK/HA/1699-1712 E dated 04-06-2012 from Sri H.K. Sarma District & Sessions Judge, Kamrup district to the Officer –In-Charge of Hajo.

**ABSTRACT**

District – wise nos. of Victim identified by Justice (Retd.) K.N. Saikia Com. of Inquiry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No</th>
<th>Name of Districts</th>
<th>No. of Victim</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Sivasagar</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Nalbari</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Kamrup (Metro)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Kamrup</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Dibrugarh</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Jorhat</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Sonitpur</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Goalpara</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Golaghat</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>55</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: K.N.Saikia Commission report.

**List of Victims Identified by Justice (Retd) K.N. Saikia Commission of Inquiry for secret killings.**

**Name of District: Kamrup.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No</th>
<th>PS case No.</th>
<th>Name of the deceased</th>
<th>Name of Nok</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Hajo ps case No. 107/99 Palasbari PS Case No.93/99</td>
<td>Sri Parameswar Das Wife: Mrs. Malati Das</td>
<td>1. Smti Malati Das (Wife) 39 years 2. Smti Parismita Das (Daughter) 14 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Detailed list of the beneficiaries of ex gratia grant (state share) in respect of Secret killing:-

**Kamrup (M) District**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl</th>
<th>PS</th>
<th>Name of Victim</th>
<th>Kin of Victim/Recipient</th>
<th>Ch.No</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Application Received on/annexure</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Chanmari 249/98</td>
<td>Lt. Boloram(Boloram Prasad)</td>
<td>Fulmati Devi (Wife), Golakgang</td>
<td></td>
<td>300000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Jalukbari 359/98</td>
<td>Lt. Kalimuddin Ahmed</td>
<td>Kasim Ali (Father)</td>
<td></td>
<td>300000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Latasil 129/98</td>
<td>Lt. Pratul Sarma</td>
<td>Prabhat Sarma (Brother)</td>
<td></td>
<td>300000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Chanmari 213/98</td>
<td>Lt. Atul Phangshu</td>
<td>Jayanta Phangshu (Brother)</td>
<td></td>
<td>300000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Basistha 44/2000</td>
<td>Lt. Gopesh kumar Deka</td>
<td>Jitendra Nath Deka (Father)</td>
<td></td>
<td>300000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Basistha 44/2000</td>
<td>Lt. Runu Bharali</td>
<td>Jamini Bharali (Mother)</td>
<td></td>
<td>300000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Basistha 44/2000</td>
<td>Dimbeswar Bharali</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>300000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Basistha 44/2000</td>
<td>Minu Bharali</td>
<td>Jamini Bharali (Mother)</td>
<td></td>
<td>300000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Basistha 44/2000</td>
<td>Lt. Rubul Das</td>
<td>Madhan Devi</td>
<td></td>
<td>300000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: K.N. Saikia Commission report.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No</th>
<th>PS Case No</th>
<th>Name of victim</th>
<th>Kin of victim/Recipient (NOK)</th>
<th>Drft No</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Remarks/Rectification in respect of bank drafts required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Hajo, 107/99</td>
<td>Sri Parameswar Das</td>
<td>Smti Malati Das (Wife)</td>
<td>304437</td>
<td>200000</td>
<td>DISBURSED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Hajo, 40/2000</td>
<td>Sri Khagen Barman</td>
<td>Sri Ganesh Barman (Father)</td>
<td>304438</td>
<td>200000</td>
<td>DISBURSED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Rangia, 273/2000</td>
<td>Sri Pratap Kalita</td>
<td>Smti Bimala Kalita (Wife)</td>
<td>304439</td>
<td>200000</td>
<td>DISBURSED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Basista, 224/99 &amp; Hajo 155/99</td>
<td>Sri Ananta Kalita</td>
<td>Sri Ananta Kalita</td>
<td>304440</td>
<td>200000</td>
<td>DISBURSED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Chaygaon 131/99</td>
<td>Dhanti Ozha</td>
<td>Aswini Ozha (Father)</td>
<td>300055</td>
<td>200000</td>
<td>Aswini Ozha expired, as per Gaor Burah’s report. Next NOK as per police report is Smti Runu Ozah (Mother of victim)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Chaygaon 131/99</td>
<td>Dhanjay Deka</td>
<td>Hiru Deka (Brother)</td>
<td>300056</td>
<td>200000</td>
<td>As per police report name of NOI is Haren Deka</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** K.N. Saikia Commission report.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Name 1</th>
<th>Name 2</th>
<th>Account No.</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Validity Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Chygaon</td>
<td>Dharani Barman</td>
<td>Motin Barman (Brother)</td>
<td>300057</td>
<td>200000</td>
<td>Validity period expired</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Baihata</td>
<td>Karuna Deka</td>
<td>Bhugeswari Deka</td>
<td>300058</td>
<td>200000</td>
<td>Validity period expired</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Rangia</td>
<td>Pallabjoyoti Deka</td>
<td>Ramesh Deka (Father)</td>
<td>300059</td>
<td>200000</td>
<td>DISBURSED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Rangia</td>
<td>Suresh Borah</td>
<td>Badan Kalita@ Achut Kalita (Brother)</td>
<td>300063</td>
<td>200000</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Rangia</td>
<td>Bipul Kalita</td>
<td>Pulam Kalita (Mother)</td>
<td>300061</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Rangia</td>
<td>Bhupen Kalita</td>
<td>Thuku Kalita (mother)</td>
<td>300060</td>
<td>200000</td>
<td>Validity period of draft expired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Kamalpur</td>
<td>Gautam Das</td>
<td>Ramani Kanta Das (Father)</td>
<td>300062</td>
<td>200000</td>
<td>As per police report Ramani Kt.Das already expired. Present NOK is Mrs. Madhabi Das, mother of the victim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Basistha</td>
<td>Haren Teron</td>
<td>Niren Teron</td>
<td>304429</td>
<td>200000</td>
<td>Validity period of draft expired</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Basista</td>
<td>Barhani Teron</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>304430</td>
<td>200000</td>
<td>Validity period of draft expired</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Basista</td>
<td>Bipul Teron</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>304431</td>
<td>200000</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Dispur</td>
<td>Lakheswar Rabha</td>
<td>Mrs Soute Rava (Wife)</td>
<td>304432</td>
<td>200000</td>
<td>As per police report name of the NOK is Mrs. Seuti Rabha, wife of victim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Relationship</td>
<td>Account No.</td>
<td>Amount</td>
<td>Remarks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Sonapur45/99</td>
<td>Sukuri Boro</td>
<td>Smti Tilottoma Boro Rava</td>
<td>304434</td>
<td>200000</td>
<td>Validity period of draft expired. Present NOK is Mrs. Nilima Kalita, mother of the victim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Sonapur45/45</td>
<td>Kanta Ram Baro</td>
<td>Smti Rambha Rava</td>
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<td>200000</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Geetanar 1/2001</td>
<td>Jyotish Sarma</td>
<td>Sri Mintu Kumar Sarma</td>
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<td>200000</td>
<td>Validity period of draft expired.</td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Basista 317/98</td>
<td>Rubul Das</td>
<td>Madhu Devi Das (Wife)</td>
<td>300052</td>
<td>200000</td>
<td>Validity period of draft expired.</td>
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The Congress ruled Tarun Gogoi government appointed Justice S.N. Saikia on 16 August 2005 to look into the issues of secret killing. Initially, the notification included 11 cases. (Vide Assam government notification PLA 331/2005/1).

