

# Thingkho Le Malcha

A Daily Newsletter by KSO Media & Documentation Cell



## L. Semol RELIEF CENTRE

L. Semol KCC Sunday School Hall, Lamka

Managed by  
Kuki Khanglai Lawmpi  
General Headquarters (KKL GHQ)

**Total Inmates Registered: 250\***

Male: 123

Female: 127

\*As on 23<sup>rd</sup> 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.



# KUKI-ZO CELEBRATES “MUTED CHRISTMAS”, FLOWERS AND DECORS ADORN GRAVES OF WAR VICTIMS



The otherwise well-illuminated and highly euphoric Kuki-Zo Christian-dominated Kangpokpi district during Christmas wore a dim and doleful look this year as the Kuki-Zo community celebrated a “Muted and Dark Christmas” due to the ongoing violence that erupted on May 3.

The festive sense and spirit are completely missing as the Kuki-Zo people restrained themselves from overtly conspicuous celebrations and other forms of enjoyment.

No Christmas decorations, no illumination of lights, no Christmas carols, and merriment, no Christmas feasting and fellowship event like lenkhom, a traditional form of singing and dancing were witnessed indoors and outdoors.

Rather, the Kuki-Zo stayed alert and prepared for any disturbance during the festive season.

As advised by the Committee on Tribal Unity, or the CoTU, Sadar Hills, all Churches in the district, shortened the Church morning service and conducted the evening service in the afternoon to culminate the program before night.

Normally, Christmas and New Year celebrations are organized at least for 2/3 consecutive days, but this year apart from strict advisory on the celebration, even the church services have also been limited.

Some Churches in Kangpokpi town after the morning Christmas service, served cakes, tea, and snacks instead of organizing the Christmas sumptuous feast.

Kuki-Zo volunteers instead of celebrating Christmas, stayed alert in the buffer zones or peripheral areas while CoTU leaders and the women’s wing replaced the womenfolks on regular highway duty in frisking and checking the vehicles.

Committee on Tribal Unity Sadar Hills leaders led by its Chairman Thanglen Kipgen and Secretary Lamminlun Singsit visited the Kuki-Zo volunteers who are in the buffer zones to wish them a Christmas Chibai and wishes.

They also sang a Christmas song wishing a Merry Christmas to all the Kuki-Zo people across the globe at the Gamgiphai checkpoint.

CoTU’s Spokesperson, Kaiminlen Sitlhou said that the Committee on Tribal Unity is saddened to reflect that this Christmas celebrations in Kuki-Zo dominated Kangpokpi district have been damp and low-key completely missing Christmas spirit owing to the morose environment everywhere due

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to the ongoing violence in Manipur.

He said that this festive season is celebrated sans carol and joyous splendor of merriment but with solemn prayers for our borders Bravehearts in the church.

He also said that the Committee on Tribal Unity is magnanimous to the Kuki-Zo community for adhering to our appeal for “Muted Christmas and New Year”.

The Committee also reminded the valley-based media platform to desist from portraying the Kuki-Zo in a bad light during the Christmas season as no amount of conjuncture can demean our Christian values.

The Committee while appealing to the Kuki-Zo not to indulge in overtly conspicuous celebrations and other forms of enjoyment, urged them to stay alert and be prepared for any eventuality, especially during Christmas and New Year.

Meanwhile, CoTU’s Information and Publicity Secretary, Thangtinlen Haokip said that the committee leaders visited the Kuki-Zo women who are on regular highway duty at the Gamgiphai checkpoint who could not stay with their family during Christmas and sang Christmas songs wishing everyone Merry Christmas.

He also said that conveyed heartfelt gratitude to all the Kuki-Zo volunteers and the womenfolk for sacrificing their precious time during this Christmas to guard the land and the people.

In the meanwhile, most of the graves of the victims, who were given a burial on December 20 in Churachandpur are now adorned with flowers, decorations and the symbolic Christmas star atop them from relatives and kin who are pained by their absence this Christmas. The town of Churachandpur, which normally is abuzz with activity and festive fervour is experiencing a bittersweet Christmas this year.

The Kuki community has faced a long and tumultuous eight months period since the violence broke out, and the mass burial on December 20 marks a significant moment for the Kukis as they honour those who



lost their lives in the conflict. The ceremony in Churachandpur has been a stark reminder of the deep-seated issues that have led to such tragic outcomes. It underscores the need for genuine reconciliation and the recognition of the Kuki community’s rights and grievances to pave the way for lasting peace in the region.

