



Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF)

Conglomerate of Recognised Tribes in Lamka, Outer Manipur

File No: ITLF-PR-202348

Saturday, 02 September 2023

CONDEMNATION

The Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF) vehemently condemns the vandalism at advocate Soraisham Chitaranjan's residence in Manipur's capital and the threats faced by lawyers representing Professor Kham Khan Suan Hausing, a Kuki-Zo tribal academic who is facing criminal proceedings for expressing his views on the sectarian violence in Manipur.

Chittaranjan and two other advocates, Th. Zinggo and Ch. Victor submitted a petition in the Manipur High Court to be withdrawn as counsel in Mr. Hausing's case after facing multiple threats from Meitei radicals like the Arambai Tenggol. Their petition was accepted.

An FIR was filed against Mr. Hausing in July following his interview with an online news portal. Mr. Chitaranjan claimed his role was limited to filing documents in court at the request of senior lawyer Anand Grover, who is handling the case.

Despite withdrawing from the case, a mob vandalized Mr. Chitaranjan's residence on Thursday and Friday.

The accusations against Mr. Hausing, 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.

The threats to the lawyers by members of their own community show the level of intolerance and radicalization among the Meiteis. Mr. Hausing has the right to defend himself in court and the lawyers were only doing their job by filing paperwork in the case.

It is clear that the Meitei community is using the legal system as a vehicle of harassment. Court cases have also been filed against Kuki Women's Forum convenor Mary Grace Zou, Wilson L. Hangsing, co-founder of the Kuki People's Alliance, and ITLF Spokesperson Ginza Vualzong. Even India's oldest paramilitary force, the Assam Rifles, is not immune to the Meitei community's penchant for filing FIRs. Manipur Police, controlled by the Meitei community, filed a criminal case against Assam Rifles in August for its refusal to toe the line of the majority community.

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