

Thingkho Le Malcha

A Daily Newsletter by KSO Media & Documentation Cell



Beith Shalom RELIEF CENTRE

Beith Shalom Synagogue, B. Vengnom, Lamka

Managed by
Kuki Khanglai Lawmpi
General Headquarters(KKL-GHQ)

Total Inmates Registered: 184*

■ Male: 99

■ Female: 85

*As on 27th July, 2023



KUKI VICTIMS' UPDATE

As on 16.12.2023



158
DEATHS



200+
VILLAGES BURNT



7000+
HOUSES BURNT



360+
CHURCHES &
SYNAGOGUES BURNT



41,425+
DISPLACED
PERSONS

Thingkho Le Malcha (charred wood tied with chilli): A war symbol; a pre-arranged secret code agreed upon by the Kukis to inform the people about the commencement of war and on receiving this, one has to remain alert and be ready for the battle.

HEAVY GUNFIGHT IN MOREH KILLS 3, INJURING SEVERAL OTHERS; KUKI-ZO VILLAGE VOLUNTEERS DECLARE TO DEFEND AGGRESSION FROM COMMUNAL STATE FORCES

A heavy gunfight which broke out in Moreh, a border hill town, on Tuesday morning between the Village Volunteers and alleged communal combined forces of Meitei militants, Arambai Tenggol and Police Commandos resulted in killing 3 individuals and injuring seven others, including security personnel.

As per sources, the violent incident occurred as a result of the communal Meitei armed forces' highhandedness today at around 8:00 AM, when the Meitei militants including the radicalised private militia goons embedded with the Police commandos ruinously launched operation in civilian areas of Chavangphai, Moreh Ward No. 7 within the jurisdiction of Kuki-Zo inhabited Moreh town.

In the ensuing heavy gunfight which lasted till 10:00 AM on Tuesday, four Meitei militants masquerading as Police Commandos lost their lives, sources said.

Among the seven reportedly injured persons, four belong to Police commandos who are identified as Maibam Thoiba (32) S/o M. Rabi of Yairipok Top Leikai; Changangbom Herojit (38) S/o Ch. Bira of Kodompokpi Mayai Leikai; Kamei Gaihemlung (40) S/o Majapou of Ragailong, Imphal West, and Mangsatabam Premkumar (35) S/o M. Tollen of Luwangsangbam.

Categorically terming the continued deployment and stationing of the combined forces of Meitei Militants, Meitei police commandos and Arambai Tenggol in Kuki-Zo area of Moreh in Tengenoupal district as "unacceptable", the Kuki-Zo Village Volunteers have declared to defend their ancestral land and its people from the communal Meiteis' state forces till the last drop of their blood.

In a statement on Tuesday, the Village Volunteers said masquerading the Meitei militants and Arambai Tenggol and deploying them in the name of police commandos to annihilate Kuki-Zo people in Moreh border town was a well-known fact to all.

"The Kuki-Zo people, especially in Tengenoupal district,



through the CSOs, have repeatedly put up the matter to central security forces. And, we had been appealing all the concerns to withdraw the combined forces of Meitei militants and Meitei police commandos from Tengenoupal district. However, our repeated appeal remains unheard," the Village Volunteers said.

Instead, the combined forces of the Meitei militants and Meitei police commandos unleashed terror in Moreh and its surroundings. They torched civilian houses in Lhangnom Veng, Moreh, detained and thrashed innocent civilians including a private school teacher. They even planted bombs in T. Yangnom and T. Lhangnomphai village areas to kill and injure Kuki-Zo civilians, the Volunteers alleged.

As the notorious state forces including the private militia groups continue to terrorise the Kuki-Zo people in Moreh and Tengenoupal District, the Village Volunteers said, they are compelled to retaliate against them.

The Tengenoupal district Village Volunteers promised that they would fight back against such State-sponsored terrorists till the last drop of their blood.

"We will not step-down until the concerned authority removes the Meitei militants and Meitei police commandos from Moreh town," the Volunteers added.

KUKI APEX BODY SLAMS ALLEGED “UNFAIR CONSTITUTION” OF COMMITTEE TO REORGANIZE POLICE JURISDICTION IN MANIPUR, APPEALS TO MANIPUR GOVERNOR TO REVIEW, RECONSTITUTE COMMITTEE

The apex body of the Kuki tribes, the Kuki Inpi Manipur strongly denounced the alleged unfair constitution of a committee to reorganize the police jurisdiction in the strife-torn Manipur state and apprised the Governor of Manipur to review and reconstitute the committee.

The Governor of Manipur on December 31, 2023, issued an order wherein a four-member committee was constituted to reorganize the police jurisdiction in the state with IPS K. Jayanta Singh as head of the Committee.

The Kuki apex body KIM stated that the constitution of the committee for re-organisation of Police Jurisdiction is a pressing need for the safety and security of the people and their land, especially of the Kuki-Zo people.