This year’s Christmas in Manipur seems somber, with sadness lingering around. The ethnic violence that gripped the state since May earlier this year, and still continues to burn, has dampened the festive spirit. Where decorations were once used to be seen in houses and streets of towns like Churachandpur, now flowers and decorations are adorning the gravestones of victims of the ethnic violence.

The Christian majority Kuki populace are experiencing a Christmas like never before when they are left yearning for their lost loved ones.



# NO 'SHANTI' FOR SHANTI: SCUFFLE BREAKS OUT BETWEEN RELIEF CAMP INMATES AND MOIRANG MLA AT HIS RESIDENCE

A scuffle broke out between the inmates of a relief camp in Moirang and the local MLA Thongam Shanti at the latter's residence on Tuesday.

The confrontation allegedly occurred due to the highhandedness of the local MLA towards the inmates of the relief centre. The Secretary of Churachandpur Meitei Ethnic Clash Victims Committee, W. Naba, said that they had earlier proposed to hold a peaceful sit-in protest. However, some of the inmates went to the residence of the MLA to meet him. He alleged that the MLA dragged one of the inmates by his clothes inside the room and there was heated exchange of words between them.

Naba said, "The protest, which was organised by the inmates, seemed to hurt the ego of the local MLA and as such when group of the inmates went to meet him personally, unwanted incidents happened and there was also an altercation between the MLA and the inmates."

Naba also said that the MLA dragged one of the inmates by his clothes inside the room but did not lay hands on the inmate.



The inmates have been appealing to the state government to take the initiatives to hand over the lost documents of the inmates to the relief centres since they (inmates) could not afford to go to the Deputy Commissioner's office every now and then. They have also demanded that the government must first consult them before taking up any welfare initiatives of the inmates.

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## MEIRA PAIBIS DENY DECENT BURIAL OF A DECEASED MEITEI CHRISTIAN

In what seemed to be a clear case of inhumanity amongst the Meitei civilians, a decent burial service of a Meitei Christian has been obstructed and denied by the so-called guardians - the Meira Paibis.

A message has been doing the rounds on social media wherein the burial service of a Meitei christian as per the Christian customs and rituals has been obstructed and denied by the Meira Paibis.

As stated in the message, the father of Thongram Sapan of Waithou Saijin Palak, Imphal East, died on Tuesday and the funeral service at the house was performed by Reverend O. Kumar. However, on their way for the burial service, they were intercepted and stopped by the Meira Paibis of Thiyam Kongjin on the way to the cemetery.



As per the message, clans of the deceased have declared to cremate the body of the deceased on Wednesday and warned that the house of the deceased would be torched if the family are against the cremation.

# CHIEF LIAR BIREN SINGH'S PEACE APPEAL FOLLOWS VIOLENT ATTACKS TOWARDS KUKIS ON CHRISTMAS DAY

The Kuki-Zo community's constant assertion of imminent violent attacks from the Meiteis' armed groups in the aftermath of each of N. Biren Singh's peace appeal has been vindicated once again on Christmas Day.

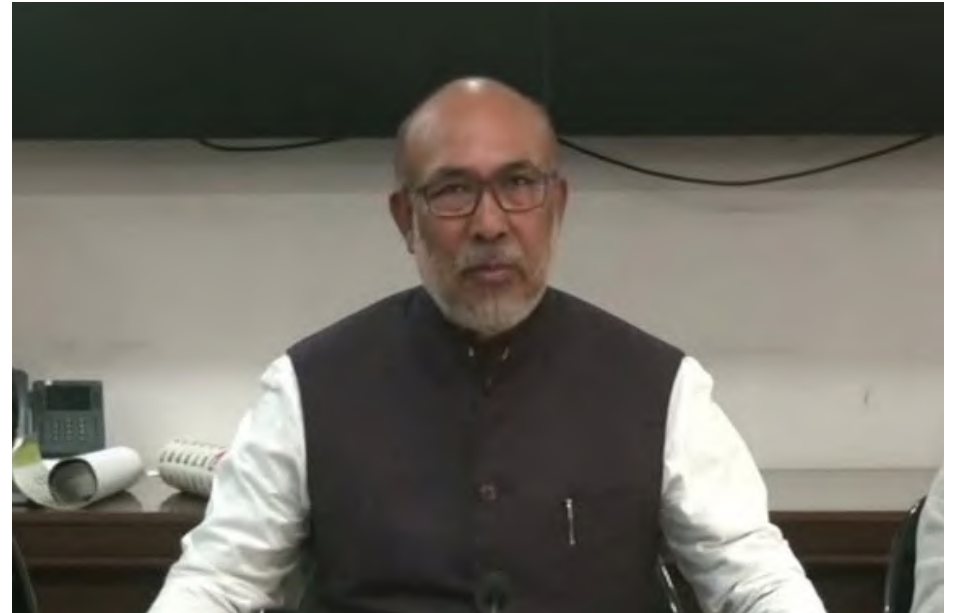
Since the eruption of the state-sponsored ethnic cleansing pogrom unleashed by the majority Meiteis, every peace appeal made by the chief architect of the violent N. Biren Singh on several occasions has been translated into devastating attacks on the Kuki areas by the Meitei militants including the radicalised private militia groups- Arambai Tenggol and Meitei Leepun. Every peace appeal from the top leadership of the state indicates a sign of violent activities from the aggressors towards the Kuki-Zo areas in the immediate future.

