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Mizoram to continue helping displaced Chins from Myanmar, Kukis from Manipur

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Mizoram Chief Minister Lalduhoma. File photo | Photo Credit: ANI

Guwahati The Mizoram government will continue to shelter the displaced Chins from Myanmar and the Kuki-Zo communities from Manipur, Chief Minister Lalduhoma said on January 7.

The Chin and Kuki-Zo people are ethnically related to the majority Mizos of Mizoram. Together, they form the Zo group.

The Chief Minister told journalists in the State's capital Aizawl that he discussed the "refugee" crisis and other issues with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, and External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar in New Delhi last week.

"The Centre is ready to work together with the Mizoram government to assist the displaced people," he said.

Mr. Lalduhoma said the Centre cannot grant refugee status to the displaced from Myanmar as India is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol. He hoped New Delhi would not go ahead with the plan to fence the 1,643 India-Myanmar boundary, of which 510 km borders Mizoram.

The Zoram People's Movement government headed by Mr. Lalduhoma is opposed to fencing as it feels it will further divide the Zo group of people already separated by the inter-State and international boundaries.

The Mizoram government claims the State is currently sheltering some 31,000 Chin people who fled a civil war in Myanmar and about 12,000 Kuki-Zo people who escaped an ethnic conflict with the majority Meiteis in Manipur.

Trouble in Myanmar began after a military coup in February 2021, while ethnic violence broke out in Manipur on May 3, 2023.

Since Nov 2022, More than 300 people belonging to the Chin-Kuki-Mizo group have taken shelter in Mizoram's Lawngtlai district, following an alleged offensive by the Bangladesh army in collusion with the Arakan Army, a Rohingya Muslim extremist group.