KIM however, stated that the constitution of the committee, totally devoid of any Kuki-Zo representation, is beyond excusable; especially considering the fact that most of the areas having such jurisdictional contestations belong to the Kuki-Zo community.

“Such actions only testify to the malignant nature of the Manipur State Government against the Kuki-Zo people”, it stated.

It also pointed out that the constitution of the committee obviously exhibited the Manipur Government’s continuance of anti-tribal policies, as a tribal officer IK Muivah (IPS, RR. 2000 batch) is appointed only as a member of the said committee despite the fact that he is senior to K Jayanta Singh (IPS, SPS: 2002 batch), who, it appears, is being made the Chairman of the committee by virtue of being a Meitei.

It further stated that the direction to submit the recommendation of the committee to the Home Department, Government of Manipur which is headed by the alleged “infamous” Chief Minister N. Biren Singh is similarly discriminatory and aggravating while alleging that, for the record, N. Biren Singh and his closest aides are known to have deliberately



engineered the ongoing ethnic-cleansing against the Kuki-Zo people by building a militia of youths, assisted by the Meitei State forces, arming them with the state’s arms and ammunitions, proactively shielding them and constantly engaging them to terrorize the Kuki-Zo people.

“It is therefore totally justified for the Kuki-Zo people to have zero faith in the Chief Minister or for that matter, the Meitei State Government”, it added.

KIM also stated that there has been a long history of the exploitation of such ambiguous Police jurisdictions by the Meitei Dominated Valley districts to suppress and subjugate the Kuki-Zo people, and this will not be tolerated any further.

Therefore, the committee must tread carefully to ensure that no part of the land (village/town/ area) belonging to the Hill districts, and the Kuki-Zo areas in particular, should fall in the jurisdiction of the Valley Districts, whether Revenue or Police, it cautioned.

The Kuki Inpi Manipur appealed to the Governor to review such pressing issues and to reconstitute a committee which is fairly represented in the interest of justice, fairness, and equality and to re-organize the Police jurisdiction in line with the demands of the Kuki Inpi Manipur to prevent further misuse of power and authority of the Meitei State Government against the Kuki-Zo people.

VILLAGE VOLUNTEERS CLARIFY ON MOREH INCIDENT; CLAIM TO HAVE INFLICTED THREE MEITEIS DEAD

With regard to a gunfight between the communal combined state-sponsored armed groups and the village guards of Moreh, the Village Volunteers, Tengnoupal district, has clarified the Imphal-based media houses' reports of involving the Kuki underground outfits as "baseless and totally false", but just an eyewash to conceal State government's involvement in deploying Meitei militants and radicals alongwith Police commandos in Moreh town.

"The news report of blaming KNA-B, KNA/UKLF involved in Moreh gunfight is totally false. It is a concocted and baseless allegations made by Meitei media and Meitei Chief Minister, N. Biren Singh, so as to conceal stationing of Meitei militants, Arambai Tenggol among the Meitei police commandos in Moreh town," the Village Volunteers said.

Claiming their hands, the Village Volunteers stated that the gunfight, in fact, broke out when Meitei Militants, Arambai Tenggol who were masqueraded as police commandos went to burn down Chavangphai Moreh W/No.7.

"Forget about KNA-B, KNA/UKLF or other, we the Tengnoupal District Village Volunteers alone are more than enough to tackle these state-sponsored terrorists," a statement issued by the Volunteers said on Tuesday.

The statement said that the combined forces of Meitei police commandos, Meitei Militants and Arambai Tenggol went to Chavangphai and abducted two innocent Kuki-Zo civilians and tried to burnt down Chavangphai following which the Village Volunteers were compelled to fire upon the state-sponsored terrorist groups.

In the ensuing gunfight, the Village Volunteers claimed, they inflicted heavy casualty, killing 3 Meiteis at the spot. "The death of three Meiteis in today's gunbattle was concealed by the Meitei Police commandos as the deceased were masqueraded as police commandos."

The Volunteers alleged that it was well-known to all



the people of Moreh that Meitei shopkeepers, overground workers, sympathisers of Meitei Militants and a butcher who used to sell meat at Moreh bazar before the communal crisis broke out on May 3 were also masqueraded as police commandos and stationed in Moreh town.

Dragging the names of all those unrelated groups - KNA(B)and others - is just a ploy to plot the Kuki-Zo community in bad light and to bring-in more Meitei militants and Meitei commandos to Moreh town, the Volunteers said.

Alleging that the State media run by Meiteis and some national media particularly NorthEast Live are biased in favour of one community, the Village Volunteers urged them all to go with media ethics.

Clarifying that there's no involvement of KNA(B), KNA/UKLF or others in Moreh gunfight, the Tengnoupal District Village Volunteers vowed that they would continue to fight the combined forces of Meitei Militants, Arambai Tenggol and Meitei Police Commandos until they are removed from Moreh town.

