

Thingkho *Le* Malcha

A Weekly Newsletter by KSO Media & Documentation Cell

**Manipur's Missing Arsenal:
SINGLE-BARREL RIFLES
RETURNED**

**AK-47s
KEPT**

**IN MANIPUR, 'PEACE' MUST NOT BE SOUGHT
AT THE COST OF JUSTICE**



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KUKI VICTIMS' UPDATE



224
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 COMMUNITY IN DELHI HOLDS SIT-IN PROTEST, DEMANDING SEPARATE ADMINISTRATION



Kangpokpi, March 02: The Kuki Students' Organisation and the Kuki-Zo Women's Forum Delhi and NCR staged a demonstration here on Saturday, and raised the demand for a separate Union Territory with a legislature for the Kuki areas of Manipur.

Scores of members of the Kuki-Zo tribe gathered at the Jantar Mantar and raised slogans, saying they cannot go back to Manipur unless the crisis in the northeastern state has been resolved.

The protesters carried placards with slogans that called Biren Singh's resignation from the chief minister's post a "smokescreen" and highlighted their demand for a separate Union Territory. The protesters blamed the former chief minister for the situation prevailing in Manipur. In a statement issued at the demonstration site, the protesters said the Kuki-Zo community has endured historical injustices.

"The Kuki-Zo community has endured historical injustices and would like to reiterate the urgent need for a political solution for the community in Manipur," the statement, copies of which would also be sent to the offices of the prime minister and home minister

as a charter of demand, said.

It said the community, an integral part of the Indian Union since its inception, has historically faced marginalisation, injustices and systemic exclusion from mainstream governance structures in Manipur, despite its significant contributions to the country.

"The present administrative machinery in Manipur has utterly failed to protect our lives and address our grievances, aspirations and rights," it said.

The demands of the Kuki-Zos include the creation of a separate administration -- a Union Territory with a legislature -- for them.

"A separate administration is the only viable path to the emancipation of the Kuki-Zo people," the statement said.

The protesters also demanded that a committee be formed at the earliest to

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prepare a roadmap for a separate administration for the Kuki-Zo community and the protection of rights and interests of its members, including land rights, cultural heritage and linguistic identity. “This will demonstrate the commitment of the Government of India to resolving Manipur’s complex problems and fostering a lasting atmosphere of mutual trust,” they said.

The statement added that a separate administration will enable the Kuki-Zo community to preserve its unique cultural heritage and linguistic identity, without external suppression.

The protesters also demanded that the village volunteers from the community should not be arrested, adding that they will not give up arms unless the Centre assures them of protection against attacks.

“Unless the Government of India ensures absolute and unwavering protection against such attacks, we will not relinquish our arms,” the statement said. “We resolutely demand a separate administration in the form of a Union Territory with legislature, as enshrined in Article 239A and Article 3 of the Constitution, to secure our inherent right to self-governance and shape our own destiny within the Union of India,” it added.

The groups also questioned whether the preservation of Manipur’s territorial boundaries will take precedence

over measures to protect and ensure the safety of its citizens, and asked if the Indian Parliament is incapable of putting an end to the Kuki-Zo community’s perpetual plight.

“Why is there a lack of constitutional safeguards for the Kuki-Zo people, allowing their rights to remain unprotected?” they asked

“The Kuki-Zo people have every right under the Constitution to live with dignity and enjoy the same rights and freedoms as every other community within this great nation, Bharat,” the statement said.

The protesters requested Prime Minister Narendra Modi to consider their demands and initiate concrete steps to fulfil those.

Ethnic violence has been raging on in Manipur for the last 21 months, accounting for at least 250 lives so far.

BJP’s Biren Singh resigned from the chief minister’s post on February 9 and President’s Rule was imposed in the state on February 13. Singh’s resignation was a long-standing demand of the Kuki-Zo community, which has blamed him for the situation in the northeastern state.



Failing to hold someone accountable is ultimately an act of selfishness.

— *Patrick Lencioni*

KUKI-ZO LEADERS' CONSULTATION ON POLITICAL ROADMAP ENVISIONS SEPARATION OF ADMINISTRATION IN MANIPUR

Lamka, Feb. 25: The Kuki-Zo leaders, gathered in consultation today (February 25, 2025) at VTI Auditorium, Rengkai, Churachandpur district, have declared their commitment to a comprehensive political roadmap for lasting peace and justice for the Kuki-Zo in Manipur.

Organised under the aegis of Kuki-Zo Council (KZC), the apex political platform of Kuki-Zo people, the leaders' consultation on political roadmap envisions a separate administration that ensures the safety, well-being, and self-determination under the Indian Constitution for the Kuki-Zo People.

The Kuki-Zo Council urged the Government of India to lay out a comprehensive time-bound political roadmap for peace and justice, taking into account the aspirations and concerns of the Kuki-Zo people by creating a separate administration in the form of Union Territory with legislature under article 239A of the Indian Constitution based on article 3 within their land.

During the consultative meeting, the Kuki-Zo Leaders' pledged to work together unitedly in their pursuit of their demand in a peaceful and just solution for the Kuki-Zo people. "We commit to engaging in constructive dialogue with the Government of India and other stakeholders to achieve our vision and demand," said the statement of Declaration.

As the Kuki-Zo people have been separated with the Meitei community geographically, physically and historically, the Kuki-Zo leaders appealed to the Government of India to recognize the urgency of their demand for separate administration and to take immediate action to address the people's concerns.

They also appealed to all stakeholders to join them in their pursuit of peace, justice, and self-determination under the Indian Constitution for the Kuki-Zo people.

In today's consultation, hundreds of leaders from



recognized tribes and district frontal organizations participated.

Rev. HP Runremthang, Evangelist At Large ICI, encouraged the leaders to stand united not only as a kindred but also united as ONE IN CHRIST. Ms. Rosy Roparmawi presents a melodious song.

