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CAA prompts Bengali militant group to surrender

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Uttam Sarkar's five-member family figured in the updated list of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam. The name of his paternal aunt, Basanti Das, however, was left out of the list, which is being updated in Assam to segregate the post-1971 migrants.

"Like my aunt, many Hindu Bengalis, who were left out are under constant fear of being declared a foreigner and pushed to a detention camp. But we just hope that the CAA brings an end to the citizenship crisis," Das, a cadre of National Liberation Front of Bengalis (NLFB), a militant group of Hindu Bengalis in Assam, told

DH, minutes after laying down his weapon before Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal, here on Thursday.

A total of 644 cadres, of which 303 belong to NLFB including its chairman Amarjit Paul deposited their weapons before Sonowal.

Sarkar said they had decided to take up arms and formed the group on December 18, 2011, in western Assam's Kokrajhar district (bordering West Bengal) to fight against the harassment being meted out to the Bengalis in the name of detection of foreigners.

"Many have been dubbed as D (doubtful) voters and not allowed to vote since 1997. Several others have been declared foreigners and put into detention camps. Some of them have

also died there. Also, Hindu Bengalis are soft targets of militant groups representing other communities," he said.

Sarkar said NLFB members had undergone training in Maoists camps in Dumka in Jharkhand and in neighbouring Bangladesh from NDFB. "Bengalis also face extortion, abduction and threat from other groups," he said.

Paul said they decided to surrender after the BJP-led government in Assam promised that the Hindu Bengalis, who were left out of the NRC would be given citizenship through the CAA. "At the same time, we demand an autonomous council for the Hindu Bengalis living across Assam and a development package," he told reporters.