Notable cases were killings of Arabinda’s Brother Dimbo Rajkhowa, killing of ULFA’s Publicity Secretary Mithinga Daimairy’s family, ULFA leader Subhas Sharma’s relatives, ULFA’s Foreign Secretary Sasha Choudhury’s brother and others. Later on, 24 more cases were given\(^94\). The said notification also gave 15 more cases of secret killing. The process begun on 21 August 2006. The commission had the following terms of reference and any other matters with recommendations\(^95\).

1. Circumstances, in each case, leading to the killing of the victims of these cases.

2. Identity of the killer(s) and accomplice(s), if any.

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\(^94\) Vide Assam government notification PLA 331/2005/2.

\(^95\) Mahanta, N.G., Confronting the State: ULFA’s Quest for Sovereignty, Sage publications India Pvt Ltd., New Delhi, 2013
3. To find out whether there was any conspiracy in targeting the victims and the motive behind such killings.

4. Pinpoint responsibility on persons who were involved directly or indirectly in the commission of such killings.

5. To make recommendation to prevent recurrence of such killings.

6. Any other matter related to or relevant to the purpose of this enquiry.

S. N. Saikia Commission looked into 35 such cases and had submitted four thick volumes. The commission has described the process not as secret killing but as ‘Ulfocide’ suggesting ‘the killing of ULFA’s and their families and relatives.

The nature of secret killings in Assam from 1996 to 2001, following types of victims are discernible:

1. Direct family members of ULFA.

2. Killings of sympathisers.


4. Killing of manufactured ULFAs (mostly business persons) refused to collaborate with the killers on business interest and benefit.

In all the cases, the commission found the following common characteristics:

• Each killing involved an ULFA family, or and ULFA related family; all the police enquiries met with dead end having no clue. No charge sheet is submitted in any of the cases.

• All the killings, except that of Dimbo Rajkhowa which was in the evening, were committed in the dead night. The assailants invariably spoke in Assamese to awaken the inmates for killing victims.
• The assailants were armed with sophisticated firearms of prohibited bores and masked with black wrappers or caps, to avoid being identified.

• As firearms of prohibited bores were mostly used, forensic/ballistic examination of exhibits was mostly avoided or unduly delayed and investigation ultimately fizzled out.

• Vehicles used in the operations were mostly Maruti Gypsies and vans. The vehicles had no registration numbers.

• In all the cases police patrolling was missing. There were police patrolling in the crime areas prior and posterior to, but surprisingly not during the killings.

• The involvement of army was found in all cases. By army the commission meant the armed forces of the Union deployed in Assam in aid of civil power.

The commission said: “There was lurking evidence of Police- SULFA nexus in the killings, some of the later being constituted into an extra-constitutional authority and used as the executioners, the modus operandi being to visit the family, ask members to persuade its ULFA member to surrender, falling which, to send an advanced team to survey the location and structure of the house, then to send armed and masked men to the family house at the dead night, knock at the door to wake up the inmates and then drag him/them out and shoot him/them dead or take him away and kill and throw the bodies somewhere.”

