

Thingkho Le Maleha

A Daily Newsletter by KSO Media & Documentation Cell



Hengbung RELIEF CENTRE

Govt. High School, CC Hall, etc., Hengbung
(Camp Code: KPI-1-04)

Managed by
District Administration &
Kuki CSOs Sadar Hills

Total Inmates Registered: 439



KUKI VICTIMS' UPDATE

As on 27.01.2024



159
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.

10 KUKI MLAS HIGHLIGHT CHAOTIC STATE OF MANIPUR, ALTERNATIVE SOLUTION TO PM MODI

The 10 Kuki MLAs on Monday wrote to the Prime Minister of India highlighting the present chaotic situation of the State of Manipur with earnest request for prompt intervention.

That, the on-going conflict situation in Manipur has turned from bad to worse as is evident from the bizarre incident at Imphal- Kangla Fort on the 24th January 2024 wherein the Meitei MLAs and Ministers of 12 Manipur Legislative Assembly numbering 37 and the 2 Meitei MPs were compelled to take oath of allegiance for the so called Meitei Militia- Arambai Tenggol in contravention to the oath taken under the Constitution of India as elected representatives, said the 10 MLAs in a letter.

“On that day, three Meitei MLAs were publicly humiliated and physically assaulted inside Kangla Fort by the Arambai Tenggol amidst heavy security deployment inside, outside and at all gates of the Complex. However, the Chief Minister has maintained eloquent silence on the public harassment of his Law-maker colleagues. One can only imagine the fate of minority Tribals, Muslims, Nepalis, Marwaris, Biharis and others under such harrowing circumstances where a parallel Government is run by the Arambai Tenggols.”

The MLAs maintained that since May 3, 2023, these Arambai Tenggol were waging war against the Kuki-Zo people. The division within the inhabitants of Manipur has been significantly more aggravated on communal lines by the recent act of the Arambai Tenggol. These militias were openly roaming in the streets with arms looted from the Government armouries. The Central Security Forces has become mute spectators in the absence of AFSPA.

That, lawlessness has become new Law in the Capital city of Imphal. This Taliban- like act of Arambai



Tenggol shows the total breakdown of the Indian Constitutional machineries in Manipur valley. The State Government is forced to comply with the bidding of Arambai Tenggols. Such instance of militia taking over the streets despite the presence of democratically elected popular Government is unprecedented in Independent India. Hence, the need for an alternative political solution is urgently imperative at this critical juncture.

It is pertinent to mention that a representation highlighting the present volatile situation has been sent to the Home Minister, Government of India on 24” January 2024, requesting his immediate attention and intervention on the following issues; (i) One-sided (Biased) Resolution adopted by Legislators of 12-Manipur Legislative Assembly on 21-01-2024 on abrogation of Suspension of Operation (SoO) (ii) Immediate withdrawal of Meitei State Police Commandos from Moreh and (iii) Re-imposition of AFSPA in Manipur Valley. However, the matter remains unattended till date, it alleged. Therefore, we, the 10 Kuki-Zomi-Hmar elected MLAs reiterated our demand for Separate Administration from Manipur under specific provisions of the Constitution of India, the MLAs added.

ATROCITIES ON KUKI-ZO TRIBALS HIGHLIGHTED IN PRESS CONFERENCE AT DELHI

Deeply concerned about the escalating developments of atrocities committed on Moreh residents in Manipur by the State-sponsored radical groups- Arambai Tenggol, Meitei Leepun, and other Valley Based Insurgent Groups (VBIGs) such as UNLF, PLA, MPA, the Kuki Students' Organisation Delhi & NCR alleged that the recorded occurrences present a distressing image of disproportionate use of force, human rights breaches, and a complete breakdown of law and order and constitutional machineries in Manipur.

In a press conference organized by the organization at Press Club of India, New Delhi, the KSO said incidents of police brutality and abuse of power have prompted major concerns about the role of law enforcement in protecting the rights and security of the Kuki-Zo tribals, who are also law-abiding citizens of the country. The situation in Moreh, as well as the ongoing perpetration of such horrific atrocities in all Kuki-Zo inhabited areas, necessitates immediate intervention and action to alleviate their suffering.

During the press briefing, the organization presented a detailed picture of police brutality in Moreh, state of lawlessness and a report on Saikul attack.