Henlianthang, Chairman KZC & President Vaiphei People's Council, delivered a welcome and keynote address. Rev. Dr. VL Nghakthang, General Secretary (Admin) KZC & Hmar Inpui Assembly Deputy Speaker, highlighted major activities of the Council. He also reminded the delegates present in the meeting that KZC was not a nomenclature, but formed to strive for common political challenges facing the Kuki-Zo in Manipur.

Each tribe's presidents and representatives including philanthropic and women leaders shared their opinions towards achieving the political goal, which was followed by a floor discussion.

The leaders also identified various plans of action of the Council towards its vision, which were agreed to all by the delegates and signed accordingly by the Council leaders and Tribes Presidents.

Rev. JF Lalropuia, Sr. Executive Secretary of the Manipur Synod, blessed the declaration and the action plans.

KUKI HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANISATION CONDEMNS MANIPUR GOVERNOR FOR MEETING WITH PERSONS BOOKED UNDER UAPA

Lamka, Feb. 26: The Kuki Organisation for Human Rights Trust (KOHUR) has strongly condemned Manipur Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla for holding a meeting with Korounganba Khuman and Robin Mangang, the self-style leaders of Arambai Tenggol, an armed extremist group responsible for mass violence, ethnic persecution, and destabilization in Manipur.

A member of UN Special Consultative status Since 2016, KOHUR questioned genuine concerns of Raj Bhavan for meeting with alleged criminals being investigated by the National Investigation Agency.

“How can a constitutional authority justify engaging with a group that has openly terrorized the Kuki-Zo community, looted state armories, burned churches, and forced elected Meitei legislators into submission at Kangla Fort?,” it asked.

In a press statement issued on February 25, Kuki Organisation for Human Rights Trust alleged that members of the Arambai Tenggol have repeatedly defied India’s rule of law; yet instead of condemnation, its leaders were being politically accommodated. “Is the Governor now endorsing their secessionist and violent agenda?”

With hope that the imposition of President’s Rule in Manipur would lead to the arrest of a criminal armed militia like Arambai Tenggol, which was all along protected by the former Chief Minister, KOHUR, however, expressed its utter dismay for the Governor’s action in engaging with Arambai Tenggol leaders, instead of being prosecuted.

It asked: “How can an organization against which the NIA has filed a case under various sections of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) be



legitimized in such a manner? This is not just appeasement it is a betrayal of the very principles of justice and governance.”

“The Kuki-Zo people are outraged by this blatant accommodation of a radical militia that has waged a campaign of terror against minorities in Manipur. What message does this send to the victims of Arambai Tenggol’s atrocities?”

“While the state machinery continues to vilify Kuki-Zo leaders, an organization with a documented history of ethnic violence is being given legitimacy at Raj Bhavan,” it added.

KOHUR has demanded an immediate explanation from Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla and called upon the Government of India to clarify whether engaging with extremists now constitutes official policy.

It cautioned that the Kuki-Zo community would not remain silent while those responsible for their persecution were treated as political stakeholders.

ITLF, COTU CONDEMN GOVERNOR'S MEETING WITH ARAMBAI TENGGOL, DEMAND SEPARATE UNION TERRITORY FOR KUKI-ZO TO END VIOLENCE

Lamka, Feb. 28: In a recent joint statement, the Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF) and the Committee on Tribal Unity (CoTU) have strongly condemned the actions of the Arambai Tenggol militia, calling their submission of 300 looted arms as nothing more than a symbolic gesture. The submission, which accounts for only 5% of the 6000 weapons looted from the Imphal Valley, is viewed as a calculated attempt to improve the militia's public image, especially following their recent meeting with the Governor of Manipur.

The statement emphasized that this move appears to be a strategic effort to garner sympathy and gain legitimacy, particularly in light of the ongoing ethnic violence. "The timing of this gesture, following their meeting with the Governor, raises questions about the underlying motivations behind their actions," the statement reads.

Arambai Tenggol has been accused of perpetrating horrific ethnic violence against the Kuki-Zo community, including the killing of more than 230 individuals, the forced displacement of over 40,000 people, the destruction of more than 7000 homes, and the burning of 360 places of worship. Additionally, reports of sexual violence against Kuki-Zo women have surfaced, adding to the long list of atrocities committed by the militia.

The ITLF and CoTU condemned the Governor's meeting with Arambai Tenggol, calling it a direct affront to the suffering Kuki-Zo community. "The Governor's willingness to engage with a militia responsible for such violence sends a deeply troubling message that the state is willing to negotiate with perpetrators of atrocities while ignoring the voices of the victims," the statement declared. This meeting, according to the organizations, represents a clear betrayal of justice and a failure to protect the lives and safety of the Kuki-Zo people.

The organizations further criticized the administration's



approach of imposing peace through presidential rule, labeling it as short-sighted and counter-productive. They argued that this approach overlooks the deep-rooted issues that are fueling the conflict, particularly the estrangement of the Kuki-Zo community by the Meitei, which has led to a breakdown in trust and social cohesion.

"The Kuki-Zo and Meitei cannot coexist under a single administration," the statement asserted, advocating for the only viable solution to the crisis—complete separation. The organizations are calling on the Government of India to grant the Kuki-Zo a separate administration under Article 239A of the Indian Constitution, in the form of a Union Territory (UT). They argue that this is the only path to ensure lasting peace, justice, and stability in the region.

The ITLF and CoTU made it clear that they would not remain silent in the face of what they perceive as injustice, and they vowed to continue demanding accountability and an end to the perceived appeasement of criminal forces. The call for a separate administration is framed as a necessary step to guarantee the security and well-being of the Kuki-Zo people, and to bring an end to the ongoing violence.