"We will continue to fight against these state-sponsored terrorists who tried to annihilate Kuki-Zo people," the Volunteers added.

MANIPUR TOP KUKI-ZO TRIBAL BODIES CALL FOR TOTAL SHUTDOWN IN ALL KUKI-ZO AREAS FROM JANUARY 2 MIDNIGHT

The Committee on Tribal Unity, or the CoTU, Sadar Hills and the Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum, or the ITLF, the two top Kuki-Zo tribal bodies in Manipur jointly called for a 24-hour total shutdown in all Kuki-Zo dominated areas in Manipur from midnight of January 2 till midnight of January 3.

The total shutdown was jointly called by the two top Kuk-Zo tribal bodies to protest against the alleged atrocities of the Meitei state forces and also to demand the removal of the Meitei state forces from all Kuki-Zo districts in Manipur.

The CoTU Sadar Hills and the ITLF stated that the incursion of communal Meitei state forces into Moreh and the surrounding tribal areas during an ethnic conflict involving the two communities is clearly an attempt by the Chief Minister to drive out tribals from their homes using state machinery, and will never be tolerated by the Kuki-Zo people.

It stated that the brutality of the Meitei commandos and their communal intent is well documented, and Kuki-Zo volunteers are faced with no option but to defend themselves.

It also stated that the people of Moreh have pleaded with the central government since May to replace Meitei state forces with neutral central security forces, and Home Minister Amit Shah said on May 31 that all Meitei forces would be removed within three days.

It also recalled that the Home Minister in his meeting with ITLF leaders had assured that he would ensure central forces work in conjunction with state forces, however, this alleged arrangement has not deterred Meitei commandos from committing atrocities against Kuki-Zo tribals, and their presence has led to an escalation of violence instead of bringing peace.

While urging the central government to remove all Meitei state forces, especially commandos, from Moreh and the surrounding tribal-majority settlements, the two top Kuki-Zo tribal bodies stated that there can be no peace as long as they [the Meitei state forces] are deployed in the Kuki-Zo areas.

It also cautioned that if Meitei forces are allowed to continue operating and harassing the Kuki-Zo tribals, the government will be held responsible for any future security issues.



Meanwhile, Kuki Inpi Sadar Hills, or the KISH, vehemently condemned the persistent attacks on Kuki-Zo civilians by the alleged combined forces of Arambai Tenggol, Meitei Leepun, and Manipur Police Commando.

It stated that these egregious actions have created a grave humanitarian crisis and called for the immediate withdrawal of state forces from Moreh to safeguard the lives and well-being of innocent civilians and to cease the continuous assaults on the Kuki-Zo community.

KISH further stated that such actions not only threaten lives but also escalate tensions, jeopardizing the region's stability while adding that the consequences are dire, impacting the well-being, safety, and harmony of the Kuki-Zo communities.

While calling upon the Manipur Chief Minister to refrain from disseminating false information and to uphold a stance that promotes unity among all communities, the Kuki Inpi Sadar Hills stated that fostering transparency and understanding is vital for the collective well-being of the region.

Expressing concern over the perceived ineffectiveness and misinformation, Kuki Inpi emphasized that the Manipur Chief Minister's actions may exacerbate the crisis while adding that urgent measures are needed to address the situation truthfully and proactively to ensure the well-being and stability of all communities.

While asserting its stance against being silent observers, KISH stated that if the combined

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forces of the Meitei government persist in their actions, Kuki Inpi is prepared to take necessary steps to ensure the safety and rights of the Ku-ki-Zo community.

Meanwhile, the Village Volunteers of the Tengnoupal District vowed to defend the border town Moreh from the alleged combined forces of Meitei militants, Meitei police commandos, and the Arambai Tenggol till the last drop of their blood.

It stated that deploying and stationing the combined forces of Meitei Militants, Meitei police commandos, and Arambai Tenggol in the Kuki-Zo area Moreh in Tengnoupal district is unacceptable.

It also stated that masquerading Meitei militants and Arambai Tenggol and deploying them in the name of police commandos to annihilate the Kuki-Zo people is well known to all.

It recalled that the Kuki-Zo people especially in the Tengnoupal district, through the CSOs, have repeatedly put up the matter to central security forces appealing to all the concerned to withdraw the

combined forces of Meitei militants and Meitei police commandos from Tengnoupal district.

However, our repeated appeal remains unheard, and instead, the combined forces of the Meitei militant and Meitei police commandos unleashed terror in Moreh and its surroundings. They torched civilian houses in Lhangnom Veng, Moreh, detained and thrashed innocent civilians including a private school teacher. They even planted bombs in T Yangnom and T Lhangnomphai village areas to kill and injure Kuki-Zo civilians, it added.

It also stated that as they continue to terrorize the Kuki-Zo people in Moreh and Tengnoupal District, the Village Volunteers are compelled to retaliate against them.

