

India, Bangladesh establish contact as more Kuki-Chin refugees are expected to enter Mizoram

Vijaita Singh, Kallol Bhattacharjee : 3-4 minutes : 11/29/2022



The members of the community from the Chittagong Hill Tract Area in Bangladesh fled the country after the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) began a crackdown against the Kuki-Chin fighters. File | Photo Credit: The Hindu

Ten days after the first batch of [over 270 Kuki-Chin refugees](#) crossed over to India fearing an attack from Bangladesh security forces, government officials estimate that [150 more refugees](#) are expected to seek shelter in Mizoram in the next few days. A source said India and Bangladesh are aware of the unique seriousness of the issue and are in contact with each other.

A senior government official told *The Hindu* that 21 [Kuki-Chin members](#) had entered Mizoram on November 27, taking the total number of refugees to 293 so far.

While civil society groups and the [Mizoram Government have made arrangements](#) for the stay of refugees in schools in Mizoram, the Union Home Ministry is yet to take a concrete decision on their repatriation.

A government official said that since India is not a signatory to the United Nations Refugee Convention of 1951 and its 1967 Protocol and does not recognise refugees, undocumented

migrants are liable to be prosecuted for violating the Foreigners Act.

The members of the community from the [Chittagong Hill Tract Area](#) in Bangladesh fled the country after the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) began a crackdown against the Kuki-Chin fighters, an armed wing of the Kuki Chin National Front, a political body that seeks various safeguards, and protection, for the community.

Fighters of the Kuki-Chin National Front had received financial support from Jama'atul Ansar Fil Hindal Sharqiya (JAFHS), a fundamentalist organisation of Bangladesh, informed sources have shared with *The Hindu*. Dhaka believes that the Kuki-Chin fighters had arms training but were short of financial resources, which was supplied to them by the JAFHS.

“We believe the religious fundamentalist group had access to finances that it has extended to the Kuki-Chin groups. This fact was revealed by some of the members of the group during interrogation by the anti-terror forces of the Government of Bangladesh,” a source familiar with the financial network between various such groups active in the region said.

Bangladesh has a zero-tolerance policy towards terrorism and extremism and the JAFHS had been kept under pressure, and was prevented from turning into a large armed group. The concerned agencies were alerted to the development after the fundamentalist group fused its abilities with the Kuki-Chin National Front.

Bangladesh carried out a special armed campaign in October to nab the cadre of the KCNF from the Chittagong Hill Tracts, which is known to have several ethnicity-based groups. Officials dealing with the issue said that the KCNF and FAFHS have a similar ambition in creating a space for their operations in the strategically important region located in the trijunction of Myanmar-Bangladesh and India.