



## Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF)

Conglomerate of Recognised Tribes in Lamka, Outer Manipur

File No: ITLF-PR-202330

Saturday, 8th July 2023

### CONDEMNATION

The Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF) is dismayed to learn that FIRs have been lodged against two Kuki leaders and an intellectual for their comments in the media in connection with the ethnic violence in Manipur.

The chief judicial magistrate, Imphal East, issued notices to Kuki Women's Forum convenor Mary Grace Zou, Wilson L. Hangsing, co-founder of the Kuki People's Alliance, and Professor Kham Khan Suan Hausing, Head of Department of Political Science of the Hyderabad University, based on complaints by people claiming to be social workers.

The accusations, which come under various sections of the Indian Penal Code, are clearly an attempt to silence tribals who are speaking on behalf of their community.

It is an attack on their right to freedom of speech and is meant to suppress the voice of the Kuki-Zo tribals, who are witnessing an unprecedented threat to their existence from an unrelenting state-sponsored ethnic cleansing program.

The N. Biren Singh-led government, supported by radical outfits like the Arambai Tenggol and Meitei Leepun, controls the police and the media. Voiceless Kuki-Zo tribals in the hills desperately need intellectuals and their leaders to express their concerns and tell their side of the story to the outside world.

Legally entangling every prominent tribal who speaks out on television is a reprehensible tactic to silence our voice. It may also be mentioned that the ITLF's official Twitter account has been suspended for the past month. Trying to stifle our voice on every platform shows the desperation of the radical Meitei organisations in their effort to block the true nature of the conflict in Manipur.

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