



Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF)

Conglomerate of Recognised Tribes in Lamka District, Manipur

Concerning Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh's press statement on 12th June 2023, the Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF) would like to make the following rebuttal.

1. The Chief Minister said he appealed to the people to give peace a chance and trust the state government.

How can the Chief Minister talk about peace when state police forces using sophisticated guns and bullet-proof vehicles are still leading Meitei militants in attacking and burning tribal villages?

There is zero trust in the state government, especially the Chief Minister, when it was his policies which directly led to the ethnic violence between the Meiteis and tribals.

Tribals are also appalled by the lies of the Chief Minister, who continually twists the truth when tribal areas are attacked. Every time police commando-led Meitei forces attack tribal areas, the CM addresses the media and blames "Kuki militants" for attacking the police. Tribal volunteers defending their homes and families are not militants. They are heroes.

2. The CM said his government had taken a slew of steps toward bringing normalcy in the state.

What steps has the CM taken to help tribal areas? Many tribal areas are facing a shortage of essential commodities due to a complete ban on the movement of goods to the tribal areas. Even the electric supply to Churachandpur, the largest district in the state, has been crippled due to power line cuts.

Tribal villages are still burning due to frequent attacks by Meitei militants and state forces, so any talk of "normalcy" is completely contradictory to what is happening on the ground. Stop the violence first.

3. The CM also talks about assisting refugees willing to return to their homes.

How can refugees return home when the people who burnt their houses still control the villages and the state police forces meant to protect all citizens are in collusion with Meitei militants like Arambai Tenggol and Meitei Leepun?

There are almost 40,000 tribals in relief camps in Manipur and Mizoram. The state government has done nothing to aid the displaced tribal people. Relief camps are being run entirely on the charity of the local population and help from neighboring Mizoram state.

4. The CM also talks about a 'No work, no pay' system for government employees, and that those unable to attend work may do so through e-office.

Many government employees had their homes and property burnt to the ground, and are mentally scared after escaping with just their lives. For many, asking them to return to the place of their

posting means facing a lynch mob. Also, the government has been enforcing a complete ban on the internet since May 3, 2023, and asking employees to attend work online is completely absurd.

Issued by

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