It further stated that the Tengnoupal district Village Volunteers would fight back against these state-sponsored terrorists till their last drop of blood and that they would not step down until the concerned authority removed Meitei militants and Meitei police commandos from Moreh town.

CBI FILES TWO SEPARATE CHARGESHEETS AGAINST FIVE ACCUSED AT KAMRUP CJM COURT

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) which is currently investigating several cases over Manipur violence has filed two separate chargesheets in the Court of Chief Judicial Magistrate, Kamrup (M), Guwahati, Assam against five accused in two inter-related cases of Manipur violence.

The agency took over the case following a referral from the State government and an official notification from the Central government. The ethnic clashes in Manipur have been a source of significant tension, highlighting the divide between the hill-dwelling Kuki tribal community and the valley-dwelling Meiteis.

It is important to note that the chargesheets were filed in Guwahati, which aligns with the decision of the Supreme Court to shift 27 CBI cases pertaining to



Manipur to the jurisdiction of the Guwahati High Court due to the environment in Manipur and to ensure fair trials.

ARAMBAI TENGGOL CONTINUES KILLING SPREE; MANIPUR CM BIREN SHEDS CROCODILE TEARS

The latest casualty to bear the brunt of Arambai Tenggol brutality is one Haobam Naocha (35) of Tejpur Mayai Leikai, Kakching district who was killed by the Kakching Unit of Arambai Tenggol on 1st January 2024. The deceased Naocha was allegedly charged with blackmailing a girl. Another eight were also grievously injured by the Arambai goons.

The Joint Action Committee (JAC) formed in connection with the killing demanded clarification from the Arambai Tenggol headquarters, stating that if the incident is not at all related with Arambai Tenggol as stated by them in their clarification statement issued today, the chief of Arambai Tenggol, Mr. Korounganba Khuman should come out with evidence that 26 Unit of Arambai Tenggol (Kakching) is not involved in the crime and that the 32 armed men who claimed themselves as members of Arambai Tenggol should be banished from Arambai Tenggol.

Of late, the Arambai Tenggol goons have been notoriously infamous for creating chaos in the Imphal valley, torturing, killing and looting at will without any reprimandation from the state law enforcing agencies. They seem to have the license to kill anyone who disobey their diktats, acting as Moral Police on various occasions.

Dramatically, the chief patron of Arambai Tenggol, Chief Minister N. Biren shed crocodile tear over the many misconducts of his private armed militia group.

Addressing a group of reporters after his visit to injured police personnel at RIMS, Biren was seen howling furiously about the recent incident which escalated the growing tension among different communities in the state. The chief minister said that the people are taking law into their own hands and this has led to more problems than solution, indirectly taking a potshot at the Arambai Tenggol.

“You guys are doing anything whatever you want. There is law. If any dispute arises, inform the concerned authority. There is government, we will solve the issue



Press briefing by JAC



Manipur CM N Biren Singh at a press briefing today

amicably. You all are responsible for disturbing peace in the valley and if AFSPA is re-imposed again in the valley, you all will be held responsible,” he said.

Ironically, despite the plethora of evidence against the Arambai Tenggol directly involved in crime, there have been no report of action taken against them by the police department. Rather, they enjoy the patronage of the state chief minister N. Biren and RS MP Leishemba Sanajaoba, which emboldened them to carry out their terror activity.

In short, Biren is shedding crocodile tears to conceal all his wrongdoings.

JAC IN CONNECTION WITH LILONG INCIDENT SUBMITS 7 POINTS MEMORANDUM TO CM, SETS 48 HOURS TO FULFIL THEIR DEMANDS; PROSCRIBED RPF CLAIMS RESPONSIBILITY

The Joint Action Committee (JAC) against the mass killing and brutal act of miscreants at Lilong Chingjao has submitted a memorandum to the Chief Minister of Manipur, N. Biren Singh, by placing seven charter of demands to be fulfilled by the state government within 48 hours.

The charter of demands included handing over the investigation of the incident to the National Investigation Agency (NIA), suitable government jobs to be conferred to the kins of the victims who had been killed in that incident, Rs. 20 (Twenty) lakhs per death victim to be paid as ex-gratia by the state government immediately and 2 (two) lakhs per injured victim to be paid. All the expenditures incurred for the treatment of the injured persons should be borne by the state government till recovery of the injured victims.

The memorandum also stated that other than the established Central and State forces and agencies, any other voluntary or independent organizations should not be allowed to enter in the Meitei-Pangal (Muslims) inhabited areas of Manipur afterwards. If any such organization requires to enter the said Meitei-Pangal inhabited areas, they should inform and consult the local club/organization first.

The Committee also demanded that the state government must give permission to the formation of Meitei-Pangal Village Protection Force (MPVPF) in all Meitei-Pangal inhabited areas of Manipur with immediate effect.

