



Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF)

Conglomerate of Recognised Tribes in Lamka, Outer Manipur

File No: ITLF-PR-202371

Sunday, 31 December 2023

CONDEMNATION

Firing broke out between unidentified gunmen and Meitei commandos around 3:30 pm yesterday as the communal state forces were advancing towards Lhangkichoi Veng, a Kuki-Zo tribal settlement in the border town of Moreh.

Some commandos reportedly suffered injuries before the state forces retreated and ran inside an Assam Rifles camp. The commandos fired indiscriminately at the village and burned three civilian houses at Lhangkichoi Veng out of spite, thereby showcasing a blatant disregard for civilians and their wellbeing.

The Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF) condemns the burning of houses by trained military personnel, who are supposedly posted in the area to maintain peace and security.

The latest incident again highlights the fact that tension and violence will continue as long as armed Meitei forces are posted in tribal areas during an ethnic conflict involving the two sides. It is also no secret that many Arambai Tenggol militants are embedded among the Meitei state forces with the blessing of authorities.

The incident in Moreh comes after a gunfight near the tribal village of Nakhojang in Kangpokpi district earlier yesterday.

Nakhojang and nearby Singda Kuki village were burned down by Meitei mobs on May 5, and all the villagers fled to relief camps.

After hearing reports that Arambai Tenggol cadres were preparing to attack tribal settlements and were camping at Nakhojang, tribal volunteers launched a search operation and were confronted by the militants around 3:00 am. In the ensuing gunfight, Jamesbond Ningomba, a member of Arambai Tenggol, was killed, while the others fled towards Kandangban, the nearest Meitei village.

Jamesbond Ningomba also works as a journalist for the Meitei vernacular Naharolgi Thoudang and is a key contributor to the anti-tribal propaganda of the Meitei media. Naharolgi Thoudang was edited by CM Biren Singh before he became a politician.

After news of the death, Rajya Sabha MP Sanajaoba Leishemba, who openly endorses Arambai Tenggol, expressed his condolences on Facebook, stating: "Oh...RIP... my beloved child."

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