Moreh Atrocities/Brutalities: There have been multiple reports of State Police using excessive force on local Kuki-Zo inhabitants in Moreh. The presence of State Police (Commandos) working with Valley Based Insurgent Groups (VBIGs) such as Arambai Tenggol, Meitei Leepun, United National Liberation Front (UNLF), People's Liberation Army of Manipur (PLA), and People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak has become an existential threat for local residents. On January 15th, a woman was shot in the leg by the Police Commandos during a peaceful march. Again, on January 19, 2024, CCTV footage surfaced showing Meitei Militants in Police Commando uniform burning houses and schools on fire in broad daylight. These ongoing atrocities have put the lives of Kuki-Zo citizens in Moreh in peril. Furthermore, our children's fundamental rights to education have been grossly violated, thus necessitating a quick action on the part of the Centre to alleviate



incidents of violence so that education and future of children is not jeopardized. Worryingly, such radical groups' impunity from the rule of law has resulted in continued egregious violations of human rights in all Kuki-Zo inhabited areas.

State of Lawlessness: On January 24, 2024, Meitei Militant groups—the Arambai Tenggol summoned all 40 Valley Legislators and Members of Parliament at Imphal Kangla Fort, and coerced them into signing an oath of allegiance under duress for annihilating all Kuki-Zos in the State of Manipur. Such audacity against public representatives is a direct attack on India's democracy. As a result, lawlessness continues unabated, wreaking havoc and causing irreversible harm between the two belligerent communities. As a result, KSOD & NCR, as well as all Kuki-Zo CSOs, ask for immediate action to combat such lawlessness by reinstating AFSPA throughout the valley and holding those perpetrators accountable for such dastardly act. It may be mentioned that the looting of more than 6000 sophisticated guns and 5 lakh ammunition from the state armoury by these extremist groups on the 4th of May 2023, allow for such magnitude of violence to persist.

Saikul Attack (Khamenlok/Satang Area): The propensity for violence and atrocities continued to manifest itself in an exchange of fire as Meitei

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Militants intruded beyond the buffer zones into Kuki-Zo populated districts in the peripheries of Saikul Sub-Division, Kangpokpi (Kanggui) District which were guarded by Central Security Forces. On January 27, 2024, at around 5:00 a.m., hard-lined Meitei militants attacked the Kuki-Zo Village Volunteers, killing one named Tilminlun Khongsai aged 26 years. The Village Volunteers (VVs) retaliated, and the exchange of fire lasted the whole day. Furthermore, the radical militants razed and bull-dozed the Church at Aigejang Village to the ground, and also desecrated St. Thomas Church at Khopibung village, which is an insult to the Christian faith. They also set fire to the houses and vestiges left behind by the villagers who fled for their lives in June of last year (2023).

The KSOD & NCR, therefore, beseeches the Centre's intervention through law enforcement agencies, and relevant authorities to take prompt action to resolve the condition of the Kuki-Zo tribals as a result of the horrific deeds of the radical Meiteis nurtured by the State Government.

Highlighting the timeline of various atrocities committed on the Kuki-Zo population, the KSO Delhi & NCR also laid down a series of demands to be addressed immediately.

"Because of all the atrocities on the Kuki-Zo people since May 3rd, 2023 and repeated, indiscriminate attacks on the hapless tribal community till today in the hills (which the Central government is aware of), our ultimate demand/request is for Central Government to intervene and fulfil our request today and work out a permanent solution for us soon. In the wake of these gross injustices against the Kuki-Zo people, we assert the following demands to bring justice to the community

in the town of Moreh in particular and Kuki-inhabited areas in general", KSO statement reads.

The demand includes:

1. Immediate and complete withdrawal of Meitei State Security Forces and VBIGs from Moreh.
2. The replacement of Col. Akash Oinam, CO 18 A.R. in Saikul for effective law and order situation.
3. A written assurance from competent authorities ensuring the safety and security of the Kuki people in Moreh and all other Kuki-Zo inhabited areas of the State.
4. Effective enforcement of buffer-zones and the central forces should be given power and authority to stop Meitei militants from intruding and attacking Kuki-Zo villages.
5. Removal of all Manipuri Army officers from Manipur to ensure neutrality and impartiality of Central forces and replacement by Non-Manipuri officers.
6. The Central government should immediately take control of Manipur whose government is now controlled by the Meitei militant groups. The state government has completely surrendered to the Meitei militants and alternative arrangement for security and governance of the tribals in the hills should be arranged at the earliest.
7. Displaced students should be given admission in educational Institutes outside the state to complete their studies. There are hundreds of Kuki-Zo students in medical, nursing and engineering courses who could not continue their studies.
8. The Central government should expedite the formation of Separate Administration for Kuki-Zo tribals to bring lasting peace in the international border state of Manipur.



All war is a symptom of man's failure as a thinking animal.

