



## Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF)

Conglomerate of Recognised Tribes in Lamka, Outer Manipur

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### PRESS RELEASE

The process of terrorizing Kuki-Zo tribals by Meitei police commandos in the border town of Moreh has begun, with 12 innocent villagers including a handicapped man arrested from their homes in an operation today. Commandos also looted and burnt tribal houses yesterday at Sinam village on the way to Moreh.

Following the killing of Meitei police officer Chingtham Anand Kumar yesterday by unknown assailants, more than 20 vehicles carrying Manipur commandos were sent to the area as reinforcements. On the way, this team burnt down two houses, four two-wheelers, and two four-wheelers at Sinam village. The commandos also looted money amounting to lakhs of rupees and stole the village registration papers.

This morning's joint operation with the Assam Rifles was carried out at Phaicham Veng and Gamnom Veng in Moreh. Shockingly, even the chairman of Gamnom Veng was detained because his children had a toy binoculars. The detained persons were released after 12 hours.

All those detained were innocent villagers, including Luncha Haokip, a handicap. Witnesses said the Assam Rifles escorted the commandos to Moreh and gave them a free hand during the operation. To compound the woes of residents, a complete curfew has been imposed in Moreh, with people unable to buy rations.

Yesterday, a team of Manipur commandos also set fire to the Wall of Remembrance structure at Chikim Village in Moreh around 11:00 AM. They also burned and vandalized temporary sheds and dispersed women participating in a sit-in protest.

The presence of Meitei police personnel is leading to tension and heightening the insecurity of tribals.

During his visit to the state in May, Home Minister Amit Shah gave an assurance that all commandos would be removed from Moreh within three days, but nothing was done. When the Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF) last met the minister in Delhi, we requested him to remove Meitei police personnel from all hill areas. We were assured that Meitei commandos would not be allowed to do things on their own and would always be accompanied by central forces.

Why is the central government and central forces now allowing Meitei commandos to loot, burn, and terrorize Kuki-Zo villages?

**Ginza Vualzong,**  
Media & Publicity,  
Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF)  
Website: <https://www.itlfmediacell.com/>