• One of the important findings of the commission was that people have unequivocally reacted against the operational tactics of the security apparatus of the state. There was general resentment and decry against the unified command structure (UCS)/Chief Minister.
• The investigation was not commensurate with the seriousness of the crime perpetrated and no modern scientific methods of investigation, finger/footprint, dog squads were used. The commission opined that no ex gratia/compensatory payment was made by the Government of Assam in any such case.

• The commissioned opined that in all the cases, except one, the entire killings were remotely orchestrated; death penalty having been imposed on the victims for ‘status offences’ of being members of ULFA-related families and the principle of ‘kill and get killed’ is deductible.

The commission’s report can be called as a big indictment on the functioning of the armed forces and of the Union and it strongly suggested the dismantling of the UCS at the earliest. The UCS had become the source of all human rights violations in the state as the system had given operational freedom to the army and they remain practically unaccountable to the civil administration. On many occasions, such operational freedom to Army had created great confusion. There was no coordination between the army and police and there is always a tug of war between the two for who can kill how many ‘terrorists’. In the process, many innocents were concocted to be ‘dreaded terrorists’, especially in the hands of the army. However, the process is always self-defeating as it is an attempt to extinguish fire with fire.

The principle of ‘kill and get killed’ was remotely orchestrated by a few police and military officials who were the most abiding disciples of K. P. S. Gill. The political leaders whose ultimate nodding was a must for such a systematic madness gave in to such immature advice primarily because of their political compulsions.

The Saikia Commission is a reflection of the present dominating role of the Union over the states. The Central government, in the name of counter-insurgency operations, systematically increases the Union’s command over the state’s administrative jurisdiction.
Operation of various draconian laws and declaration of certain areas as disturb zone help the union to deploy Central forces in the name of law and order.

**Forces Deployed in CI Role**

The Army deployment is seldom made known to the public. The following seems plausible information from the published sources:

Army’s Tezpur (based) 4 crops is responsible for counter-insurgency operations in Assam. It has one to two Army division at its disposal for the task; approximately 20,000 troops.

Unlike the Army, the para military forces (PMF) generally keep announcing the quantum of their forces deployed in different states. PMF deployed in Assam in December 1996 was CRPF- 138 companies and BSF- 20 companies.

In July 1996, Chief Minister Mahanta had announced that were 57 companies of PMF, 37 of Assam Police, 5 from Karnataka and 15 from Bihar\(^9\). He also disclosed that during the elections (earlier 1996), there were in all 157 companies. CRPF told the press (June 1997) that it had a total of 350 companies in the NE, of which 156 were in Assam to operate against the ULFA militants. Its force was divided into three sectors, Guwahati, Agartala and Imphal. On the poll eve in February 1998, there were 69 companies of PMF against the projected demand of over 600 companies. Home Minister Inderjit Gupta informed the Lok Sabha in January 1998 of the Government decision to raise 12 India Reserve Battalions for anti-insurgency duties in the NE. The figure was later raised to 13.

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\(^9\)The Hindustan Times, 29 July 1996
Insurgent fatalities and surrenders in Assam from 1991 to till June 2014.

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Source: Records of Special Branch (SB), DGP Office, Assam Police.
Number of security personnel killed, civilians killed and kidnapped

Ammunitions and Cash recovered from 1991 to 2nd June, 2014

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Source: Records of Special Branch (SB), DGP Office, Assam Police.
Peace Process

Most of the peace processes in North-East are confined to peace making than peace building. Two voices dominate in the region, the voice of the state and the voice of the militants, the people remaining mute spectators. The history of resolving conflict in India shows that the state is always after a ‘rag-tag’ piecemeal approach. The conflict Resolution (CR) attempt in Assam by the Indian State can be best describes as an approach of conflict management and suppression. The conflict management theories see the violent conflicts as an ineradicable consequence of differences of values and interests within and between communities.  

The propensity to violence arises from the existing institutions and historical relationships as well from the established distribution of power. Resolving such conflicts is viewed as unrealistic- the best that can be done is to contain and manage them and occasionally to reach a historic compromise in which violence may be laid aside and normal politics resumed. Conflict management is the appropriate intervention to achieve political settlements, particularly by those powerful actors having the power and resources to put pressure on the conflicting parties.

It is also the art of designing appropriate institutions to guide the inevitable conflict into appropriate channels. Conflict management is the mixture of both conflict settlement and conflict containment. Conflict settlement means agreement between parties to settle a political conflict ending an armed conflict. Conflict containment includes peacekeeping and war limitation with an intention to terminate conflict at the earliest opportunity.

The model of management and suppression has been conspicuous by the following characteristics: In this model, issues of ‘dignity and justice are compromised. Protection of

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97 Miall, Hugh, Conflict Transformation: A Multi-Dimensional Task, Berghof Research Centre for Constructive Conflict Management, 2004
human rights is understood as the last bastion for the pro-insurgent NGO activists and academia. Continuation of AFSPA in the North-Eastern states is one such indication, in spite of recommendations by the Justice Reddy Committee for its repeal. The committee says, “The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 should be repealed. Therefore, recommending the continuation of the present Act, with or without amendments, does not arise…. The Act is too sketchy, too bald and quite inadequate in several particulars…We must also mention the impression gathered by it during the course of its work viz., the Act, for whatever reason, has become a symbol of oppression, an object of hate and an instrument of discrimination and highhandedness.”