KUKI-ZO WOMEN'S FORUM CONDEMNS GOVERNOR OF MANIPUR FOR MEETING WITH ARAMBAI TENGGOL

New Delhi, Feb. 26: The Kuki-Zo Women's Forum Delhi & NCR (KZWF) has expressed its deep shock and outrage over the recent meeting between the Governor of Manipur, Ajay Kumar Bhalla, and Arambai Tenggol—a fascist militia responsible for the rape, torture, and murder of Kuki-Zo tribal women.

“This meeting is an insult to every Kuki-Zo woman who has suffered horrific violence at their hands. It is a betrayal of justice and a clear indication that the state is willing to negotiate with perpetrators of sexual violence while ignoring the cries of the victims,” said a statement issued on February 25 by KZWF (Delhi & NCR)

“How can the highest office in Manipur sit across the table from men who are wanted by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) for terrorist activities? These are not representatives of any legitimate cause; they are criminals and extremists who have orchestrated ethnic cleansing, paraded our women naked, and inflicted unimaginable cruelty on innocent Kuki-Zo civilians.”

KZWF stated that the Governor's legitimization of a meeting with Arambai Tenggol was nothing short of disgraceful, confirming what Kuki-Zo women have long feared—that the government does not see their pain, does not value their lives, and does not care for justice.

“The rape and brutal murder of Florence and Olivia, the public humiliation and sexual assault of Kuki-Zo women at B. Phainom, the torture and mutilation of countless unnamed victims whose bodies were desecrated—these are the crimes of Arambai Tenggol, the very people who now sit in the halls of power. The same hands that committed these atrocities now shake hands with the Governor, sending a clear message that justice will never come from this administration,” the statement said.

For months, Kuki-Zo women have waited for accountability, for even a single perpetrator to be punished for the horrors committed against their

people. Instead, KZWF said, the Kuki-Zo people are forced to watch as those responsible for their suffering are welcomed and entertained.

“What hope is left for justice when the state itself is willing to stand beside the monsters who have inflicted so much pain upon us?”

The Forum alleged that this is not just a failure of leadership; it is a moral disgrace. “It is a direct endorsement of violence against Kuki-Zo tribal women. It is a mockery of the suffering we have endured. If this is the kind of governance Manipur has to offer, then we refuse to recognize its legitimacy. A government that embraces rapists and murderers while ignoring their victims is unfit to govern.”

Asserting that the women of the Kuki-Zo community would not be silenced, the Forum stated that it would not accept this whitewashing of crimes. The Kuki-Zo women wanted to know whether the Governor of Manipur stands with the victims or with the perpetrators of heinous crimes.

Reports, including those from Amnesty International and independent journalists, have alleged that Arambai Tenggol members have been involved in the mutilation, killing, and burning of Kuki-Zo victims, including women. The murder of Lucy Marem, a 55-year-old Maring woman, was attributed to Arambai Tenggol by the United Naga Council. While not a Kuki woman, this case illustrates the broader pattern of violence against tribal women by the group.

Kuki-Zo women and their families have been forced to flee their villages as Arambai Tenggol-led mobs burned down their homes, churches, and localities in Imphal. During those attacks, women

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have been subjected to physical torture, beatings, and psychological trauma. Amnesty International documented instances where Kuki women faced barriers in registering complaints with the Manipur Police, often being intimidated or assaulted by Meitei members of the police force.

On May 1, 2024, the CBI filed a chargesheet in the case of the gang rape and parading of two Kuki-Zo women, as reported by The Hindu. The chargesheet details that the victims were attacked by a Meitei mob, including members suspected to belong to Arambai Tenggol, Meitei Leepun, and Kangleipak Kanba Lup, while fleeing their village. The CBI stated that the Manipur Police drove the women to the mob, leading to the sexual assault. The chargesheet named six accused, initially arrested by the Manipur Police, but did not include fresh arrests, indicating limited progress in prosecuting all perpetrators.

Notably, the Manipur government had not granted sanction to prosecute under Section 153A (promoting enmity among groups) at the time of filing, raising concerns about political interference.

On February 9, 2024, the NIA registered two FIRs (RC-03/2024/NIA/IMP and RC-04/2024/NIA/IMP) against Arambai Tenggol, as reported by Imphal Free Press and Hindustan Times. These cases involve attacks on police, looting of arms, and armed rioting in Manipur, particularly on November 1, 2023:

RC-03/2024: Investigates an attack led by Korounganba Khuman and Arambai Tenggol members, armed with sophisticated weapons and wearing Manipur Police uniforms, at Palace Compound in Imphal East. The group was accused of obstructing public servants, snatching, robbery, and terrorist acts under various sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), Arms Act, and Official Secrets Act.

RC-04/2024: Concerns an assault on the 1st Manipur Rifles Battalion in Imphal, where Arambai Tenggol members, led by Khuman, looted firearms and attacked police personnel, again under similar legal provisions. These NIA cases underscore Arambai Tenggol's transformation from a socio-cultural outfit (formed

in 2020) into a radical Meitei militia accused of orchestrating violence against Kuki-Zo tribals and state security forces, with Korounganba Khuman as a central figure.

The Kuki-Zo Women's Forum alleged that they have suffered immense trauma under Arambai Tenggol's attacks, as documented by Amnesty International and other sources. "Why has the Governor prioritized Arambai Tenggol's demands—such as border fencing, NRC with 1951 as the base year, and ST status for Meiteis—over addressing the institutional injustice and violence faced by the Kuki-Zo community?" it questioned.

"With President's Rule imposed in Manipur in 2024 to restore order and ensure justice, the Kuki community had hoped for swift action against perpetrators like Arambai Tenggol, including prosecutions and disarmament. Instead, Governor Bhalla's acceptance of their memorandum, which demands policies that could further marginalize the Kuki-Zo people, appears to contradict these expectations."

