



Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF)

Conglomerate of Recognised Tribes in Lamka, Outer Manipur

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Friday, 18th August 2023

CONDEMNATION

The Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF) condemns in the strongest terms the brutal killing of three Kuki-Zo villagers on Friday by Meitei militants in Manipur's Ukhrul district.

Despite the Home Minister Amit Shah's plea to all communities in the strife-torn state to maintain peace, sections of the Meitei community are intent on stalling any peace effort.

In the early hours on Friday, Meitei militants crept up on unsuspecting villagers at Thowai Kuki village, killing three men and mutilating their bodies. Jamkhogin Haokip (26 years), Thangkhokai Haokip (35 years) and Hollenson Baite (24 years) were all killed inside a bunker where they were sleeping. According to a report by The Hindu newspaper, an Assam Rifles unit posted near the village was withdrawn just a few days ago due to pressure from Meitei groups. This is clearly a pre-planned attack, and a cowardly one. We salute the brave young men who died guarding their land.

We request central security forces to do more to protect tribals, who carry single-shot hunting guns while guarding their homes from attacks by Meiteis, who carry sophisticated weapons and mortars stolen from police stations and armouries.

Since the sectarian conflict began on May 3, around 6,000 sophisticated arms and six lakh rounds of ammunition have been looted by Meitei mobs. These are being used to attack tribal villages. Pictures taken by journalists and social media posts show that Meitei militants are openly carrying sophisticated weapons in front of Meitei police forces, which clearly shows that they are working together.

If violence is to be stopped, the army and other central security forces should start operations to retrieve looted government-issued weapons, as the state police force is fully compromised. .

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