– John Steinbeck

MEITEI PHD SCHOLAR IN MIZORAM UNIVERSITY UNDER SCRUTINY FOR TERROR FUNDING; TERMINATION CONSIDERED

Teresa Ningthoujam, a Meitei PhD student at Mizoram University, has sparked controversy for collecting funds totaling Rs. 20,000 only, for use in terror acts against the Kuki people in Manipur. The funds were reportedly raised for Arambai Tenggol, the alleged orchestrator of violent attacks on the Kuki community. A viral video depicting Teresa handing over the collected amount to Arambai Tenggol circulated widely on social media platforms.

Netizens expressed shock at Teresa's involvement in terror-related fundraising, questioning her commitment to academic excellence. In response, the Mizo Zirlai Pawl (MZP), a leading student body in Mizoram, wrote to the university Registrar urging the immediate termination of Teresa's Ph.D. program.

C. Lalhminsanga, Asst. Secretary of MZP, addressed the Registrar in a letter, stating, "Such actions are not only morally reprehensible but also go against the principles of humanity and academic integrity." The MZP requested the termination of Teresa's enrollment, emphasizing the need to uphold the university's values of peace, respect for human life, and academic excellence.

"Such actions are not only morally reprehensible but also go against the principles of humanity and academic integrity. As Teresa's supervisor, I understand the gravity of this situation and the implications it carries for both her academic pursuits and the reputation of the renowned Mizoram University. Given the severity of the allegations against Teresa, I respectfully request that her enrolment in the Ph.D. program be terminated with immediate effect. I believe it is imperative to uphold the values of peace, respect for human life, and academic excellence that Mizoram University stands for", the letter said.

"By taking decisive action in this matter, we re-affirm our commitment to fostering a safe, inclusive, and ethical learning environment for all students. I trust that you will carefully consider this request and take



appropriate measures to address the situation in a manner consistent with the university's policies and standards of conduct," it added.

Leaders from the Mizo Students' Union, Mizo Zirlai Pawl, and Young Mizo Association held emergency meetings with university authorities. The MZP met with the Registrar, while the MSU leaders engaged with the Vice-Chancellor, highlighting the urgency of terminating Teresa's Ph.D. program. An FIR concerning this matter is also expected to be filed in Aizawl.

RAM MANDIR DONE, CAA WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN NEXT SEVEN DAYS, SAYS UNION MINISTER SHANTANU THAKUR

Union Minister of State, Shantanu Thakur, while addressing a public rally in West Bengal said that the Citizenship (Amendment) Act will be implemented across the country in the next seven days.

“Ram Mandir has been inaugurated (in Ayodhya), and within the next seven days, the CAA - Citizenship (Amendment) Act - will be implemented across the country. This is my guarantee. Not just in West Bengal, the CAA would be implemented in every state of India within a week,” said Thakur at a public rally in West Bengal’s South 24 Parganas yesterday.



On December 27, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said that no one can stop the implementation of the CAA as it is the law of the land.

THE SOCIAL MEDIA BUZZ

Abdul Quadir - عبدالقادر @Northistan

India - Manipur's CM, Biren Singh, claimed militants returned weapons for peace, but **Arambai Tenggol** militias, armed with looted weapons, are seen dancing in uniform.



11:45 AM · Jan 29, 2024 · 4,597 Views

Indian Christian Community @ChristianIndia

The church belongs to the minority Kuki-Zo Christian in Manipur demolished by the #Meitei BJP Government in Manipur.

#ManipurViolence

@AJEnglish
@ANI @Pontifex @BillyGraham @amnestyusa @BishopBarron @UN_HRC
@UN @BBCNews
@POTUS



3:56 AM · Jan 29, 2024 · 4,048 Views

SHOW CAUSE NOTICE SERVE TO MEITEI EXTREMIST ORGANIZATIONS

Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) constituted Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Tribunal consisting of Justice Sanjay Kumar Medhi, Judge of the Gauhati High Court, has served a Show Cause notice to 7 (Seven) Valley Based Insurgent Groups (VBIGs) as to why they be not declared unlawful within 30 (thirty) days from the date of service of the notice.

The Central Government as well as the State Government of Manipur shall make necessary and adequate arrangements for the service of notice, mentioned the order.

The Home Ministry on November 13, 2023 declared several Meitei extremist organisations, their factions, wings and front organisations as unlawful associations under Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act for a period of five years. The banned group includes the Peoples' Liberation Army generally known as PLA, and its political wing, the Revolutionary Peoples' Front (RPF), the United National Liberation Front (UNLF) and its armed wing, the Manipur Peoples' Army (MPA), the Peoples' Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK) and its armed wing, the "Red Army", the Kangleipak Communist Party (KCP) and its armed wing, also called the "Red Army", the Kanglei Yaol Kanba Lup (KYKL), the Coordination Committee (CorCom) and the Alliance for Socialist Unit/ Kangleipak (ASUK).