The attempt of the state is to analyse the insurgency-related developments purely from a perspective of Greed Model as popularised by Paul Collier.\(^{99}\)

Many of the insurgent groups have come a long way from their stated idealism; many have lost their mass support. But the basic issues for which armed rebellions have come need to be looked into dispassionately.

Procrastination and bureaucratic machinations in resolving the insurgency issues is the latest approach of the Indian State. The State has realised that suppression is the best method and entices the groups to join the ‘mainstream’. The state is rarely successful in bringing the entire group to the so called ‘mainstream’; and the splinter group keeps clamouring about talks - slowly and gradually the groups will be lost into oblivion until a new batch of insurgent groups comes up. In other words, there is a ‘traffic jam’ of Pro-talk groups ULFA- the list is endless in Assam.

\(^{99}\) Collier, P., Economic Consequences of Civil War, Oxford University Press, 1999
Conflict Resolutions:

Most of the wars in the 21st century are intra-state and they are incredibly resistant and tend to defy easy solutions. These contemporary conflicts are termed as ‘New Wars’ (Kaldor), ‘internal conflicts’ (Brown), ‘Small wars’ (Harding), ‘Conflict in the post-colonial states’ (Van de Goor), ‘Protected social conflicts’ (Edward E. Azar)\textsuperscript{100}, ‘deep-rooted conflicts’ (John W. Burton)\textsuperscript{101} and so on\textsuperscript{102}.

Preferring the term ‘intractable conflicts’, Gidron, Katz and Hasenfel argue that characteristics of these conflicts include protracted, continual, violent, perceived as irreconcilable, zero sum and central to the lives of the identity group involved\textsuperscript{103}.

It has been argued that one of the greatest shortcomings of the contemporary CR process is that they often fail to address the bitterness, including the memories and images, and the sources that generate it. In CR literatures, two approaches are widely talks about, one group that perceives conflicts to be structural and the other that perceives it to be psychological and psycho-cultural. The structuralists focus on the issue of rights, justice and identity. The psychological and psycho-cultural group has emphasized on relationships and need to work on eliminating the ignorance, misperceptions, fears and hostility between the groups, often through cooperative activities and encounters\textsuperscript{104}.


\textsuperscript{102} Kaldor, Mary, New and Old Wars: Organised Violence in a Global Era, Standford University Press, Palo Alto, CA, 1999

\textsuperscript{103} Gidron, Benjamin, Katz, Stanley N and Haseenfeld, Yeheskel, Introduction: Theoretical Approach and Methodology, in Mobilizing for Peace: Conflict Resolution in Northern Ireland, Israel/ Palestine and South Africa, OUP, New York, 2002

\textsuperscript{104} Gaware, Michelle I., Peace Building: Theoretical and Concrete Perspectives, Peace and Change 31(4): 437, October, 2006
**Peace Initiative by 28 Battalion:**

In June 2008, the A and C companies of the Battalion under the leadership of Mrinal Hazarika, Mrinal Dutta, and Prabat Neog declared Ceasefire for peace talks. Later they joined in the pro-talks group of ULFA.

**Civil Society:**

According to Gellner, civil society constitutes institutions strong enough to counterbalance the State whilst not preventing the State from fulfilling its role of keeper of peace and arbitrator between major interests\(^\text{105}\). Michael Edwards defines civil society as “all organizations and associations between the family and the State with the exception of business\(^\text{106}\). Others include even business within the spectrum of civil society. Paul Caspers states that civil society lies “outside and beyond identifiable and established societal structures or institutions, while being in it all pervasive, yet elusive and often invisible categories”\(^\text{107}\).

Neera Chandhoke defines civil society as the site for production of critical discourse, which possesses the potential to interrogate the state\(^\text{108}\).

The relatively new emphasis in multidimensional, comprehensive and multitrack approach to peace is due to the limited success of the State-centric realist approaches to the resolutions of conflicts and peace-building.

Camilla Orjuela points out that the necessity for civilians to be involved in working for peace can be seen as ‘question of representation’.\(^\text{109}\).

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non-democratic actors to varying degrees are dependent on the people to get support, sustain their power, legitimacy and recourses and their need to recruit.

The importance of local people and grass-roots leaders is to be understood not only as the ‘victims of violence’ but also as ‘perpetrators of violence’. The scholars, journalists, opinion leaders, formers government officials and representatives from conflicting parties, common people at the grass-roots level have a significant role in CT and peace-building process.

Initiative by All Assam Democratic Citizens’ Association (AADCA), 1990

The first civil society initiative in Assam, in order to usher a peace process with ULFA, was taken by the All Assam Democratic Citizen’s Association (AADCA), established in the year 1990 at Guwahati. Noted freedom fighter and trade union leader, Bijoy Chandra Bhagawati, was the president of AADCA and Pradip Acharya, a reputed scholar from Cotton College, was the general secretary. Professor Hiren Gohain (a prominent leftist scholar), and Preeti Baruah (educationist) were involved among others. It was a platform for progressive people comprising intellectuals from all sections of the society. On 16 December 1990, the AADCA organised a state-level convention in the District Library Auditorium of Guwahati. The convention took a resolution against the continuation of the Disturbed Areas Act & Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA). On the crucial question of peace process with ULFA, the convention decided to set up a five member committee to mediate the negotiation between ULFA and Government of India (GOI). The convention appealed to the Central government to come forward for negotiation and urged ULFA to abjure violence. However,

ULFA rejected the mediatory offer of the convention as it did not consider the AADCA as an impartial organisation\textsuperscript{110}.

