

## **Policy Brief: Minority Protection Provisions in the Zogam Charter**

### **Introduction**

The **Zogam Charter** serves as the guiding constitutional framework of the Zomi people. It is rooted in the principles of **truth, justice, freedom, equality, and self-determination**. While primarily affirming the **indigenous rights of the Zomi people**, the Charter also embeds **minority protection mechanisms** applicable to all inhabitants of Zogam, ensuring inclusivity, non-discrimination, and universal freedoms in line with international human rights norms.

### **Key Minority Protection Components**

#### **1. Recognition of Indigenous & Minority Rights**

- **Zomi as Indigenous People:** The Charter affirms the Zomi's inalienable rights to land, culture, and identity by virtue of being autochthonous to Zogam.
- **Equal Rights for All Inhabitants:** All people living in Zogam are guaranteed **cultural, religious, and traditional freedoms** regardless of origin.

#### **2. Universal Rights and Freedoms**

- **Religious Freedom:** All inhabitants enjoy the right to belief, religion, and worship without discrimination.
- **Cultural Rights:** Protection of traditions, languages, and practices of all communities.
- **Equality and Liberty:** Assured equal treatment under the law, guaranteeing fundamental liberties such as freedom of expression, association, and assembly.

#### **3. Institutional Safeguards**

The Charter creates **dedicated departments** tasked with upholding minority rights and addressing vulnerabilities:

- **Department of Women's Affairs** – safeguards women's equality, empowerment, and representation.
- **Department of Religious Affairs** – protects the right of all faiths to coexist peacefully and without persecution.
- **Department of Judiciary Affairs** – ensures justice, fairness, and equality for all inhabitants of Zogam.

#### 4. Non-Discrimination Clauses

Article IX of the Charter provides explicit safeguards:

**“ZPCC shall strive for its goal of Federated Zogam without any discrimination based on regional background, gender, and socio-economic status, and shall work for equality, equity, and fairness for all Zomi”.**

This provision ensures that minority groups, marginalized communities, and vulnerable individuals are protected in governance and development processes.

#### 5. Alignment with International Human Rights Norms


The Charter situates Zomi and Zogam rights within global frameworks:


- Affirms **self-determination rights** in line with the **UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)**.
- Upholds commitments of the **1947 Panglong Agreement**, which recognized ethnic equality and autonomy.
- Embeds **federal democratic principles**, ensuring checks against majoritarian domination.

#### Conclusion

The **Zogam Charter** is not only a declaration of Zomi self-determination, but also a framework for **inclusive governance** that guarantees protection for minorities and all inhabitants of Zogam. Through its guarantees of **equality, non-discrimination, religious and cultural freedom, and institutional safeguards**, the Charter aligns with international human rights standards and indigenous rights frameworks.

The ZPCC calls on the **international community** to recognize and support these provisions as part of the Zomi people’s struggle for *dignity, protection, and self-determined* governance.

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