On Christmas day and ahead of New year, Meiteis' Kangleipak Chief Minister N Biren Singh asked people to stop violence and start peaceful dialogue. Biren while talking to media persons said, "Solving problems will take time. I want to appeal to all the people to stop violence and start peaceful dialogue. We must live together again, displaced persons have to be resettled, children have to go to school, people have to do their work. So, I appeal ahead of New Year and Christmas, to stop violence." However, like all times before, his appeal was followed by attacks on Kuki-Zo village guards.

On Christmas Day, fresh gunfire attacks occurred in the "Line of Control (LoC)" areas of Saibol, Twichin, Phaimol under Kuki dominated Kanggui district. As per sources, the attack to disrupt the festive mood of the Kukis began in the early morning of December 25 until 11:00 AM. The Meitei militants climbed up the hills and started indiscriminate firing towards the Kuki village volunteers who were guarding their ancestral land and the people. However, there was no report of any casualty.

During the night of December 24, a video clip recorded by the Kuki village volunteers went viral on social media platforms, wherein a large convoy of the Meitei militants were seen moving towards Sabungkhok and Yaingangpokpi side, a sign of an impending imminent threat of attack on the Kuki areas. The firing thus occurred the following day on Christmas.

Similar attacks on the Kuki-Zo areas were also reported in the buffer zone between Lamka district and the Meiteis' dominated Bishnupur district. The Meitei militants started indiscriminate gunfiring towards the Kuki-Zo village volunteers who were guarding the village of Molngat



and the surrounding areas under Lamka district. The ensuing gunfight which began at around 10:20 PM of December 25 lasted for about two hours. However, there was no report of any casualty.

The pathological liar, N. Biren Singh, had also stated that normalcy has returned in Imphal, Kangpokpi and Churachandpur. However, escalating tension still prevails between the warring parties with imminent threat of attacks from his private militia goons - the Arambai Tenggol and Meitei Leepun, on the Kuki areas. No one takes his words seriously as he has blood on his hand, and he is a liar and will remain a pathological liar until he breathes his last.

Unfortunately, some other media outlets have also been a part of the misinformation campaign spearheaded by Imphal valley- based sources. An online news portal, nenow.in on 25 December has reported on the incident under the title "Militants perpetuate terror on Christmas Day in Manipur". Although there is no denying the fact that it was indeed militants who had perpetuated the terror, they belonged to the Meitei community. The Kuki-Zo volunteers had only returned fire upon provocation by the Meitei militants as stated above. As there is currently a state of war with the Meiteis ever threatening to attack Kuki-Zo areas, the Kuki-Zo volunteers have been forced to pick up arms to defend their land and its people and will continue to do so until and unless the Meiteis give up their arms and the state and centre formally recognise the separation of the Kuki-Zo hills from the state of Manipur.



## PEACE KEEPING FORCES CENTRAL ARMY FIND NO PLACE AMONG MEITEIS

The Central Security Forces who are primarily stationed in different parts of the state to maintain peace and tranquility have found no place amongst the so called peace loving Meitei community. Law and order in Imphal valley has been shattered since the eruption of violence.

The central security forces in Heirok Assembly constituency under Thoubal district have been chased away by Meiteis mob on Tuesday. The Meitei militants who are in full combat gear were seen riding a Gypsy vehicle chanting slogan against the Indian security forces.

On Tuesday, hundreds of locals launched an agitation demanding to vacate Border Security forces from the Tenta police outpost within 24 hours or else, they said they would launch a protest. They also submitted a memorandum to the SP Thoubal and MLA of Wangjing Tenta. The central security forces have been instrumental in maintaining normalcy in the valley district. The central security forces have checked the unlawful movement of valley based insurgent groups, thereby creating animosity with the Meitei populace.