\textit{1991 Initiative:}

The talk process led by three leaders from Kamrup, Sunil Nath, Kalpajyoti Neog and Munin Nobis, conducted a meeting of five district units, Kamrup, Barpeta, Sonitpur, Jorhat and Lakhimpur. Notable among the top most eight pro-talk leaders, there were four from Kamrup district alone. In the meeting following resolutions were taken.

1. At this hour of crisis the central emergency council of ULFA has failed to give any specific directions to the people of Assam, rather they have preferred to stay away from common people taking shelter in secure zones. On such circumstances we don’t want to push the people of Assam to a state of uncertainty. Therefore, respecting our commitment to the people, various district committees assembled here have declared to take their own decisions.

2. The central committee members of ULFA have never faced any military atrocities, rather it is the common people who face the wrath; hence, we have decided to carry forward the peace process. The meeting has decided to resume direct talks with the government; the talks will take place in an open atmosphere, taking the full confidence of the people.

3. Arms accumulation in the name of people’s revolution has caused more harm to the people of Assam. Instead of the revolutionary zeal getting misused in the reckless use of arms, it is important to provide a correct platform to give vent to the grievances of the people of Assam. The meeting decides to collect all illegal arms and oppose its possession.

\textsuperscript{110}Mahanta, N.G., Confronting the State: ULFA’s Quest for Sovereignty, Sage publications India Pvt Ltd., New Delhi, 2013
4. The meeting condemns atrocities and terror of both the government and non-governmental groups. The meetings feel that only in a non-violent democratic atmosphere could the problems of Assam be resolved.

5. To regulate the activities of the group, a central committee was constituted.

*Asom Jatiyatabadi Yuva Chatra Parishad (AJYCP)*

Perhaps the first major initiative for peace effort in Assam was taken by AJYCP in December 2000 under the leadership of Dilip Patgiri.

The first national convention on the issue of ULFA-GOI talk to resolve the national issues was organised by AJYCP on 20 and 21 September 2004 at Lakhiram Baruah Sadan, Guwahati. The Parishad said:

“In our views it will be impossible to isolate ULFA from the masses, as ULFA is the product of a situation. The step mother attitude of the central government in the post-independence period, plunder of our resources from Assam to benefit the metropolitan centres, unemployment, conspiracy to disrupt the unity of the Assamese people etc. have given birth to a self-pride to the Assamese people. ULFA represents that pride— it’s an attempt to redeem our lost glory…. So ULFA by itself is not the problem; the factors leading to such a situation is the problem which ULFA wants to rectify by demanding sovereignty ….We may not agree with the sovereignty demand but we can’t prance the background has led to the growth of ULFA”.

The meeting which was attended by more than 120 organisations and more than 1,500 persons urged to tackle the ULFA issue through political means- excessive reliance on military means and treatment of the issue as law and order problem would not help to mitigate the situation. The Mahasabha blamed the Central government for not paying heed to

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111 Press statement and leaflet published by AJYCP, 1 September 2004
the prolong demand of the people of Assam to resolve the issue through dialogue. The meeting among others took the following resolutions:

1. It requested the Central government to invite ULFA for talks on the basis of the demands put forwarded by ULFA.

2. For a political resolution of the issue, it urged ULFA to shun violence and other armed activities and also requested the Central government to immediately withhold anti-insurgency operations.

3. The conclave expressed solidarity to the people of Manipur in their struggle against the AFSPA and resolved that the draconian Act be scrapped immediately.

ULFA responded positively to the resolutions of AJYCP. It expressed the opinion that Dr. Indira Goswami should take the resolutions of the Mahasabha as the basis for her proposed model of talk between ULFA and the GOI which she plans to submit to the Centre.

Arabinda Rajkhowa on 28 September extended support to the resolutions of the Mahasabha. AJYCP did play an important role in mobilising public opinion for peaceful resolution of the ULFA issue.

*National Convention (Jatiya Abhibartan) Sivsagar, People’s Committee for Peace Initiative in Assam (PCPIA), 2005.*

More than 45 organisations of the state came together for a national convention which took place on 13 and 14 March 2005 at Sivsagar Natya Mandir. Although the convention was a product of collective efforts of various organisations, the predominant role of AJYCP was perceptible from the very beginning. Some of the groups which took an active part in the Sivsagar convention were MASS, Krishak Adhikar Surakhyta Samiti, Nari Adhikar Surakhyta

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112 Shanti AlusonarProtiUlfarXohari, Asomiya Pratidin, 26 October, 2004
Samiti, NESO, Dalang Mukti Sangram Samiti, Tai Ahom Students’ Association, Assam Lawyers’ Association, Sivsagar, Karbi Students’ Union, All Assam Minority Students’ Union (AAMSU), All Assam Motok Chatra Sanmilan, All Assam Moran Students’ Association, Assam Tea Tribes Students’ Association (ATTSA), Purbanchal Tai Sahitya Sabha, AASU, All Assam Gorkha student’s Union, representatives of political parties and many more. The convention was also attended by many prominent personalities of the state.

