



SURVIVAL STORIES SERIES

A month of nightmare, or what you call

The events that unfolded in Manipur from 3rd of May and still continuing even now is a horrifying nightmare that one struggles to wake up from. It is beyond any stretch of imagination that a peaceful solidarity rally taken up in the hill districts of the state by the masses can be so vehemently refuted by valley meiteis (Arambai tenggol and Meitei Leepun) and the magnitude of destruction that ensued in areas inhabited by the Kuki-Chin-Zo communities with the burning of churches, properties, looting demands stringent answers from the state government. This is a state devoid of rule of law. Many lives have been lost in the tragedy and the bodies of some Kukis are still lying in RIMS morgue with no means of taking away due to the unrest prevailing in the state even now. The divide is established. Kukis in the valleys have left the valley and Meiteis residing in the hills have left the hills. The exodus is more or less completed.

it was assumed that such incidents will be contained by the authorities and situation will be stabilised sooner or later. But I was wrong. I recall kuki friends and families rushing to my residence on 4th May one after another for safety. Their houses were located at more vulnerable areas and some were living in meitei localities. After 1pm, burning of nearby churches and institutions by vociferous mob started. The flames reaching the clear sky were there for all to see. I had to pinch myself to believe it. The mobs were all over chanting communal slogans, cursing and finding their next Kuki target. I feared for safety of my family

What has transpired in Manipur in the last one month can be termed as a pre-meditated state sponsored ethnic cleansing of the minority tribal Kukis by the majority valley Meiteis supported by radical groups such as Arambai Tenggol (AT) and Meitei



After having heard that some unlawful incidents have broken out at some Kuki localities in Imphal in the evening of 3rd May

Leepun (ML) respectively. These two radical groups earlier perceived to be constituted for enhancing the rich and beautiful cultural

heritage of the meitei community have been systematically transformed as a platoon of thugs and goons to uproot the very existence of Kuki Chin Zo communities especially in the valley and neighbouring environments.

On 4th evening, we were evacuated from my residence to Relief camp IGAR South, Mantripukhri by a Major from Assam Rifles and his boys. 34 was the count of lives from my residence that survived the ordeal. Life inside the relief camps in the midst of hundreds and thousand others like us was not easy but we were the fortunate ones as compared to others who were stranded at their homes amidst the firing, burning and arson. It broke my heart to see children and elders sleeping on concrete floor with mosquitoes hovering all around. Despite the uneasy tension we were relieved that we were in a safe environment. We waited for the next day.

I have lived to witness insurgency, communal clashes between Naga, Kuki, Meitei and Meitei Muslims in the 90's, Covid 1.0 and 2.0 as well. During all the past man-made and natural calamities, government have risen above all to protect the people of the state irrespective of ethnicity, race, caste, region etc.. However, one of the distinguishing factors of the ethnic cleansing this time is that the government is anti-Kuki. The goal of the government is to displace us all from the areas we occupy and secure a larger land for Meitei people. The manner in which the present government is

functioning is like a school bully who derives fun intimidating and deriving benefits from his fellow mates. Both communities have suffered as a consequence. Let us take into consideration the population of Manipur that have hardly anything to do with ST status or land grabbing and the population who are simply happy to live normal lives. For having raised an army of radicals to achieve their objective, the Chief Minister of Manipur along with MP Sanajaoba are the prime instigators and perpetrators of this ethnic cleansing. This is abuse of power in the strictest sense as Lord Acton of British era described as "Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely."

Violence have rarely resolved any conflicts in the past and is not the answer even now between the two communities. The state government never had the answer and never will. While many have resorted to prayers and divine interventions others are seeking attention of the centre and neighbouring states for support. Only time will unfold what the future holds for us. The narrative of the developments during the last one month can be briefly sum up as "ethnic cleansing of minority Kukis by Meiteis (CM/MP/AT/ML) for grabbing land of the Kukis."

Meanwhile, it is only fair to pray for our friends and families and for a secure future where our children can go to school and we can live without fear.

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