KZWF asked: "Why has the Governor prioritized negotiations with alleged criminals over prosecuting them, especially when evidence from the CBI, NIA, and human rights reports is readily available?"

The Forum further alleged that it was unfortunate to say that the current Governor of Manipur is neither apolitical nor upholding the constitutional sanctity of the office. The nonchalant attitude of Arambai Tenggol militants, who have unrestricted access to the highest office in the state, is a clear indication of the Governor's bias—one that favors the majority while suppressing the oppressed Kuki-Zo tribal minority.

In strong words, KZWF stated, "Enough is enough. We demand justice. We demand accountability. We demand an end to this shameful appeasement of criminals."



TENGNOUNPAL KUKI CSOS OPPOSE PROPOSED MEITEI RESETTLEMENT POLICY IN HILL AREAS

Tengnoupal, Feb. 27: In a formal letter addressed to the Hon'ble Governor of Manipur, the leadership of various Kuki organizations has expressed serious concerns regarding the ongoing situation in Tengnoupal District. The letter, signed by the Presidents of the Kuki Chiefs' Association-Tengnoupal (KCA-TPL), Kuki Inpi Tengnoupal-Tengnoupal (KIT-TPL), and Kuki Students' Organization-Tengnoupal (KSO-TPL), outlines key grievances and urgent demands to ensure peace and security for the Kuki people in the region.

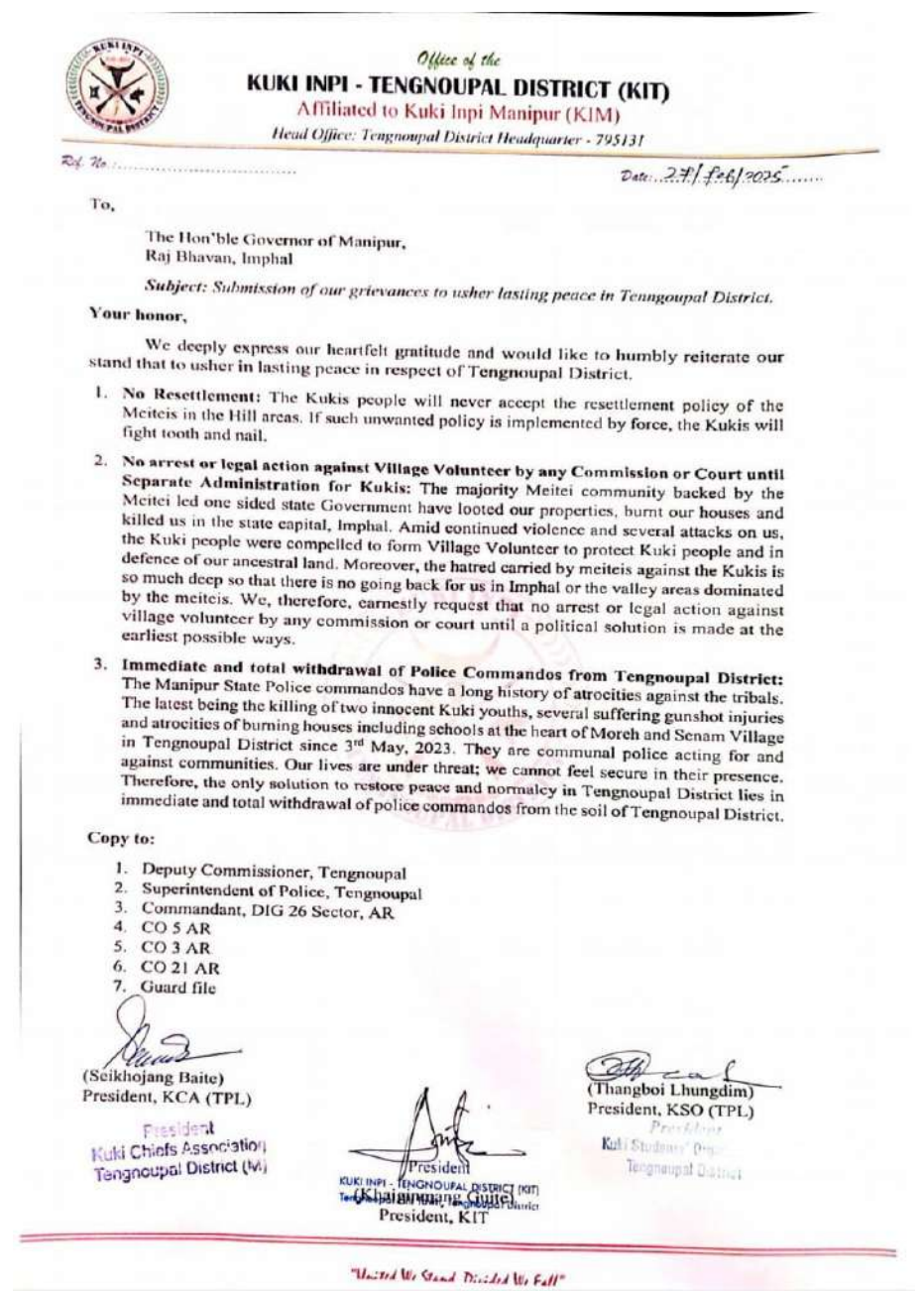
The letter begins with a deep expression of gratitude to the Governor and highlights the need for a lasting peace agreement that respects the rights and security of the Kuki community in Tengnoupal District.

The three primary points raised in the letter include:

1. Opposition to Resettlement Policy: The Kuki leaders categorically rejected the proposed resettlement policy of the Meitei community in the Hill areas, asserting that the Kuki people would never accept such a policy. The letter warns that any forced implementation of this policy would be met with fierce opposition.