Meanwhile, the Central Government and the State Government will submit their respective affidavits and documents in support of the grounds on which the aforesaid Associations have been declared as unlawful.

To adjudicate on whether there is sufficient cause for declaring the Meitei Extremist Organizations of Manipur along with all their factions, wings and front organizations as "unlawful associations", the ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has constituted the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Tribunal consisting of Justice Sanjay Kumar Medhi, Judge of the Gauhati High Court, on November 29, 2023. As per the order, the next hearing of the Tribunal is fixed on 19/02/2024 at 2 PM in the Court Room No. 10, Gauhati High Court, (New Block), Guwahati, Assam-781001 Given under my hand and the seal of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Tribunal.

In a statement on November 13, 2023, the MHA said that the action to declare these groups was based on inputs that all the Meitei extremist organisations: the PLA and its political wing RPF, the UNLF and its armed wing MPA), the PREPAK and its armed wing "Red Army", the KCP and its armed wing also called the "Red Army", the KYKL, the CorCom and the ASUK have as their professed aim, the establishment of an independent nation by secession of Manipur from India through armed struggle and to incite indigenous people of Manipur for such secession.

"Notice is hereby given under Sub-section (2) of Section 4 of the Act read with Rule 6 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Rules, 1968 and you are hereby called upon to show cause in writing within 30 days from the date of service of this Notice as to why the aforesaid Valley based Insurgent Groups should not be declared as Unlawful Associations and why an order should not be made confirming the declaration to the above effect made in the Notification mentioned herein above. The objections/reply/written statement, if any, may be filed/delivered within the statutory period of 30 days from the date of service of the notice, before the Registrar of this Tribunal, i.e. the undersigned at the Chamber of the Deputy Registrar (Recruitment-II), Gauhati High Court, (Old Block), Guwahati, Assam-781001. In case, objections/reply/written statements are in regional or vernacular language, true English Translation thereof should also be attached. You are required to appear before the Tribunal or may cause an appearance on your behalf before the Tribunal in the Court Room No. 10, Gauhati High Court, (New Block), Guwahati, Assam-781001, either through a duly authorized representative or an instructed Counsel/Advocate, where after irrespective of your appearance, the Tribunal shall proceed as per Sub-Section (3) of Section 4 of the Act," reads the notification.

Notably, this secessionist groups have been engaging in all sorts of crimes ranging from extortion, murder, ambush of central security agencies, kidnapping and boycotting holidays of national importance.

NON-LOCALS IN VALLEY AND THE NAGAS IN MANIPUR FACING THE BRUNT OF FORCED DONATIONS BY MEITEIS

Small to large-scale non-local businessmen in valley areas and the Naga community who travels to the valley are lately facing the brunt of the forced donations collected by the Meitei women in the shops, on roads and along the highways.

Since the violence broke out in the State, staffs of a parlour owned by a Naga lady in Imphal were abducted and assaulted after they refuse to give the monetary demands imposed by Meiteis.

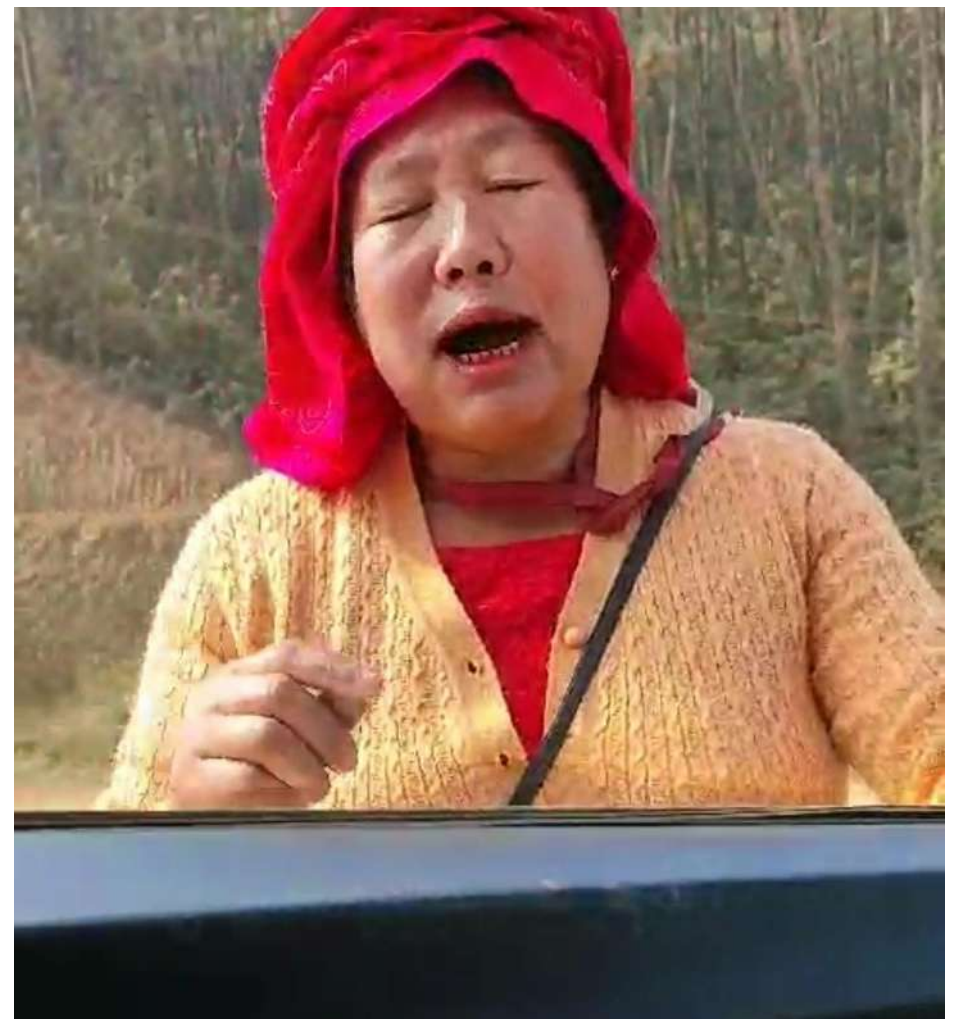
The forced donations collected by Meitei women from non-locals came to light recently after a video, of a non-local shop-keeper confronting a Meitei woman who came to collect donation, went viral on social media.