The JAC has given an ultimatum for 48 hours to the State government to fulfill the demands; failing which the dead bodies should not claimed by the Committee and relatives. It also warned that if the demands are not fulfilled by the state government within the stipulated time, the JAC, in consultation with the CSO's of Manipur would launch further agitation regarding the incident.

Meanwhile, the proscribed RPF has claimed responsibility for the Lilong incident. The proscribed outfit Revolutionary



People's Front (RPF), while claiming responsibility, stated that the incident occurred after its cadres attempted to apprehend one drug smuggler Md. Hassan son of (Late) Md. Habbibur of Lilong Chingjao under Lilong Police Station, Thoubal District.

In a press release signed by the outfit, Assistant Secretary Publicity Bangkim said members of STAFORCE (Special Task Force) of the outfit formed on July 7, 1998, said the outfit went to pick up Md. Hassan, who had been warned multiple times to stop drug smuggling. However, a large crowd in the area gathered and attacked the members of the STAFORCE while they were taking Md. Hassan, it said.

The proscribed outfit continued that members of the STAFORCE fired several shots in the air as a warning when the large crowd tried to snatch their weapons, but the crowd did not retreat. In self-defense, the cadres had no choice but to retaliate by letting off Md. Hassan, whom they had picked up, for their safety.

Expressing condolences for the deaths of the four individuals and sharing the pain of those injured during the incident, the outfit further promised to conduct an inquiry to find out how the incident had happened.

INDIA'S NHRC TAKES UP CASE FILED BY YAMBEM LABA OVER PHONE TAPPING ISSUE

In a sensational revelation, the National Human Rights Commission of India has registered a case filed by Mr. Yambem Laba, Ex-Acting Chairperson, Manipur Human Rights Commission and Senior Correspondent of the prestigious national newspaper, The Statesman, regarding a phone tapping issue of his private conversation with Ms. Thounaojan Brinda, Ex-Additional Superintendent of Police of Manipur.

A press release issued on Tuesday by the Centre for Organization Research and Education (CORE) of Manipur, an NGO, with special consultative relationship with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations, stated that the conversation took place on October 3, 2023 at about 8:30 PM from their personal mobile phones. The private conversation was leaked out on the intervening night of 13th and 14th December, 2023, and started to appear on social media platforms, namely, WhatsApp and Facebook. This private conversation became viral.

Soon after, a mob of people entered the home of Ms. Thounaojam Brinda, who was one of the persons that had taken part in the private conversation, located in Yaiskul Janmasthan, Imphal. Members of the mob vehemently protested the contents of the private conversation and proceeded to vandalize the house of Ms. Thounaojam and her family, destroying properties including national and cultural heritage items of historical importance to the people of Manipur and India. The mob further threatened to attack the house of Mr. Yambem Laba as the next target.

According to the complaint lodged by Mr. Yambem Laba the private conversation that he suspected was tapped by an unknown entity with malicious intent of leaking it to the public and causing mischief and action by certain unknown persons that directly threatened the parties involved in a private telephonic conversation.

President of CORE, Lailungbam Debabrata Roy, said the police complaint filed by Ms. Thounaojam has been acknowledged and registered by the Cyber Crime Unit,