The Meiteis in their endeavor to malign the image of the central forces have labelled them as partisan. The central forces have been time and again disrupted from performing their assigned duty by the Meitei Meira Paibis, which indicates lawlessness among the Meitei society. The disliking for Central Forces has once again manifested their secessionist stand. The suspicious Meira Paibis in the past have also checked the Aadhar Cards of central armed forces, exerting dominance over the central forces in security related matters. The Imphal valley has now



been devoid of proper law and order keeping agencies and the Meitei militia, radical groups and the Meira Paibis now act as the de-facto law and order keepers.

The Chief Minister N. Biren Singh has failed to exert authority over his own people despite claiming that normalcy has been restored in the state.



Institute of Banking Personnel Selection has activated the IBPS SO Prelims Exam 2023 centre change link for Manipur candidates on December 26, 2023. Candidates who want to make changes in the exam centre can find the link on the official website of IBPS at [ibps.in](https://ibps.in).

The link to make changes in the exam centre will remain active till December 27, 2023. On receipt of centre change option from the willing candidates, they will

be allocated to the Venues of their chosen Centres.

The decision to offer the option of 'centre change' to the candidates who have opted for Imphal (Manipur) as Centre for Online Preliminary Examination for recruitment for the post of Specialist Officers under CRP SPL-XIII was taken after reviewing the situation in the state. The notice for the same was released on December 23, 2023.



## News in Pic: Christmas with the Martyrs



Not the best year for sure, but the day was Christmas Day and the place was Kuki-Zo Martyrs' Cemetery at Sehken Village in Lamka District, the place where all 87 Kuki-Zo martyrs were laid to rest on December 20.

The Kuki Students' Organization Churachandpur on Christmas day visited the Martyrs' Park, paying homage to the martyrs of Meitei ethnic cleansing against the Kukis. The KSO Churachandpur, led by its president, paid floral tributes to all the 87 martyrs and also organized a wreath-laying ceremony for the martyrs.



**It is not the punishment but the cause that makes the martyr.**

*- Saint Augustine*



**FEATURED ARTICLE**

# The Joy of Christmas Amidst Adversity in Manipur

**HOINU KIPGEN**

As we approach the end of the year, it is natural to reflect on what the year has held for us. This year we witnessed large-scale tragedy, chaos, and conflict. It has overshadowed our world and led to a state of irreparable division. In my home state of Manipur, the conflict between the Kuki and the Meiteis has lasted over 200 days. The outcome is a solemn and subdued atmosphere.

Fear and uncertainty weave themselves into the daily fabric of our lives. It casts doubt on our existence and dampens the preparations for Christmas. This holds true for all residents of the state, especially those separated from their families. Displaced people are residing in relief camps and families are grappling with profound loss due to the conflict. Closure is elusive.

## No Ordinary Christmas

Amidst this crisis, as people of faith in Manipur, we ask ourselves how we can find joy and celebrate in the midst of this pervading gloom. How can we gather like we did in earlier, normal times? How can we worship together when warnings of impending attacks, especially during Christmas, loom large?

Today, families displaced for more than 7 months live in relief camps without any signs of resolution or resettlement. How can we sustain hope when there are no signs of change? It is daunting to celebrate

Christmas the usual way. Summoning hope and celebrating joyfully seems absurd.

Yet, despite the lack of enthusiasm, we have noticed an increased compassion and generosity amidst the suffering. The shared experience of adversity has inspired people to rally together. People are working to provide essential resources, emotional support, and engage in simple acts of kindness in the community.

As Christmas approaches, there is a growing commitment to offer assistance to those in need. There is a desire to pray and celebrate alongside displaced people. The prevailing atmosphere has also encouraged many in the community to reconsider the way Christmas is celebrated. Many see a glimmer of hope in the darkness. They perceive that perhaps the current situation will allow people to contemplate on the true meaning of Christmas more deeply without the usual noise and distractions.

## An Invitation to Deeper Meditation

Present circumstances may compel us to do away with the external festivities. However, this Christmas

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invites us to discover a deeper, more meaningful joy. It invites us to something that transcends the material aspects that usually accompanied Christmas. We can no longer focus solely on gifts, Christmas decorations, community gatherings, and feasts.

This Christmas will be one where we will redirect our focus to the real reason behind the celebration. In essence, we will be able to consider the true meaning of the birth of Christ, free from the superficial trappings of the season.