However, if one listens to the argument between the shopkeeper and the Meitei woman, it is learnt that such donations have been collected many times in the recent past.

While confronting the Meitei lady, the non-local lady said she has been disturbed a number of times in the name of donation. In response, the Meitei lady told her to leave Manipur if she cannot keep up with the prevailing situation (mostly, contribution of money for the meitei militants), banged and broke the glass cabinets in the shop.

A few days after the video went viral, the non-local lady who perhaps was threatened, tendered an apology to the Meiteis, in the same manner as Thounaojam Brinda, on a few instances where she was made to retract her statement.

In another incident, a Naga man riding a four wheeler was intercepted by a Meitei lady dressed up in the signature Meira Paibi outfit { wearing a wrap-around(phanek), carrying a sling bag, wrapping her head with a cloth and a Chandan on her forehead}. Even though the Naga guy explained that he was returning from Imphal after undergoing an operation, the lady asked the men to donate at least Rs. 50 to which the Naga guy had to agree.



The two incidents came to light after the recorded videos were posted on social media platforms. Had the videos not went viral, the forceful collection of money from minority communities within the Imphal Valley by the Meiteis would remain a secret to this day.

If small businessmen are forced to donate, then non-local businessmen who own godowns and showrooms in the valley might well be receiving monetary demands from local clubs, CSOs and even the Arambai Tenggol and Meitei militants unless proven otherwise.

In another video, the gate of Primary Health Centre, Leimapokpam under Bishnupur district remained closed with a written note posted on the gate which roughly translates as, "The office has been closed due to monetary demands".



After nearly nine months of ethnic cleansing by a majority community in Manipur, Chief Minister N. Biren Singh seems to have acknowledged the critical role of security forces. This realisation follows significant casualties suffered by his affiliated organisation Arambai Tenggol, during recent attacks on KukiZo villages and towns.

Singh, who also oversees the Home portfolio, strongly criticised the Indian Army, accusing them of being passive spectators.

Addressing a gathering to commemorate the 52nd statehood day, he emphasised that central security forces should not remain mere observers but are invited to protect the state's integrity and the lives and properties of innocent people.

However, during the violent incidents where almost 200 KukiZo civilians were brutally killed, and numerous women subjected to heinous acts, Chief Minister N. Biren Singh seemed oblivious to the atrocities. Houses, including that of his colleague Letpao Haokip, were allowed to be burned a few meters away from his residence, resulting in the displacement of 60,000 people.

Evidence suggests that the state security forces, under N. Biren Singh's control remained inactive. To set the record straight, Manipur Police was implicated in burning KukiZo houses in Imphal in May and more recently in Moreh.

The two women paraded naked in Kangpokpi district were handed over to the mobs by Manipur Police. Six-year-old Tonsing and his Meitei mother, along with his aunt, were burned alive inside an ambulance by Meira Paibis in the presence of state police. Not a single bullet was fired when 6000 arms and 6 lakhs of ammunition were looted from police stations.