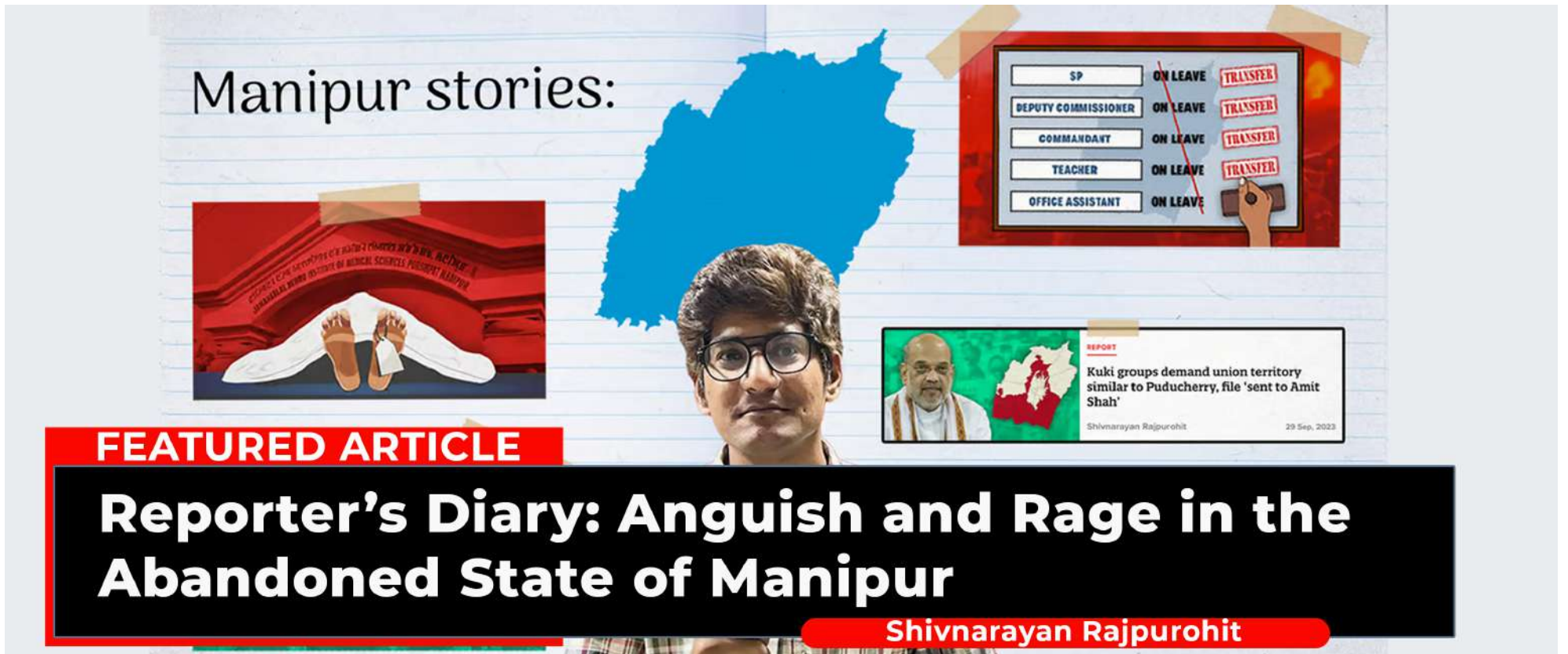


Manipur Police along with a previous complaint filed by Ms. Thounaojam on 21 December 2023.

“The issue of tapping this private conversation is a serious violation and breach of the rights to privacy, and safety and security guaranteed by the Constitution of India to every citizen and the relevant laws to protect and promote such rights,” he said.

According to reliable information received from the National Human Rights Commission, the matter is being taken up for further investigation and actions.

The Centre for Organization Research and Education (CORE) of Manipur, an NGO, with special consultative relationship with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations, expressed its concern that the matter has become a centre of attention for the people of Manipur at a time that the State is in deep crisis.



On July 23, the morning flight from Delhi to Imphal was packed with security personnel – perhaps the first sign for the uninitiated that all was not well in Manipur.

Huddled in the aircraft with my colleague Priyali, we looked out the window as we landed in the valley. “Stunning!” I thought, looking at faraway hills that kissed the sky.

It was my first trip to the Northeast but I had little time to spend on nature’s beauty. After my colleague Prateek joined us from Pune, we hit the road. The streets were cluttered with security barricades and devoid of people, except for the odd car or bike. Manipur, after all, was under curfew, torn apart since May 3 by violent animosity between the Meiteis and Kuki-Zos. Two communities who, as someone once wrote, had always lived together – but separately.

We quickly learned that geographical lines had been drawn by both civilians and security forces. The Meiteis lived in the valley, the Kuki-Zos in the hills. Neither could enter each other’s territory, dead or alive. This separateness manifested in barricades, closed shops, burnt and bulldozed settlements, children not at school but in relief camps.

There were other, more tragic displays. In the worst bout of violence in recent memory here, children and women were not spared.

At Hotel Imphal, we planned to grab a quick meal but the food was a long time coming. We learned they were short-staffed. “Kukis have left after the violence,” one staff member told me. I would soon find out that most restaurants, which predominantly employed Kuki-Zo people, were closed.

From the valley

On July 24, we drove to the gunfight site of Phougakchou and other areas in Bishnupur district. Vehicle after vehicle disgorged youths in army fatigues, their faces covered. Conventional and automatic arms were aplenty.

As Prateek and I walked towards the frontline, two mortars exploded. Smoke leapt from a distant village. Here was where Meitei teachers, former army men and students were fighting for “their land”. The Kukis, we were told, had the altitudinal advantage. Central forces watched the gunfight from the main road while army vehicles were held back by Meira Paibis or “torch bearers”, a group of activist women who are a constant feature in the valley for their presence at protests and rallies. The police walked toe to toe with armed “volunteers”.

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The sheer volume of guns overwhelmed me. The Biren Singh government has done little – nothing, even – to recover arms and ammunition looted from government armouries. By the end of October, only 25 percent of arms had been recovered so far.

But a war needs money. Meiteis turned to common folks and business men in the Bazaar area of Imphal. Those who dragged their feet to contribute were threatened. Extortion was an open secret and everyone seemed nervous.

In the middle of Imphal city, I came across small barricades formed by corroded oil drums. These “checkposts” were manned by four or five Meira Paibis, who would stop commuters and collect “voluntary” contributions. Our driver slipped Rs 50 into a donation box.

Relief camps were a regular feature along the road and inside the alleys of the valley area. Help poured in from civil society groups. But it wasn't enough for a displaced population that had lost everything. A Kuki-Zo government teacher, who had spent 30 years of his life in the hills, sobbed to me. “My home and childhood memories are in the hills,” he said.