The report of the convention criticised the colonial mindset of the Central government and a military-centric approach in addressing the issue of insurgency in the state. The main conclusions and resolutions of the convention were.

1. The ULFA issue is not merely a law and order problem and behind the armed movement, there is the question of national rights of the Assamese people. Only a meaningful political dialogue with dignity can resolve such national issues. On account of the colonial attitude of the Central government for last 57 years, Assam has been witnessing assertive movements one after another. The emergence of ULFA has to be looked into in this historical context.

2. The GOI as being the guardian of the nation and the Constitution should immediately invite ULFA for talks, and all military actions against the organisation should be stopped forthwith. The government should also release all the children, women and other cadres who were arrested during the Bhutan operation in 2003, ULFA should reciprocate to such offer and should bring down all their armed activities.

3. The convention took the resolution that political dialogue between ULFA and the GOI should be started on the basis of demand of sovereignty. An open dignified discussion between the two would give a resolution to the issue.

4. The convention was of the opinion that the Centre has been trying to militarise Assam and other parts of North-East India by taking help of anti-democratic legislation like
the AFSPA. This law has been decried by all democratic forces including the committee appointed by the government. The convention resolved that the draconian Act be scrapped immediately.

5. The meeting protested the attempt to divide Assam in the name of creation of greatest Nagaland. It urged the government to resolve the Naga issue without causing any threat to the neighbouring nationalities of the region.

6. It urged to the GOI to remove the restrictions it had imposed on the Right to self-determination, particularly the 11th chapter of the ICCPR and ICESCR.

7. AJYCP and MASS have been appointed as the joint conveners to move forward the talk process between the GOI and ULFA. With the consent of the members present, a new platform was created to be known as PCPIA.

8. If the GOI does not start the talk process with ULFA on the issue of sovereignty, the newly constituted body, the PCPIA, would consider for conducting a plebiscite to solicit the opinion of the indigenous people on the issue of Assam’s sovereignty. On the basis of the findings, the PCPIA would urge for resolving the issue. (A report on the Jatiya Abhibartan, 2005, published by Chandarditty Gogoi, General Secretary and Kamal Bora, working president, the organising Committee of the Jatiya Abhibartan, Sivasagar, 2005.)

After that, the PCPIA conducted a number of meetings in various parts of Assam to mobilise people’s opinion on the issue of political resolution of the issues. One of the noticeable features of the PCPIA was in the number of occasions the platform, which was a conglomerate of more than 64 organisations, expressed voice for amicable resolutions of all the nagging issues of the North-East. The PCPIA gave equal importance to all the other insurgency movements and demanded to initiate political dialogue with organisations.
Many leaders of the organisation including Dilip Patgiri, Lachit Bordoloi (both of them were the coordinators of PCPIA) and Diganta Konwar were subsequently appointed as the members of PCG by ULFA. They were accused of making attempts to legitimise the demands of ULFA in the name of civil society initiative. The PCPIA conducted another major national convention (Jatiya Mahasabha) at Machkhowa ITA complex, Guwahati on 22 March 2007, which was attended by not less than 2,500 people from various parts of Assam.

It was true that members of PCPIA had soft corner for the rebel group and many of the members were forced by ULFA top leaders to take resolutions in the favour of the rebel organisation. However, it would be wrong to say that such demands were articulated by PCPIA or AJYCP only. Other peace initiatives in the state echoed similar sentiments.

2005 People’s Consultative Group:

The PCG held three rounds of talks with the Union government in New Delhi. The first meeting on 26 October 2005 was attended by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. The second PCG-government meeting was held on 7 February 2006, and the last on 22 June 2006 was attended by the then Home Minister Shivraj Patil. According to reports, in the third round of talks between the PCG and the GOI, following points were broadly agreed upon:

1. The GOI urged the PCG members to impress upon the ULFA leaders to ensure a peaceful and conducive environment so that direct talks with the GOI are held at the earliest.

2. The Central government said that the release of five ULFA detunes would be favorably considered in consultation with the state government.

3. Modalities for holding direct talks between ULFA and the GOI in a fixed time-frame would be worked out through mutual consultations.

4. The meeting concluded with a hope that there would be restraint on all sides. (Joint statement, 22 June 2006).
Other efforts (2006-2008):

Suchibrata Rai Choudhury, daughter of Ambikagiri Roychoudhury, along with other Gandhian leaders, made a series of attempts from 2006 till the time of her death to convince the Central government for a negotiated settlement. Some other civil society appeals also criticised the State role and urged the government of India to play a positive role. The appeal made by some of the most prominent Gandhian of the state like Hem Bharali, Rabindra Bhai, Suchibrata Roychoudhury, Natawar Thakhar and many others fervently prayed to both the parties to speed up the talk process.

On 19th March, 2007, a Citizen Peace Forum was constituted. On 22 March, 2007 another national convention on the ULFA issue was held at Machkhowa ITA complex where nearly 2500 people attended.