The worst aspect, under the watchful eyes of the chief minister, is the integration of all state security forces with separatist Meitei militants and Arambai Tenggol, which he calls a unified command.

It is baffling how someone who has allegedly misused security forces to this extent can advise the Indian Army on their role. In fact, questions arise about Biren Singh's authority to invite central forces. Central forces should be deployed by the centre wherever deemed necessary, with their

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primary duty being to protect national integrity. State integrity is a collective responsibility, requiring the cooperation of all communities living within the state, a far cry from the current state of affairs.

While Biren Singh rightly emphasises that central forces should protect the lives and properties of innocent people, this responsibility extends to all communities, including KukiZos, Nagas, Nepalis, and not just Meiteis. The expectation that the Indian Army should remain passive when private militias and separatist organisations move to attack KukiZo villages, breaking Buffer Zone protocols, is questionable.

With things not aligning with Biren Singh's expectations and the Army standing for truth hindering their aggression towards KukiZos, Biren has resorted to blaming them for inaction. However, when KukiZo volunteers retaliated against alleged Meitei forces' atrocities in Moreh, prompting the Meitei forces to seek protection in Assam Rifle camps.

The call for the sudden resignation of security advisor Kuldeep Singh seems part of a larger strategy by N. Biren Singh to consolidate control over security matters. Differences of opinion, especially regarding security in Moreh, have surfaced.

According to the Meiteis, the Indian Army shouldn't restrain itself against KukiZo volunteers, while, on the other hand, the Army shouldn't harm Biren's private militia patrolling the streets of Imphal with looted guns.

Senior security advisor Kuldeep Singh, not aligning with Biren Singh's views, resulted in the Meitei Media questioning him about potential resignation. Strongly refuting allegations of inefficiency, he clarified that he is not the sole person in charge of security and shares equal responsibility with the chief minister.

If Biren Singh desires the Army to take action, reimposing AFSPA in the Valley of Manipur, removed in March last year, should be a prerequisite. This act curtails the Army's power, while simultaneously

accusing them of inaction is a form of hypocrisy. Regarding the resolutions adopted by 37 MLAs on Monday, the major demand was to suspend the truce between Kuki extremists and the centre.

This truce, a decade-and-a-half-old tripartite agreement between Kukis, the Government of Manipur, and the Government of India, had been abrogated by Biren Singh with some organisations prior to the Manipur violence. This was not the cause of the violence but rather highlights the complexity of the situation.

The second resolution for the complete disarmament of illegal arms is a positive step. The delay in adopting this resolution prompts questions about Biren Singh's influence and the potential challenge posed by Arambai Tenggols. The January 24th meeting called by Arambai Tenggols, where all MLAs of the valley are threatened to attend, challenges Biren's hegemony, raising concerns about the organization becoming a Frankenstein Monster.

Armed attacks on Indian soil by KukiZos are not a new narrative. Attempts to link KukiZos with foreign elements and democracy struggles in Myanmar have been refuted by intelligence and central security forces. Kuldeep Singh, in recent questioning by the Meitei Media, vehemently denied the involvement of any foreign elements.

The accusation against Assam Rifles is also old propaganda, with the Meitei community alleging favouritism towards KukiZos. Manipur is not only manned by Assam Rifles but also by Gorkhas, Kumaons, Sikhs, CRPF, BSF, and RAFs. For central forces, protecting innocent lives is of utmost priority. Why Meiteis are against central forces requires reflection and understanding of their motives.

First published by [East Mojo](#)



FEATURED ARTICLE

Abject Surrender of the State to Armed Militia in India's Manipur

Snigdhendu Bhattacharya

The Northeast Indian state of Manipur, which has been in the grip of a civil war-like situation since May 2023, when violent clashes broke out between the Meitei and Kuki ethnic groups, stood witness to a new low of lawlessness on January 24, when the chief of an armed militia, the Arambai Tenggol, administered an "oath" to 37 members of the state legislative assembly and two members of the Indian parliament.

The MPs were R.K. Ranjan Singh, junior minister for external affairs in the Narendra Modi government, who hails from Manipur, and Leishemba Sanajaoba, a member of the Rajya Sabha, the upper house of the Indian Parliament. Others who participated in the event included ministers in the Manipur state government as well as former Chief Minister Okram Ibobi Singh.

"I pledge to personally do my part for protecting our community and Sanamahi (religion). I will not betray or let my community and religion down and become a traitor," goes part of the oath that can be heard in videos circulating online.

The administering of the oath to the legislators happened just a day after a special team from India's Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) met Arambai Tenggol chief Korounganba Khuman in the state capital Imphal to discuss their demands.