To the hills

On August 2, we moved from Imphal to Churachandpur, located in the hills. We had to cross checkposts manned by central forces near Kangvai. There were levelled houses and ruined tin houses on either side.

At the final checkpost, an armoured casspir of the army was just before us, stopped and questioned. Then it was our turn. We presented our ID cards and were allowed to enter Churachandpur. As we departed, we saw the casspir being searched by a large group of women wearing black. One of them said, “We have information that the army is sneaking in police commandos.” There were arguments on whether the casspir could enter or not.

In Manipur, there's deep resistance to the entry of central forces into key areas. The hills and valley are deeply homogenised. Our driver, a Meitei Pangal, who took us to Churachandpur was looked upon with suspicion for his facial features. “He does not look like a Pangal,” someone said.

Kuki-Zo tribes reject the name Churachandpur, choosing the word Lamka instead – and across Churachandpur, I saw walls emblazoned with Lamka. Other walls carried the words “separate administration”. I now pick through the memories – a group of four-wheelers carrying armed youth rushing to the frontlines in the border areas of Churachandpur-Bishnupur, intact bunkers (which the government said were destroyed) along German road, a college student at Khausabung who showed me the single-barrel gun he would use to “protect the land from Meiteis”.

As we packed up to leave Churachandpur, we were caught in heavy cross-fire at P Geljang village. We sheltered behind sandbags with “volunteers”. Jokes were cracked. Every now and then, militants from hardcore groups under suspension of operations routinely arrived to reinforce volunteers

An army officer showed me letters from the central forces to the state and union governments, sent before the violence broke out. The letters alleged Kuki militant groups were not complying with the suspension of operations agreement, a ceasefire treaty signed by two dozen Kuki militant groups with the state and central governments in 2008 for a ceasefire. A confidential report from 2021 said cadres from these groups were not staying in designated camps as per the pact.

“We had alerted the government long ago but they did not act on these inputs,” the officer said.

Shutdowns, silence, status quo

Manipur's internet was completely or partially suspended for 200 days from May 3 – one of the longest shutdowns in India. It turned people's lives

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upside down, and it still continues. Everyone I spoke to – professionals, businesspeople, students – decried the blackout.

The press was left bruised too. Misinformation and disinformation were landmines that journalists in Manipur had to navigate. The internet is now a necessary tool for modern journalism, so we had to rely on a government institute with an internet connection in Imphal to file our reports. There, we'd meet students who turned up everyday to go online. In the hills, some youths were forced to travel several kilometres just to stay connected.

The blackout also posed a challenge for journalists to verify facts. Newspapers on both sides were partisan, we were told by journalists in the valley and the hills. "Unless a journalist visits both sides, her story will lack objectivity," one of them said. Meitei journalists and Kuki-Zo journalists could not visit areas not dominated by their communities. Besides accessibility, journalists avoided critical reporting, fearing for their safety.

Before I arrived in Manipur, I had worried about safety too, about encountering armed mobs. I was scarred by traumatic experiences in Delhi during the 2020 riots. But at no point did my colleagues and I face hostility

in Manipur, either in the valley or in the hills.

There was one question I asked many of the people I met – "What can bring peace to Manipur?" The answers were varied but offered up a couple of solutions. One, a free hand for central forces to disarm militants and radical groups. Two, active intervention by the central government.

But it took Narendra Modi 79 days to speak about the violence. He's still not visited Manipur. In July, many in the valley looked forward to his Mann Ki Baat, hoping he'd touch on topics close to them – but he didn't. They were anguished.

Meanwhile, bodies decomposed in mortuaries. Students left their campuses. An estimated 52,628 displaced people crammed into 337 relief camps. Over 180 people died. And Modi did not grant an audience to aggrieved MLAs from Manipur.

My trip to Manipur was five months ago. But little has changed since then.

Source: [Newslaundry](#)



**All is fair in love and war but
neither love or war is ever fair.**

— *John Guedes Do Nascimento*

THE SOCIAL MEDIA BUZZ

H S Benjamin Mate
@BenjaminMate1

Finally, CM @NBirenSingh has openly admitted complete lawlessness in Imphal Valley. He also further stated that all Govt Departments in Imphal r scared 2 attend their offices due to extortion demands & even Ministers & MLAs r scared to stay in their homes.

@AmitShah @IndiaTodayNE



7:57 PM · Jan 2, 2024 · 1,296 Views

তন্ময় | Tanmoy I
@tanmoyofc

Ridicule to the People of Manipur

PM wishes Manipur Chief Minister on his birthday, but remains silent on #ManipurViolence.

And The News Is:

Four people were allegedly shot dead by armed men in #Manipur's Valley district of Thoubal in a fresh violence that also saw several injured on Monday, January 1.

The Arms openly looted from Manipur State Forces by #Arambai_Tenggol.