2. Protection of Village Volunteers: In light of the ongoing violence and attacks by the Meitei community, the Kuki leaders expressed the necessity of protecting the Kuki people by forming Village Volunteer groups. The leaders requested that no legal action be taken against these volunteers by any commission or court until a political solution is reached for the Kuki community. They cited the history of violence, looting, and killings of Kuki people by the Meitei-led state government and emphasized the deep mistrust that exists between the communities.

3. Withdrawal of Police Commandos from Tengnoupal District: The Kuki leaders demanded the immediate and total withdrawal of Police Commandos from the Tengnoupal District, citing a history of police atrocities against the tribals. They specifically pointed to the recent killing of two Kuki youths and the



destruction of properties, including houses and schools, by the police forces in the region since May 3, 2023. The letter argues that the presence of the Police Commandos is exacerbating the violence and insecurity in the district, making it impossible for the Kuki people to feel safe. The letter concludes with a call for immediate action to address these grievances in order to restore peace and stability to Tengnoupal District. The Kuki leaders expressed hope that the Governor would intervene to facilitate a peaceful resolution to the ongoing crisis.

AMIT SHAH CHAIR HIGH-LEVEL MEETING ON MANIPUR SECURITY SITUATION, ENSURES FREE MOVEMENT FROM MARCH 8



New Delhi, Mar 01: Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation, Amit Shah, chaired a high-level review meeting on the security situation of Manipur in New Delhi today. The meeting was attended by the Governor of Manipur, Union Home Secretary, Director, Intelligence Bureau, Deputy Chief of Army Staff, Army Commander of the Eastern Command, Directors General of Border Security Force (BSF), Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and Assam Rifles, Security Advisor, Manipur and senior officers of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), Army and Manipur administration.

During the meeting, Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation Amit Shah said that the Government of India, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, remains fully committed to restoring lasting peace in Manipur and is providing all necessary assistance in this regard.

1. Free movement to be ensured for people on all roads in Manipur from March 8, 2025; strict action against anyone attempting to create obstructions

2. Strict action should continue to be taken in all cases of extortion

3. Fencing work on both sides of the designated entry points along Manipur's international border should be completed at the earliest

4. To make Manipur drug-free, the entire network involved in drug trade should be dismantled.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah directed that free movement to be ensured for people on all roads in Manipur from March 8, 2025. He also directed that strict action should be taken against anyone attempting to create obstructions.

The Union Home Minister also directed that the fencing work on both sides of the designated entry points along Manipur's international border should be completed at the earliest. He said that to make Manipur drug-free, the entire network involved in the drug trade should be dismantled. (PIB)

NH-2 STRUCTURE DEMOLITION SPARKS CONTROVERSY: SECURITY CALLS THEM 'ILLEGAL BUNKERS,' COTU ALLEGES EVICTION FOR HIGHWAY EXPANSION



Kangpokpi, Feb. 20: Tensions ran high along National Highway-2 in Sadar Hills, Kangpokpi district, as security forces launched a pre-dawn operation to demolish several structures near Gamgiphai, the border area between Kangpokpi and Imphal West. The operation, conducted by the Indian Army, Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF), and Manipur Police, has sparked intense controversy, with security officials citing the destruction as illegal extortion checkpoints while the Committee on Tribal Unity (CoTU) alleging as a targeted eviction drive under the pretext of highway expansion.

The operation, which began at 4 AM, saw the use of bulldozers to dismantle what security forces termed “illegal bunkers and extortion checkpoints.”

It was reported that as the security personnel advanced, a large gathering of Kuki-Zo community members staged a protest, resisting the demolition. The protest led to six arrests as security forces swiftly moved to complete the operation.

In sharp contrast to the official justification, CoTU Sadar Hills has condemned the demolitions, stating that the security forces, under the guise of highway expansion, have created fear and unrest among the Kuki-Zo populace. CoTU asserts that the incident instilled “unnecessary fear among our womenfolk, who have been manning the area since the conflict began.”

The Committee has also raised concerns over the security measures being implemented under President’s Rule, accusing the administration of attempting to “forcefully normalize” a volatile situation without addressing core ethnic tensions.

CoTU has reiterated its long-standing accusation that the Kuki-Zo community has been systematically targeted by valley-based insurgent groups and radical militias. The statement alleges that Meitei

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armed groups have repeatedly violated buffer zones, provoking unrest in tribal-dominated regions like Kangpokpi, Churachandpur, Tengenoupal, and Jiribam.

Drawing parallels with the Jiribam incident, where heavy security deployment led to violence, CoTU warned against repeating such actions in Kangpokpi. The Committee labeled the recent demolitions as part of a broader campaign of repression and human rights violations against the Kuki-Zo people, vowing to resist any further attempts to marginalize the community.

In a direct appeal to the Governor, CoTU has urged the administration to “refrain from using the same yardstick” in Sadar Hills, rejecting allegations that Kuki-Zo groups are blocking NH-2 and NH-37. The Committee accused the authorities of “projecting the community

in a bad light” and demanded an end to what it calls “uncalled-for security measures driven by ethnic bias.”

While the authorities frame the demolitions as part of a law enforcement operation against illegal extortion, CoTU and the Kuki-Zo community see it as another attempt to displace them under the guise of infrastructure development.

With the conflict in Manipur showing no signs of resolution, today’s events mark yet another flashpoint in the fragile peace of the region, raising concerns over the path forward under President’s Rule.

THE BUZZ SOCIAL MEDIA



H S Benjamin Mate @BenjaminMate1

Looking at the list of the arms surrendered by Meitei radical terrorist group (#ArambaiTenggol) today. It is undoubtedly nothing more than returning of few defective & antique arms looted from the state armories. @RajBhavManipur @manipur_police @PMOIndia @AmitShah @power_corridors



Why surrender now? Are automatics still hidden?