The Arambai Tenggol had called for the meeting with the legislators on January 20, warning that anyone staying away would be considered an enemy of the people. When media reports indicated that some legislators were considering resigning rather than participating in the oath-taking, Khuman issued a statement, saying that anyone who wished to resign could do so only after attending the January 24 event.

A government official claimed that the MHA team had tried to persuade Khuman to cancel or postpone Tuesday's event but he did not budge. The Diplomat could not independently verify this claim.

During the event on January 24, the lawmakers were made to sign a six-point pledge. This will be sent to the Union government as a resolution for immediate action.

"If the centre does not listen to our concerns, we will take the movement to protect Manipur to the people," reads a part of the pledge. Khuman has given the lawmakers 15 days to get some results.

The lawmakers are from different political parties but they all belong to the Hindu Meitei

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ethnic group, who form the majority in the state.

However, the Arambai Tenggol considers Meiteis to be followers of the Sanamahi religion and claims that they are indigenous people.

The Meiteis live in the valley, while the Naga and Kuki-Chin tribes live mostly in the surrounding hills. It is with the predominantly Christian Kuki-Chin group that the Meiteis have engaged in a bloody turf war over the past nine months in this Myanmar-bordering state.

The Kuki share ties with ethnic kin living in Myanmar. It is alleged that Kuki armed groups are collaborating with groups in Myanmar. Infiltration from Myanmar has been one of the triggers of the current conflict.

Only recently, the Union government imposed Article 355 of the Indian Constitution on Manipur. This allows the Union government, when faced with external aggression and internal disturbance, to assume control of a state's law and order enforcement without dismissing the state government.

But an armed group administering oath to every single lawmaker from the majority community has possibly surpassed everything that has happened over the past nine months.

Videos showing the lawmakers standing in a single line repeating every word of the oath went viral on social media and shocked people. Many felt it reflected the total collapse, surrender and subordination of the administration.

After the oath-taking ceremony, Khuman addressed a large public gathering a little distance from the historic Kangla Fort. He said that he wanted to show the people through the event "that the people are above ministers and MLAs."

Chief Minister N. Biren Singh was not present at the oath-taking event, but he too signed the resolution, Khuman informed the public. The Arambai Tenggol has made the signatures public.

On January 25, Khuman also clarified in a Facebook post why the chief minister did not turn up at the event. "He didn't come because we didn't invite him. The chief minister's presence would have allowed the opposition to allege that the [Arambai Tenggol] had captured the government through a coup," he said, adding that "since there are some protocols, his absence is not an issue."

Khuman said that he faced many personal threats for trying to organize the event but he did it without fear for the sake of their land and society.

Khuman has displayed extreme insolence as well. When the junior foreign minister shared on Facebook a photo of himself sweeping a temple premises in northern India's Uttarakhand ahead of the Ram Temple inauguration in Ayodhya, Khuman shared the post adding the comment, "Come early on 24th and sweep at Kangla, please!"

On Monday night, the administration had initially deployed a large number of security personnel in the Kangla Fort area with the intention of preventing the entry of Arambai Tenggol members there. However, on Tuesday morning, the security cover was withdrawn and carloads of armed Arambai Tenggol members arrived at the venue.

Khuman, who moves around with tight security provided by his heavily armed Arambai Tenggol members, entered Kangla Fort in a vehicle with a police sticker on it, a journalist who was present outside the fort told The Diplomat.

During the event, three lawmakers who reportedly refused to take the oath were beaten up. Though none of them — or any of the lawmakers present — made any public comment, the Congress, India's main opposition party, raised the matter.

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In a post on the social media platform X (formerly Twitter), Jairam Ramesh, Congress parliamentarian and general secretary in charge of communications, said the party “strongly condemns the brutal physical assault” on the party’s Manipur state unit chief K. Meghachandra, “in a meeting of all-party MLAs/MPs/ Ministers, under full security protection of state and central forces, at Kangla in Imphal yesterday.”

Ramesh criticized Prime Minister Modi for continuing with “his eloquent silence on the enormous tragedy that has overtaken Manipur.”

The pledge that the lawmakers were made to sign includes the demand for abrogation of the Suspension of Operations (SoO) agreement with Kuki militants, a

