



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 everyone from the Kuki-Zo community urge the central government to immediately remove N. Biren Singh as chief minister of Manipur in light of his recent remarks, where he publicly said that he is only working for the interest of the Meitei community and is fighting the tribals.

As chief minister of the state, Biren is duty-bound to work for the welfare of the entire population and should be striving to maintain law and order. Instead, he said he became a lawmaker to look after the interests of the Meiteis.

"I knew this (conflict) was going to happen 10 years ago... the land needs to be saved, the community (Meiteis) needs to be saved, that is the reason why I became a candidate (in the state election)," Biren said at a recent public event. The video of his speech was released by Meitei social media handles on November 22, 2023.

Manipur has witnessed a state-sponsored ethnic cleansing of minority Kuki-Zo tribals since May 3, 2023. After almost seven months, thousands of government-issued weapons looted from state armouries by Meitei mobs are still being used to attack tribal settlements. Meitei militant groups like Arambai Tenggol are allowed to roam freely with automatic weapons in Imphal and the surrounding valley areas. They are even accompanied by police commandos while attacking tribal villages.


More than 150 tribals have been killed, 7,000 homes burned by Meitei mobs and more than 40,000 tribals displaced since the start of the conflict.

In his speech, the chief minister talked about fighting the "enemy" and hinted that he was the one in charge of planning the "war". "Who talks beforehand about how they are going to fight the enemy? Do you think I will publicly tell the people about what I am going to do?" Biren said during his speech. "We need to do things with a clear head... we will not win the war by shouting loudly on social media and other platforms."

Never before in the history of independent India has a chief minister publicly said he has gone to war with citizens in his own state. It is time the central government, the media, and prominent personalities call Biren out for who he is – a Meitei chauvinist who is using his power to kill hundreds of Indian citizens.

Kuki-Zo tribals have nothing to expect from the communal Manipur government except discrimination and death. A separate administration is the only solution.

The video of Biren Singh's speech can be viewed at: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2288996684648885/permalink/3574173162797891/?mibextid=dzYiin>


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