



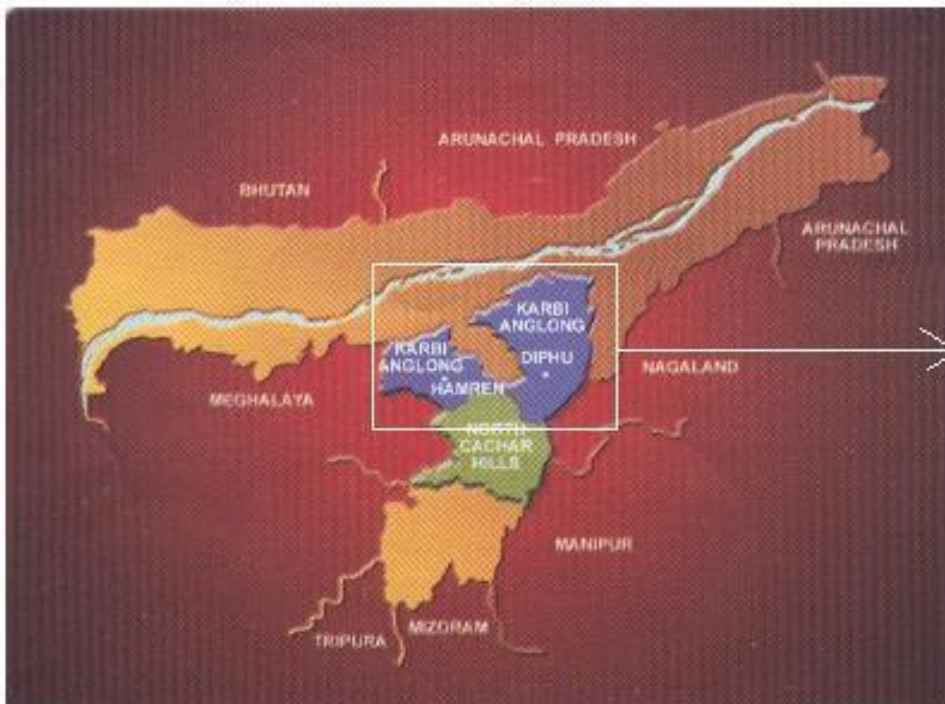
# Rengma Nagas Demand Autonomous District Council

## Why in News

The Rengma Naga Peoples' Council (RNPC) or **Rengma Nagas** have **demande**d an [Autonomous District Council \(ADC\)](#) in **Assam**.

- The Central and the State governments recently upgraded the **Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC)** and the **North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council (NCHAC)** to territorial councils like the [Bodoland Territorial Council](#).
  - The '**status of territorial council**' will provide **more autonomy and financial grant** to them.
- It is alleged that the creation of these tribal councils deprived the Rengma Nagas, the “legitimate owners”, of the land. Both the **KAAC** and the **NCHAC share boundaries with Nagaland**.

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## Key Points

- **About the Rengma Naga Tribe:**
  - **Found in:**
    - Rengma is a **Naga tribe** found in **Nagaland, Assam** and **Arunachal Pradesh**.
  - **History:**

- The **first official recording of the Rengma Nagas staying in Assam's Karbi Hills (then known as Mikir Hills)** was made in 1855 by Major John Butler, a British officer posted in the Northeastern region.
- Butler recorded that the **Rengmas in Karbi Anglong had migrated there from the Naga Hills in the early part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century**, abandoned many of their tribal customs and married within the local communities.
- **Festival:** The harvest festival of the Rengmas is called **Ngada**.
- **Autonomous District Council (ADC):**
  - **About:**
    - The **Sixth Schedule** of the Constitution deals with the administration of the **tribal areas** in the four northeastern states of **Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram**.
      - The special provision is **provided under Article 244 (2) and Article 275** of the Constitution.
      - The tribals have been given freedom to exercise legislative and executive powers through an **autonomous regional council and ADCs**.
  - **Composition of Autonomous Councils:**
    - Each autonomous district and regional council **consists of not more than 30 members**, of which four are nominated by the governor and the rest via elections. All of them **remain in power for a term of five years**.
    - However, the **Bodoland Territorial Council is an exception** as it can **constitute up to 46 members**.
  - **Governor's Control:**
    - Despite various degrees of autonomy, the 6<sup>th</sup> Schedule area **does not fall outside the executive authority of the state concerned**.
    - The **governor is empowered to organise and re-organise** the autonomous districts.
  - **Applicability of Central and State Laws:**
    - The **Acts passed by Parliament and state legislatures** may or may not be levied in these regions unless the **President and the governor gives her or his approval**, with or without modifications in the laws for the autonomous regions.
  - **Civil and Criminal Judicial Powers:** The Councils have also been endowed with wide civil and criminal judicial powers, for example **establishing village courts** etc.
    - However, the jurisdiction of these councils is subject to the jurisdiction of the concerned High Court.
  - **Existing Autonomous Councils:** The sixth schedule to the Constitution includes **10 autonomous district councils in 4 states**. These are:
    - **Assam:** Bodoland Territorial Council, Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council and North Cachar Hills/Dima Hasao Autonomous Council.
    - **Meghalaya:** Garo Hills Autonomous District Council, Jaintia Hills Autonomous District Council and Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council.
    - **Tripura:** Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council.
    - **Mizoram:** Chakma Autonomous District Council, Lai Autonomous District Council, Mara Autonomous District Council.
- **Arguments of Rengma Naga Peoples' Council (RNPC):**
  - **Rengmas** were the **first tribal people in Assam to have encountered the British in 1839**.
    - But the existing **Rengma Hills** was eliminated from the political map of the

**State and replaced with that of Mikir Hills (now Karbi Anglong) in 1951.**

- The Rengmas gave shelter to the **Ahom** refugees during the Burmese invasions of Assam in 1816 and 1819.
    - The **Ahom are an ethnic group from the Indian states of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh.**
  - The **Rengma Hills and Mikir Hills** were **two separate entities until 1951**. The **Rengma Hills was partitioned in 1963 between Assam and Nagaland.**
    - Karbis have no history in the Rengma Hills.
    - At the time of creation of Nagaland State, the **Karbhis were known as Mikirs till 1976.**
      - They were the **indigeneous tribal people of Mikir Hills.**
  - The **Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC)** population is around 12 lakh and the Karbis constitute only 3 lakh, the remaining are non-Karbhis, including the Rengma Nagas, whose population is around 22,000.
- **NSCN (I-M) Stand:**
- The **National Socialist Council of Nagaland or NSCN (Isak-Muivah)** has said that the Rengma issue was one of the important agendas of the “**Indo-Naga political talks**” and no authority should go far enough to override their interests.
  - NSCN (IM) had signed a Naga Peace Accord with the Government of India in August 2015, but the final accord is yet to be finalised.
    - One of the most contentious demands of the NSCN (IM) was the **creation of a unified Naga homeland, called ‘Greater Nagalim’** by integrating the Naga-inhabited areas of Assam, Manipur and Arunachal with Nagaland.

**[Source: TH](#)**

PDF Refernece URL: <https://www.drishtias.com/printpdf/rengma-nagas-demand-autonomous-district-council>