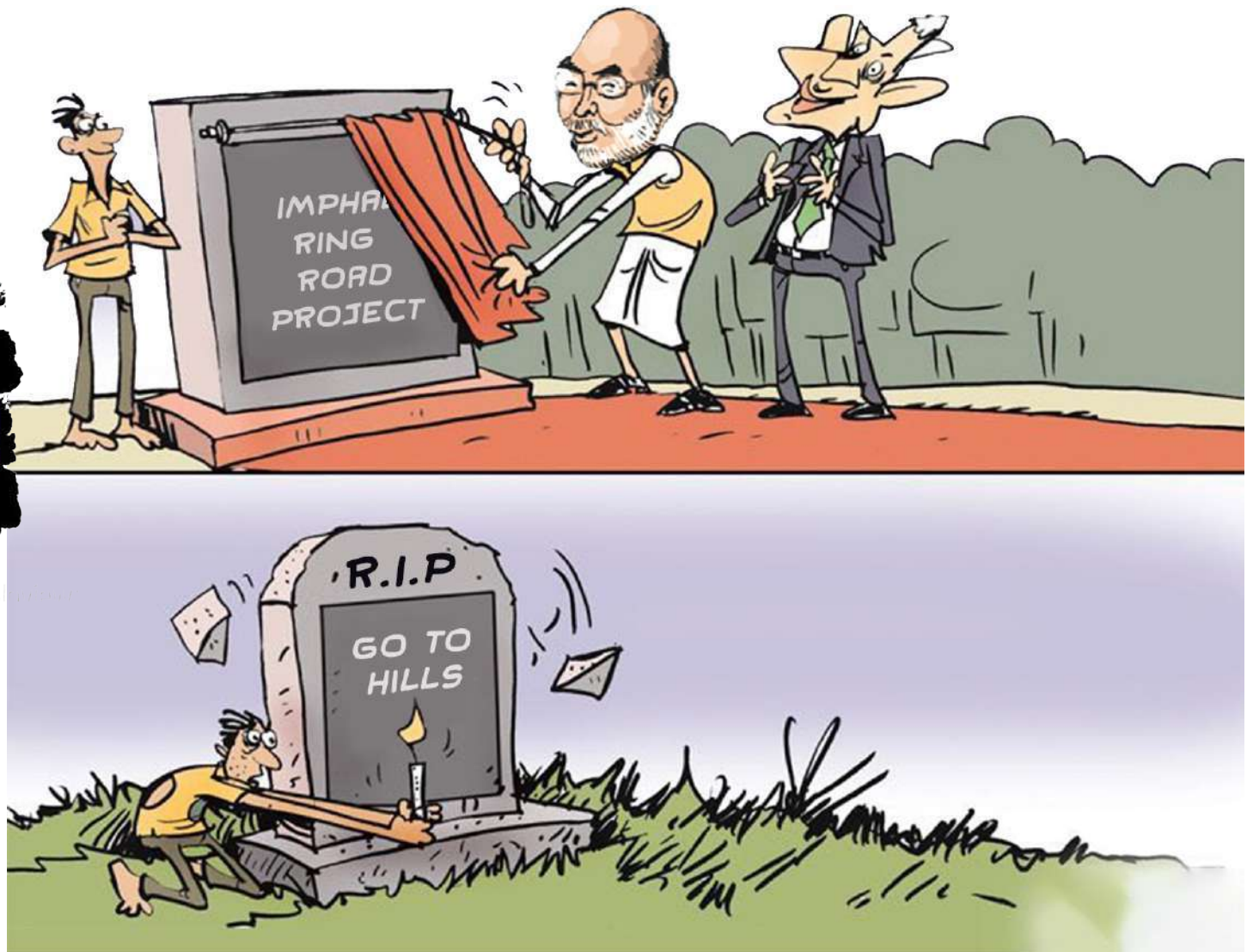
citizenship screening exercise in Manipur asking for pre-1951 documents to prove citizenship, fencing of the India-Myanmar border, and removal of Kukis from the Scheduled Tribe list.

Another demand is the deportation of Myanmar’s Kuki-Chin refugees, who are currently in Manipur’s neighboring Mizoram state. The Kuki-Chin tribe from the majority in Mizoram and Myanmar’s Kuki-Chin refugees have received a rather sensitive welcome there.

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R.I.P.
GO TO HILLS





The Mother of a Brave Warrior

She had a lone child, a son,
Whose father died at a tender age.
They lived alone, in the woods by the hills,
The only thing they had was each other.

There came a war in their land,
Between the Hills and the Valley.
Soon, he left his home to defend his fatherland.
She missed her boy, day and night.

Months later, a lad knocked her door.
She opened, and let him in.
He sat on the couch but uttered no words,
There was a long, long silence.

In tears, he finally described -
How bravely her son fought in the front,
How well he commanded them in battlefields,
How much more he loved his mother,
And how he fell to the ground in the end.

Neither she shed tears nor moved,
For the lad cried bitterly on her shoulder.
Now, she well understands how worthy it is,
To be a mother of a brave warrior.

Then, she bent over and whispered in his ears-
"Had I owned another son,
I would still allow him to protect his people bravely,
And defend his ancestral land with honor and highest sacrifice."

- Hillsman Tearsworth Lhungdim