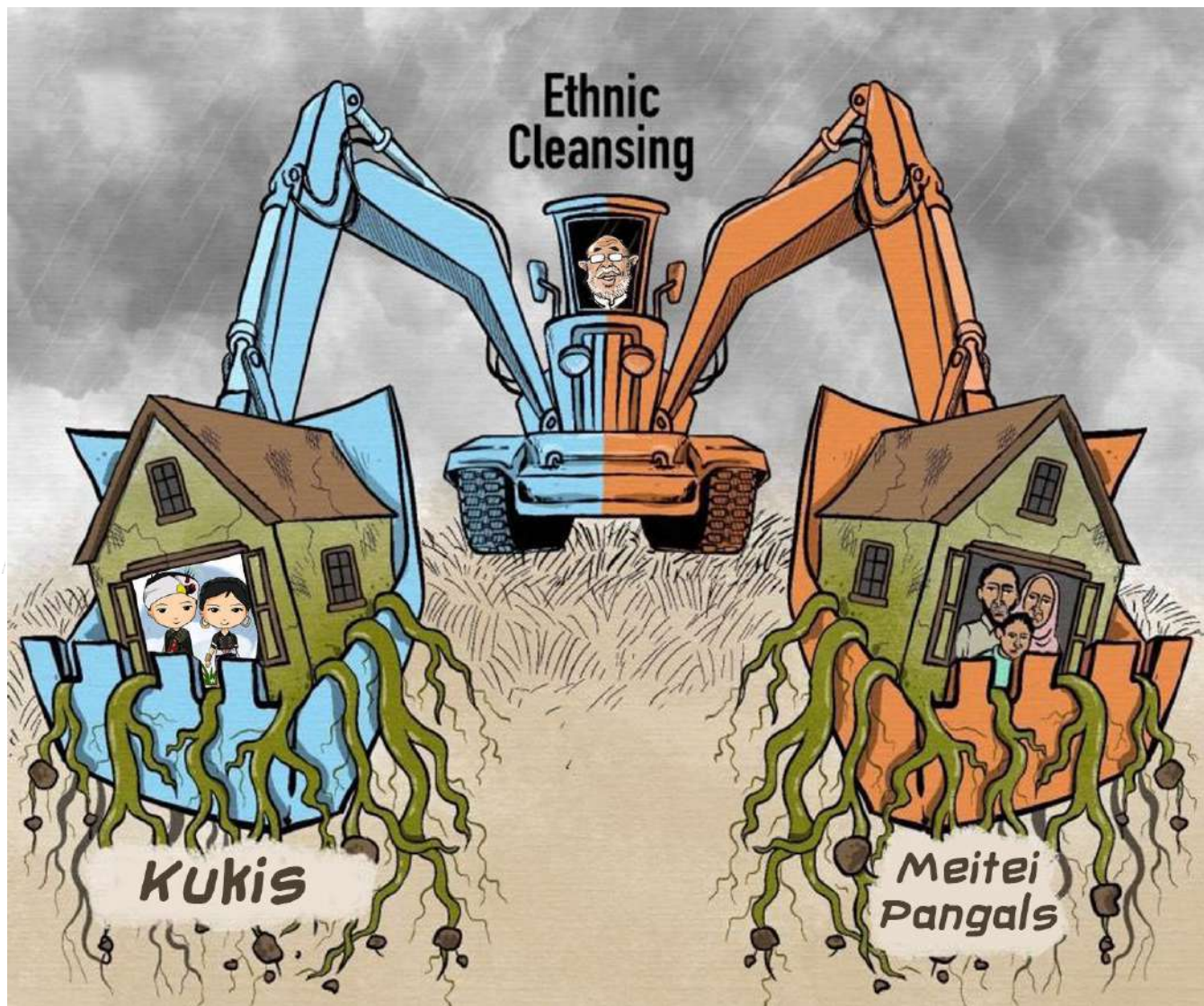
Questions

- The Prime Minister and the Home Minister have abandoned #Manipur ?
- The Weapons that were looted have returned to the Government ?
- Why are people still dying despite having about 4000 Central Force ?

#GoBackModi #ManipurBurning



BIREN'S DOUBLE ENGINE





Kahinlhai Kumlui

Time come to say Goodbye 2023

Time to Welcome New Year 2024

O 2023 please carry all the burden and sorrow that you have brought
O New Year We welcome with new hope

O 2023 it's Hard to say Goodbye

It's hard to be separated but time changes,
Time come and we are forced to be separated

O New Year 2024 You are the Hope we are waiting for
Come with New Hope and Give us Strength
Make Your Year Great and Freedom to Kuki-Zo Nation

O New Year brings hope for Kuki-Zo Volunteers
O New Year come with strength for our frontlin Heroes
Who Fight for their Land and for the Nation Kuki-Zo as a whole.

- Haotinmang Sitlhou



2023

2024