A conglomeration of 12 non-Congress political parties initiated an effort to bring together intellectuals, journalists, NGOs, etc., for a citizen’s meet on 24 February 2007. The resolution of the meeting urged the GOI, Assam Government and ULFA to take solution centric steps for a durable peace in Assam. It said:

The meet believes that Government’s attempts should be sincere and transparent and so does ULFA’s response too should be equally convincing. The meet appreciates the good will gesture shown by ULFA while conducting 33rd National Sports Meet at Guwahati. The Government should respond to such positive signal. In the light of Prime Minister’s appeal for talks, the central government should not take the ‘sovereignty’ issue as the stumbling block. On the basis of discussion between the PCG and GIO on 22nd June, 2006, the five detenues should be released to facilitate a direct talk. Tarun Gogoi, the Chief Minister of Assam, on the eve of taking over power declared that the five detenues would be released.
The Civil Society believes that in a democratic set up dialogue and discussions are the best methods to resolve conflicts.\textsuperscript{113}

The Gauhati University’s Peace and Conflict Studies of Political Science department conducted several Round Table Dialogues on the issue ‘In Search of Peace’ on 3 December 2008. Apart from the major political parties, organisations and activists, all the rebel groups who were in ceasefire with GOI took part in the Dialogue. This was the first time that various armed groups, student’s groups, political parties, intellectuals, journalists, etc., came together in one platform to discuss the issues of peace and justice. Some of the groups were ULFA pro talk group, Dima Halong Daogah (DHD, Nunsia) - the militant group from NC Hills, Birsa Commando Force (another militant group in ceasefire), All Bodo Students Union, AASU, BJP, AGP, CPI, Indian Confederation of Indigenous and Tribal People, Dimasa People’s Council, All Dimasa Students’ Union, Krishak Muki Sangram Samiti, etc.

While urging upon all rebel groups to come forward for peace, the dialogue also very objectively and comprehensively discussed the obstacles towards peace in the state. The dialogue emphasised on the primary responsibility of the state towards taking the peace initiatives to their logical conclusion. The meet at Gauhati University has expressed its concern over the state’s insincerity towards taking the dialogue to a logical conclusion for peace. It has expressed its deep concern over using ceasefire as a delay tactic on the part of the government. The dialogue has resolved to strongly urge upon the state to take the peace dialogue forward with all rebel groups including with the groups currently under suspension of operation. The dialogue feels that any insincerity and negligence on the part of the state towards the peace dialogue will pave the way for renewed violence by those groups\textsuperscript{114}.

\textsuperscript{113} The resolutions of the civil society meet organised by 12 political parties on 24 February 2007, Published by Pobindra Deka and Dhirendra Dev Adhikari, Guwahati

\textsuperscript{114} Mahanta, N.G., Confronting the State: ULFA’s Quest for Sovereignty, Sage publications India Pvt Ltd., New Delhi, 2013
More than 130 civil society organisations, intellectuals across the state gathered at ITA Machkhowa on 24 April 2010 to participate in a meet to chalk out modalities for GOI and ULFA talk to settle the long standing demands of the state. Inaugurating the meet, chief convener and noted intellectual of the state, Professor Hiren Gohain said:

“The Assamese community is in crisis due to external pressure which we have failed to tackle. In the last 30 years, over 12,000 ULFA members and 18,000 others were killed. This apart, many ULFA leaders have been missing. There are blasted in various parts of the State and that has made individual liberty very fragile. If the peace process is stalled, we won’t get rid of the problems afflicting the State. Now both the ULFA and the government have shown positive gesture for peace talks, but a sense of mistrust pulls them back.”

Commenting on the peace initiative by Mamoni Raisom Goswami and PCG, Gohain said:

“The peace overture taken by Mamoni Raisom Goswami with the formation of the People’s Consultative Group (PCG) is a chapter of history and the participation of the Prime Minister generated lot of enthusiasm. However, sincerity on the part of the government was lacking and the PCG too split later on. A lesson was learnt from that incident that an individual’s view can’t be above that of the masses.”

The convention chaired by a presidium, was headed by Professor Hiren Gohain. The other members of the presidium were Dr. Nirmal Kumar Choudhury, Professor Mamoni Raisom Goswami, Hiranya Kumar Bhattacharya, Harekrishna Deka (was absent), Rohini Baruah, Indibor Deuri, Khursed Alam and Ratneswar Basumatary. Dilip Patgiri and Lachit Bordoloi were the secretaries. The meet had nothing to do with the Government or ULFA, question of taking any one of the sides does not arise. He said “We are distressed by the

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present state of affairs in the state and on-behalf of the people of Assam; we would like to attempt for a negotiated settlement of ULFA issue. We have had informal discussions with some ULFA leaders, but that led various quarters to undertake a false propaganda against us. However, the ULFA leaders who have got the chance to feel the pulse of the people of Assam from a close range haven’t misunderstood us. ULFA has to bury the differences within it.”

Almost all the major civil society organisations of the state attended the convention.

Professor Deba Prasad Baroah, former Vice-Chancellor of Gauhati University and one of the advisors of the convention said that, ‘Peace talks can be held on any issues, including sovereignty. The government should know what the ULFA wants to say with their demand for sovereignty. The government should be open to hold discussion with the ULFA on any issue.’

Another noted senior journalist, editor and advisor of the convention Radhika Mohan Bhagawati said,

The Assamese community has been confronting a challenge, and the main issue should be its solution. What is the problem to hold talks on sovereignty? But ULFA has not been given the right over the conscience of the people of the state. The decision should come from the people without whom there can’t be any movement. Even the representatives of the national political parties wondered why sovereignty should be hinder for talks.

