



Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF)
Conglomerate of Recognised Tribes in Lamka, Outer Manipur

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PRESS RELEASE

The Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF) would like to know what government agencies are doing to address the security threat posed by frequent looting of guns and ammunition by Meitei mobs, and why security forces are still unable to safeguard government-issued weapons three months into the ethnic conflict in Manipur.

More than 4,000 weapons and lakhs of ammunition were "looted" from different police stations and armouries by Meitei mobs in Imphal and the surrounding valley in May. A government official quoted by The Hindu newspaper said most weapons were handed over to mobs by policemen of the same community.

In the latest incident, more than 300 lethal weapons and over 19,000 rounds of ammunition were taken from an Indian Reserve Battalion camp in Bishnupur on Thursday, again by a Meitei mob. According to a complaint filed by police, looted weapons included assault rifles, pistols, magazines, mortars, detonators, hand grenades, bombs, carbines and light machine guns.

It is clear as daylight that the majority community is massing arms to launch an attack on Kuki-Zo tribals.

The number of guns, ammunition and explosives that are in the hands of the Meitei community are also a security risk for the country as a whole.

If the central government and security forces do not take cognizance of the risk pose by the circulation of such huge quantities of arms and act to retrieve the weapons, we are afraid that Manipur could witness a bloodbath, the kind of which the country has not seen in decades.

Ginza Vualzong,
Media & Publicity,
Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF)

Email: itlfmediacell@gmail.com | Phone: 882653229

Website: <https://www.itlfmediacell.com/>

Twitter: https://twitter.com/ITLFMedia_Cell

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/itlfmediacell>