Last edited 9:01 PM · Feb 27, 2025 · 2,759 Views



Nehemiah Len Haokip @LenHaokip9



When the Arms were looted from state armories there was no SBBL & DBBL but magically 88 SBBL & 20 DBBL surfaces out in the open. The question is where have those sophisticated arms gone...??? @narendramodi @PIBHomeAffairs @AmitShah @AmitShahOffice @Spearcorps @BhardwajAnanya



Which sophisticated arms were looted? Are sophisticated arms still in use?

7:26 PM · Feb 27, 2025 · 2,544 Views



FEATURED ARTICLE

In Manipur, 'Peace' Must Not Be Sought at the Cost of Justice

Vishal Arora

Manipur's Governor appears to be calling for peace without addressing justice, accountability or institutional reforms, despite the previous state government being accused of supporting one side and enabling the systemic targeting of one community. The Governor's current stance suggests an expectation for the people of Manipur to simply "move on," as if the past can be set aside without justice or accountability.

Days after President's Rule was imposed in Manipur, the Governor called for groups from both the majority Meitei and minority Kuki-Zo tribal communities to surrender weapons within seven days. The outcome of this call is something we will examine later in this piece.

While this is not a bad move in itself, no assurance has been given to the victims—tens of thousands of people directly affected by the violence, which included brutal murders, rape, vandalism or displacement. Beyond them, the over 3.7 million people of Manipur, including the Nagas, have also suffered indirectly due to economic hardships, restrictions on movement, prolonged disruption in education, and difficulty in accessing healthcare.

Let's start with an analogy to understand what a "move on" strategy truly means.

Imagine a district where a gang, backed by the local police, goes on a rampage—burning homes, killing hundreds and forcing thousands to flee. The people plead for help, but the authorities either look away or actively support the gang. Months later, after the gang has inflicted most of the destruction, the district magistrate finally steps in and says, "Let's not dwell on the past. Everyone should forget and move on for the sake of peace."

But who benefits from this? Certainly not the victims, whose homes remain in ashes and whose families are still missing. Certainly not the rule of law, which has been rendered meaningless. And certainly not the district's future, because now everyone knows that those who use violence with the right backing can act with impunity.

Non-Compoundable Crimes

Further, the repercussions go beyond that district, considering the crimes involved. In law, certain crimes are classified as "non-compoundable"—meaning serious offences where prosecution continues even if the victim wants to withdraw the

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charges—because those crimes threaten the fabric of society and cannot simply be “forgiven” by the victim.

A victim may choose to forgive for personal reasons, but letting go of non-compoundable crimes isn’t peace from the State’s point of view—it’s surrender to injustice.

This is why, in legal terms, non-compoundable offences—such as murder, arson, sexual violence and rioting with deadly weapons—are prosecuted by the State and not the victim and regardless of whether the victim wants to “settle” the matter. The rationale is that these crimes undermine public order, legal integrity and the State’s responsibility to uphold justice. If they go unpunished, it sends the message that lawlessness is tolerated.

Therefore, the violence in Manipur, involving numerous non-compoundable crimes such as mass killings, large-scale destruction of homes and rape, is not just a private dispute between two communities in the state—it is a crime against the national society. Even citizens in Delhi, Bengaluru, Pune or elsewhere are affected because it sets a dangerous precedent: that it is possible to kill, destroy and displace people without facing accountability.

The violence in Manipur has resulted in at least 258 deaths, according to conservative estimates, and has destroyed thousands of homes while displacing tens of thousands of people.

State’s Complicity

The State’s complicity or inaction makes it even more critical to ensure accountability because it erodes trust in institutions meant to protect all citizens. Sadly, calls for accountability in Manipur have come from private citizens, human rights groups, and activists—not from the central government, which imposed President’s Rule only after the party in power at both the Centre and the state evidently lost its majority in the state

legislature.

The “Manipur Tapes,” leaked recordings being examined by the Supreme Court thanks to private petitioners, in which former Chief Minister N. Biren Singh is purportedly heard boasting about his alleged role in the ethnic violence, suggest the possibility of State backing for one side in the conflict. Moreover, it was Human Rights Watch that first called for an investigation into police bias during the violence.

By not assuring prosecution of the perpetrators and instead advocating a “move on” approach, the government is apparently emboldening the forces that were blamed for the violence.

Emboldened

A delegation of the armed Meitei group Arambai Tenggol (AT) met the Governor on Feb. 27 to discuss the way forward for peace in Manipur. While the group surrendered 246 weapons, this amounts to only about 5 percent of the 6,000 looted arms from the Imphal Valley, as reported by The Indian Express.

NDTV quoted an AT spokesperson as saying after the meeting, “We have some terms and conditions regarding the arms. If they are fulfilled, we will all surrender the weapons, no problem... Let us stay with peace and calm, like before. Everything is possible... The Governor is hopeful peace will come soon, and asked for our cooperation. Once the process of surrendering weapons is complete, the highways are opened, and people move freely, peace and calm will come.”

During the violence, the Kuki-Zo community blamed AT for carrying out deadly attacks against them, and according to reports in various

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newspapers. In their numerous visits to Manipur since the violence began on May 3, 2023, members of the Newsreel Asia team have also heard reports from sources in the security establishment and local residents, including those in Meitei areas, about the role of AT.

In January 2024, the group summoned all the elected Meitei legislators of the state for a meeting to deliberate on the defence of Meiteis in the conflict. The meeting saw the lawmakers being coerced into endorsing the group's demands. The situation escalated when Congress MLA K. Meghachandra Singh was assaulted for suggesting the state government's responsibility for the troubles. Two other MLAs were also roughed up, with Meghachandra requiring brief hospitalisation.

Further, a case (RC-03-2024-NIA-IMP) has been registered with the National Investigation Agency (NIA), described as "Attack and firing on Manipur Police by a large number of Arambai Tenggol led by Korou Nganba Khuman."