The struggle to find joy in the midst of adversity is not exclusive to people in Manipur alone. It also extends to other parts of the country and the world where conflict and suffering persist. How can anyone have joy amidst the gloom and doom surrounding us? (Ps. 13:1-2)

This may be one of the most challenging years in our lives without any apparent relief in sight (2 Cor. 5:7). Yet the crisis also reminds us, especially at Christmas, that our joy should not depend on external circumstances (2 Cor. 4:16). Rather, the joy of the Lord is our strength (Neh. 8:10). It comes from being in his presence (Ps. 16:11). Despite the gloom and darkness around us, the assurance of Immanuel, God with us, is a source of great joy for us (Matt. 1:22-23).

### **Good News of Great Joy**

Our situation is similar to the circumstances at the birth of Christ. It happened in the midst of crisis, chaos, and conflict. In Luke 2:10, the angels met shepherds and reassured them saying, "Fear not." Similarly, their message invites us to cast aside fear. Moreover, the angels proclaimed "good news" and not only of joy but of "great joy" (Luke 2:10-11)

Though we live in the most challenging times, we hope to celebrate the good news of Christmas. It renews joy, hope, and love in us (Ps. 4:6-7). The birth of Christ is a

poignant reminder that God reached down to us, offering his only Son as a gift for our redemption (1 Peter. 5:10).

As we walk through this dark valley, the message of the angels is a reassuring promise of a Savior and a Deliverer. He provides strength, courage, and great joy as we navigate this tumultuous time (Ps. 39:5-7).

### **Our Redeemer Lives**

Although our situation may not change immediately, his Word promises us that God is with us (Ps. 23:4). He walks with us on this journey (Ps. 16:8). He is the light in our darkness, peace amid conflict, hope in seemingly hopeless situations, and great joy in the midst of suffering (Isa. 9:2). His love and promises extend beyond fleeting moments of happiness (2 Cor. 4:7-9). He assures us that one day he will heal our hurts and undo our suffering (Rev. 21:3-4).

If, like many of us in Manipur, this year has been a difficult year and the prospects of navigating Christmas feels daunting, may you find reassurance in his presence. May you know that he is with you at this time. May we anchor ourselves in the promised hope of Christ, drawing comfort from his abiding presence even if celebrations may be subdued. This Christmas, may we rediscover the depth of God's love and rejoice in the knowledge that it is his love that redeems us.

*(Hoinu is an independent researcher in Manipur. Her work involves conducting evidence-based research for organisations focusing on community development, maternal and child health, church and community transformation, and peace building.)*



# THE BUZZ

SOCIAL MEDIA

Rohini Anand  
@mrs\_roh08

Narendra Modi said "I have a very old connection with the Christian community" on Christmas.

But it does not bother him when tribal Christians in Manipur are killed.



Raj Meena  
@Batman1947\_

Peace negotiation talks Since the beginning????

Kuki\_Zo would return to Imphal under no guarantee of their safety

Even BJP Politician from Kuki\_Zo are not safe in Imphal

Even now Meiteis are attacking Kuki\_Zo villages after 8 months

Have u forgot?

[google.com/amp/s/www.theh...](https://google.com/amp/s/www.theh...)



@somokantathangz · 7h

Why did the Chin\_Kuki\_Zo CSOs, NGOs and even the MLA deny peace negotiations talk since the Beginning?

Was that a problem between civilians or with the Government?

Why did the Chin\_Kuki\_Zo community vandalise the Meitei shops in Churhandpur on 28th April?...

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## THE CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION OF MANIPUR KUKIS



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# Heroic Sonnet For The Knightly Departed

From thy spiritual realm do ardently gaze.  
Comrades and kins hand in hand together,  
Preparing thy bed with solemn faces.  
Heavy hearts yet heads held not nether,  
Proud brothers and sisters stout strong  
Shifteth to dress thy knightly sepulchre.

Sleep now and rest well beloved dearest.  
In the timeless calmness of thine ossuary,  
Think not of thy relinquished family bereft.  
Troubled not and do not for once ever worry,  
For here ever abiding is our khankho-nunkho  
Shaping one another since the times ancient.

Loved ones this day bid thee transient farewell.  
Regards to the old folks who'd advanced home,  
While kinsmen pledge for to keep on the fire.  
Rest now comrades to awake when we overcome.  
Loving mother's lullaby, thy soothing sleepsong  
Fearless father's trumpet, thy rejoicing victory rise.

— Henry Manggon