



Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF)

Conglomerate of Recognised Tribes in Lamka District, Manipur

File No: ITLF-PR-202309

Sunday June 11th, 2023

CONDEMNATION

There has been circulation by the Imphal-based news media Elite TV of a video clip titled "BREAKING NEWS: Kuki Militants with sophisticated weapons" doctored to malign the image of tribal village volunteers, including ITLF, who were baselessly tagged as "Kuki militants" without conclusive proof or verification from concerned authorities. The video contains clips taken from different sources and events professionally stitched together to make ITLF and the village volunteers look like militants.

ITLF as portrayed in the video has no association with militant groups of any kind. Militant groups have specific and unique uniforms and identity markers, which the men in the video clip do not possess. It is presumptuous to accuse the village volunteers to be militants based on the depiction of some video clips of unknown people with sophisticated guns.

It is well known that over 4000 sophisticated arms were taken from various police stations in the valley districts, and only a minuscule portion of these have been recovered. The conflict would end sooner if the security forces and media focus on the disarming of Meitei militants. Until these looted arms are recovered, the tribal people will continue to be terrorized by the Meitei armed radical groups. The fact that the chief of Meitei Leepun, Pramot Singh announced on National Media the intention of the Meiteis to wipe out the Kuki population from the face of Manipur and the open declaration of war against the Kuki-Zo community by the Coordination Committee on Manipur Territorial Integrity (COCOMI) is threatening and alarming. The Government and the media should rather focus on stopping these extremist elements rather than spend time misleading the mass with edited videos.

We, therefore, condemn such malicious intention on the part of the Imphal-based media houses, especially Elite TV in particular, in circulating baseless reports and cultivating false narratives, while the state is being marred by enmity and widespread violence.

When over 160 of our villages are burnt with over 4500 houses burnt and destroyed, every village volunteer must defend the remaining villages with their lives.

Issued by

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