Despite this, and with no mention of accountability by the authorities, the AT spokesperson gave the impression through his statements to the media that the group has demands and conditions for disarmament.

Applicability of Amnesty

Amnesty programs—legally based on the President's and Governors' authority to grant amnesty under Articles 72 and 161 of the Indian Constitution, respectively—are understandable as an alternative to pure force, which may not always be desirable. However, any amnesty plan must have clear, measurable objectives to justify the trade-off involved.

For example, amnesty programs for Maoists in states such as Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, and Maharashtra aim to weaken the movement by

encouraging surrenders, rehabilitation and reintegration. Through these programs, the government seeks to break the insurgency's ranks by persuading lower-level cadres to surrender, thereby isolating the leadership and weakening its operational capacity.

However, unlike the Maoist rebellion—where the State fights an ideologically driven group—ethnic violence in Manipur involves alleged State complicity, targeted attacks on Kuki-Zo communities, and deep-rooted historical grievances. Granting amnesty in such cases can have serious consequences.

Granting amnesty to perpetrators of ethnic violence—especially those who were supported, or appeared to be supported, by the State—sends the message that such violence is a legitimate political tool. This increases the likelihood of future conflicts, as groups learn that mass violence can lead to power or immunity. When aggressors are pardoned while victims are denied justice, it entrenches a lasting power imbalance and normalises impunity. In the absence of justice, the targeted community may see self-defence or retaliation as its only recourse.

Peace is not merely the absence of violence. True peace requires justice; without it, any temporary calm is fragile, and violence may return with even greater force—not just within that society but also in other communities beyond the state. At stake in Manipur is not just that state's interest, but that of the entire nation.

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FEATURED ARTICLE

Manipur's Missing Arsenal: Single-Barrel Rifles Returned, AK-47s Kept

Navin Upadhyay

The Shadow of Sophisticated Weapons: How Manipur's Deadly Arsenal Remains at Large

On May 3, 2023, ethnic violence erupted in Manipur, unleashing a wave of chaos that saw over 6,000 firearms and vast quantities of ammunition looted from police stations and armouries across the state. By February 27, 2025—the final day of Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla's seven-day ultimatum issued on February 20 for the voluntary surrender of these looted and illegally held weapons—only a fraction had been returned. While the deadline spurred significant action, including a dramatic surrender by the Meitei militia Arambai Tenggol and smaller returns by Kuki militants groups or "Civic Volunteers" from February 21 to 26, the majority of Manipur's sophisticated arsenal remains unaccounted for, casting a long shadow over the state's fragile peace.

The Deadline Day: Arambai Tenggol's Partial Gesture

On February 27, 2025, Imphal West's 1st Manipur Rifles complex became the stage for a striking scene: a convoy of pickup trucks rolled in, carrying members of Arambai Tenggol and a reported 246 weapons, alongside thousands of rounds of ammunition. This surrender, the largest single event of the week, was billed as a compliance with the Governor's appeal. Yet, beneath the spectacle, questions swirled about the

true nature of the cache.

The surrendered weapons included a visible number of single-barrel rifles—firearms often used for hunting or basic defense. Social media posts from Kuki-Zo advocates, like TingKhongthang on X, accused the group of handing over "license guns" or less lethal arms, a far cry from the automatic and military-grade weapons they were known to possess.

Social media was abuzz with this formalities of surrender. One user Jalhai Haokip (@hatjalhai) wrote on X: "Arms looted in Manipur-AK-series rifles, INSAS rifles, Ghatak rifles, SLRs, INSAS LMGs and other light machine guns, MP-5 rifles, 9mm pistols and .32 pistols, Hand grenades, tear gas shells, smoke guns, stun guns, and detonators, 51mm HE (High Explosive) bombs, Over 600,000 rounds of ammunition of various calibers were looted, including more than 19,000 rounds in a single incident in Bishnupur in August 2023. Yet, what did the Arambai Tenggol surrender? A pitiful collection of single-barrel guns and rusty old carbines, with just a sprinkle of AKs thrown in for appearances. Is this what Mr. Bhalla dares to call a "successful recovery"? It's beyond absurd-

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it's a downright joke.”

Incidentally, Arambai Tenggol had been linked to major looting incidents: the May 4, 2023, raid on the Pangei training centre yielded 175 INSAS rifles, 98 Self-Loading Rifles (SLRs), and AK-47s, while the August 3, 2023, attack on the 2nd IRB in Bishnupur netted AK rifles, Ghatak rifles, and INSAS Light Machine Guns (LMGs).

Given this history, it's probable that some sophisticated arms—perhaps a handful of AK-47s, SLRs, or INSAS rifles—were included in the 246, but no official breakdown confirms this. A senior police official, speaking anonymously, had earlier predicted the group would return “over 200 arms” with “thousands of pieces of ammunition,” hinting at a mix that likely included 5.56mm rounds for INSAS and 7.62mm for AK-47s.

The optics of the surrender suggested a strategic move. After a February 25 meeting with Governor Bhalla, where they sought assurances against civilian attacks and security gaps, Arambai Tenggol appeared to offer a token gesture—enough to appease authorities while retaining their most potent firepower. The emphasis on single-barrel rifles in public discourse, coupled with the lack of detailed inventories, fueled speculation that the deadliest weapons remained in their hands.

The Six Days Before: A Scattered Return

From February 21 to 26, roughly 300 weapons were surrendered across Manipur by various individuals and groups, including Meitei and Kuki-Zo communities, in districts like Churachandpur, Imphal West, Kakching, Kangpokpi, and Bishnupur. While these efforts marked a response to the Governor's call, the returns were dwarfed by the scale of the original theft.

