

Points raised with the Lt. Gen (Retd) NK Singh, Chairman of the CFMG by the Action Committee Against Unabated Taxation (ACAUT) on 29th Nov, 2013 at Officer's Mess, Chumukedima.

1. The issue of taxation has not being addressed properly in the ceasefire clause. Clause (i) has only expressed the “concern” of the GOI on “forcible collection” taking place. Ironically, out of the 11 points under “Revised Text of Agreed Ground Rules for Ceasefire” finalised between the GOI and NSCN/GPRN (13th Jan, 2001) the one issue, that is, taxation or ‘forcible collection’ which otherwise should have attracted the most concern from the GOI has been reduced to a mere side note.
2. The ceasefire ground rules has not described in explicit terms the role of the state government in the maintenance of law and order as far as the activities of the NPGs is concerned. The state government is in the unsavoury habit of passing the buck on the GOI everytime the issue of law and order and its violation by armed cadres is raised by civil society. For instance, the state police force cannot even question NPG suspects, let alone make arrests because of the so-called ceasefire rules. Because there is no specific reference as to the role of the state government in the maintenance of law and order the state government has time and again washed off its hands and pleaded helplessness. A fresh clause demarcating the clear role of the state government on this issue should be highlighted. A vague reference to police ‘acting against any group causing public disturbances’ in clause (j) is clearly not enough. Maintenance of law and order and protection of its citizens is one of the fundamental roles of the state and any violation of this constitutional provision is a serious matter.
3. The issue of defection does not figure at all in the ceasefire clauses either with the NSCN/GPRN, NSCN (K) or GPRN/NSCN. This is most surprising because, without a shadow of doubt, defection is related to unabated taxation and unabated taxation to defection. Most of the functionaries of the NPGs, including senior, mid-level and lower functionaries collect taxes from the business community with impunity because they realize that they can defect to the other factions if action is ever taken against them. Many cadres have already started collecting 2014-15 tax from traders in advance, probably with an eye to defect to the other faction where he’d be virtually untouchable and free to enjoy his ill-gotten money. The ACAUT believes that this omission is a deliberate act of the GOI which may have given the latter tactical advantages but this policy is having disastrous consequences for the civilian population for which the GOI should take responsibility. The worst sufferers are the common men who have to make do with daily harassments and unprecedented price rise as well. Defection from one group to another cannot be tolerated and a clause preventing such is to be inserted.
4. The ceasefire clauses make no mention of arrests of cadres indulging in anti-social activities nor does it prescribe penalties for cadres arrested for extortion, cognizable offences and related matters. Generally, arrested cadres are booked under the dreaded NSA by the police. However, to make NSA more effective, those accused under the act should not be lodged in state jails but send to jails outside the state, including Tihar. This, the ACAUT believes will have a deterrent effect by bringing down the crime graph.

