



**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) and all Kuki-Zo tribals feel let down by Home Minister Amit Shah for his comments in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday regarding the ethnic conflict in Manipur.

Three months of violence has led to the deaths of more than 130 Kuki-Zo tribals, the displacement of 41,425 tribal civilians and the complete physical and emotional separation of Meiteis and tribals. And the best explanation that the home minister can come up with is the entry of refugees from Myanmar.

Mizoram has welcomed more than 40,000 refugees from Myanmar and displaced people from Manipur, and it is still the most peaceful state in India.

The Scheduled Tribe demand by the majority community, the government notification on forest reserves which would usurp tribals from their lands, and the demonizing of tribals by the CM and radical Meitei intellectuals are the reasons why the trust deficit grew between Meiteis and tribals, which culminated in the sectarian clashes.

Accusing refugees, who are some of the most deprived and helpless sections in any community, of starting a conflict at this scale is just plain wrong.

Also, the ITLF is aghast that the home minister is still defending Manipur CM Biren Singh, who we consider is the chief architect of the violence. So many innocent people have died under his watch, and violence continues unabated after three months. Many of his own ministers have made submissions to the central government saying law and order has completely collapsed in the state. Despite all this, he is still being feted by the central government instead of being sacked. We appeal to the home minister to rise above party politics in dealing with the crisis in Manipur.

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

Email: [itlfmediacell@gmail.com](mailto:itlfmediacell@gmail.com) | Phone: 8826532299

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

Twitter: [https://twitter.com/ITLFMedia\\_Cell](https://twitter.com/ITLFMedia_Cell)

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