February 22: In Churachandpur, Kuki-Zo tribes handed over an assortment including one M16 rifle, two AK-series rifles, three INSAS rifles, one 7.62mm SLR, and two M-79 40mm Under-Barrel Grenade Launchers (UBGLs), alongside 64 gelatine sticks and mortar rounds. In Kangpokpi, an AK-47 with two magazines and an INSAS

rifle surfaced among other arms. Meanwhile, Meitei surrenders in Imphal valley and Kakching included .303 rifles, SLRs, and bulletproof vests. February 23: Imphal East saw an AK-56 rifle and a 7.62mm MAS-series bolt-action sniper rifle surrendered to the police, alongside smaller caches elsewhere.

February 25: Across seven districts, 87 firearms emerged, including 12 carbine machine guns and two SLRs in Imphal West, an AK-47 and a Smith & Wesson revolver in Kangpokpi, and five double-barrel shotguns in Jiribam. Churachandpur added SLRs and INSAS LMGs to the tally.

February 26: By this date, total surrenders hovered just under 300, with AK-series rifles, INSAS rifles, and SLRs dominating, supplemented by mortars, 9mm carbines, and IEDs in smaller numbers.

Ammunition returns topped 3,500 rounds by February 26, covering calibres like 5.56mm (INSAS), 7.62mm (AK-47), and .303 (SLRs), with mortars and grenades sporadically reported. Security forces also seized additional arms—like pistols and IEDs in Tengnoupal—but these were not voluntary surrenders.

The Gap: What Remains at Large

By February 27, combining Arambai Tenggol's 246 weapons with the prior 300 or so, approximately 550–600 firearms had been returned—less than 10% of the 6,000 looted since May 2023. The missing arsenal is staggering:

AK-47s and AK-56s: Hundreds were looted, yet only dozens surfaced in surrenders. Arambai Tenggol's history suggests they retain many, possibly hidden in valley strongholds.

INSAS Rifles and LMGs: Of the 175 stolen from Pangei alone, far fewer returned. Their presence in both Meitei and Kuki-Zo hands indicates widespread retention.

SLRs and Ghatak Rifles: SLRs appeared regularly, but Ghatak rifles—looted in Bishnupur—were

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absent from surrender lists, hinting at deliberate withholding.

M16s and Sniper Rifles: Rare mentions (e.g., one M16 in Churachandpur, one sniper in Imphal East) contrast with their known circulation among militants.

Explosives: Mortars, UBGLs, and IEDs trickled in, but the bulk of the “lakhs of pieces” of ammunition looted—plus advanced explosives—remain unrecovered.

Why They Stay Hidden

The partial surrenders reveal a calculated standoff. Arambai Tenggol’s focus on single-barrel rifles suggests a ploy to maintain combat readiness while feigning compliance. Kuki-Zo groups, under pressure in Churachandpur, returned more automatic weapons, yet likely held back reserves amid distrust of Meitei militias and security forces. The Governor’s promise of no punitive action expired on February 27, and Chief Secretary P.K. Singh’s warning of crackdowns loomed, yet the fear of disarmament in a volatile region kept

many weapons underground. Posts on X, like hatjalhai’s, called the process a “pathetic farce,” noting the absence of MP-5 rifles, tear gas shells, and smoke guns—items looted but unseen in returns.

The Lingering Threat

As of February 27, 2025, Manipur’s sophisticated weapons—AK-47s, INSAS rifles, SLRs, M16s, and explosives—remain at large in numbers exceeding 5,000. Hidden in villages, forests, and urban caches, they fuel an uneasy stalemate. Arambai Tenggol’s strategic surrender and the scattered returns of February 21–26 failed to dent the arsenal amassed since 2023. With ethnic tensions unresolved and security forces stretched thin, these arms promise continued instability, their lethal potential lurking just beyond the reach of the Governor’s deadline.

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POLITICAL SOLUTIONS, NOT GUNS



**COTU
KWOHR**



observance of

22

05

22nd REMEMBRANCE DAY

-cum-

**DISTRIBUTION OF 5th PHASE
JANGNA DOP**

jointly organised by **COTU & KWOHR-GHQ**

Venue : Martyr's Cemetery, Phaijang, Sadar Hills

Date : 3rd March 2025 (Monday)

Time : 11:00 AM

Host : Pu Kaiminlen, Spokesperson COTU

Co-host : Ng. Neijou, Secy. KWOHR-SH

Blessing & Dedication : Rev. Dr. Satkai Chongloi

Programme

Opening song : COTU Joint Artiste

Opening prayer : Pastor Thanggin Vaiphei

Welcome address : Pu Thanglen Kipgen, Chairman COTU

Remembrance Speech : Pu Lamminlun Singsit, Gen.Secy. COTU

Jangnadop thua houlimna : Pi Ngaineikim, President KWOHR-GHQ

Report & Jangnadop hopdohna : Ms. Kimneihoi Lhungdim, Gen,Secy, KWOHR-GHQ

Speech : 1. Pi Nemcha, Hon'ble MLA

2. Kuki Inpi Manipur (KIM)

3. KISH

4. Pi Merlin, Convenor KZWF Delhi & NCR

5. Pi Kimboi Mate, VP KWUHR-Tengnoupal

6. Pi Nengboi Hmar, President KWU-SH

Vote of Thanks : Pu Haakholen Kipgen, President SAHILCA

Benediction : Pu Sonlet, Pastor Phaijang B/C

NENGNEITHIR CHON
AGE - 23



UNITY IN CRISIS

In times of crisis, we find our greatest strength in each other. Let us stand together, united in our diversity, and face the challenges ahead with courage and resilience.

We are stronger as one, and together, we can overcome any obstacle. Let us put aside our differences and come together in solidarity, compassion, and support.

In unity, we find hope.
In unity, we find healing.
Let us choose to stand together, and emerge from this crisis stronger, more united, and more determined than ever.

We are in this together.

~ Obed Paogoulien Singson
Songpi, Kukiland