As the CPI’s central executive committee member Promode Gogoi said: “Talks should be without any preconditions. The government of India held talks on sovereignty with the Mizo National Front (MNF) of Mizoram and the NSCN -IM of Nagaland. What is the problem to hold talks on sovereignty with ULFA? This doesn’t mean that sovereignty should be given to Assam. There shouldn’t be any opposition to provide special rights to Assam as given to Jammu & Kashmir.”
The written statement of the Axam Xahitya Xabha (AXX), the premiere literary body of the state, urged the government to initiate talks even on the issues raised by ULFA: ‘All core issues of the ULFA, including the issue of sovereignty, can be discussed. However, both the government and the ULFA should shun violence.’

AASU, perhaps the most popular student body of the state that launched the Assam Movement and from where ULFA draws substantial support base said:

Talks should be held on all issues, including sovereignty. Whether Assam should get sovereignty or not is a matter to be decided in the negotiation table. The ULFA came up due to the step-motherly attitude of the Central Government towards Assam. While the AASU protests this step-motherly attitude of the Centre without arms, the ULFA protests it with arms. The indigenous people of Assam should be given constitutional safeguard and all jailed leaders should be freed so as to pave the way for talks.

The draft resolution of the convention said that the top leaders of both the government and ULFA should sit together to resolve all the issues. The convention called upon the government to give free passage to the ULFA leaders and demanded that the jailed leaders of the militant outfit should be released to facilitate holding of meeting of the central committee of ULFA to take decisions regarding talks with ULFA. The convention also said that no legal procedure should be initiated against leaders of ULFA till a settlement comes out. The convention formed a steering committee for facilitating the peace process. The members of the steering committee were Professor Hiren Gohain, Dr. Nirmal Kumar Choudhury, Dr. Mamoni Raisom Goswami, Hiranya Kumar Bhattacharya, Harekrishna Deka, Rohini Baruah, Indibor Deuri, Khursed Alam and Ratneswar Basumatary. Dilip Patgiri and Lachit Bordoloi were the secretaries of the steering committee. The steering committee will finalise the resolutions by incorporating suggestions from different sections of people and the committee has sought suggestions within seven days. The steering committee will also aid ULFA in the
process of negotiations with the government. It will form expert committee for studying basic issues like right of the indigenous people over the natural resources, economic development, problems like flood and erosion and infiltration, etc. the expert committees will be asked to finalise reports within 2 to 3 months so that the same can be placed before the Centre during talks.

A delegation of six-member steering committee met with the Prime Minister, the Home Minister, Sonia Gandhi and other leaders of opposition parties. Many important groups representing communities like the Bodos, Dimasa, and Motok-Moran did not participate at the convention because of a variety of reasons.

Professor Gohain’s remark in Delhi also sparked off lot of controversies after his meet with the Prime Minister on 21 June 2010. Dr. Gohain replying to questions on relevance of the proposed dialogue without the presence of Paresh Baruah opined that he may be marginalised, if he does not come for the talks. He is a member of the ULFA central committee and has to work as a member. If the central committee manages to resolve the vexed problems then Baruah would be marginalised, even if he does not come for talks. Dr. Gohain said that though ULFA has not formally drop the demand for sovereignty, a tricky issue that has stalled the peace process, they are certainly willing to tone down their demand\(^\text{116}\).

Various individuals, organisations, intellectuals expressed surprise that Professor Gohain, contrary to the resolution of the national convention that took place on 24 April, could be in such a hurry to provide a model for talks that has mollified ULFA’s 30 years, core demand so easily. Professor Gohain’s showering of praise to the prime minister was

\(^{116}\text{PM’s Green Signal for ULFA Talks’, The Assam Tribune, 22 June 2010}\)
perceived to be too early. In fact, many quarters have criticised Professor Gohain as the agent of government and intelligence agencies, an allegation without any substance\textsuperscript{117}.

There is a difference between the PCG which was appointed by ULFA in 2005 and Professor Gohain-led SJA initiative. Whereas the PCG was a facilitator for talks between the GOI and ULFA, SJA not only acted as the facilitator but also provided a basic framework by developing rules and regulations of talks.

Article 12 of chapter 17 of ULFA’s constitution says that the Permanent Council comprising the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, General Secretary, Chief of Army Staff, and a senior member will decide on important issues such as ceasefire, discussion with government, etc., subject to the ratification by CEC. Almost all members (except Paresh Baruah) of both the bodies of ULFA are lodged in central jail in Guwahati. Three of them - Ramu Mech, Pradip Gogoi and Mithinga Daimary have already been released on various grounds. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in his conversation with the delegates of SJA said he is in favour of an honourable settlement of the ULFA issue and he personally does not have reservations against the release of the detenues. However, his Home Minister P. Chidambaram made it clear that the detained leaders could talk with the government from prison\textsuperscript{118}.

Such a victor and vanquished approach has firmly demonstrated that in terms of conflict resolution techniques, the Indian state has not matured at all and still relies on old-fashioned ‘Kautilyan’ manipulative diplomatic maneuverings.

\textsuperscript{117} Hiren GohairBoktyborProtibad, Dainik Janambhumi, 23 June 2010
\textsuperscript{118} Chidambaram Rules Out Leaders Release, the Assam Tribune, 1 July 2010