



## Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF)

Conglomerate of Recognised Tribes in Lamka, Outer Manipur

File No: ITLF-PR-202473

Saturday, 13 January 2024

### PRESS RELEASE

The Meitei government in Manipur continues to victimize Kuki-Zo tribals in the state – this time suspending three Education Department officials from the minority community for trying to help tens of thousands of students whose education and careers are in peril because of the ethnic violence.

Since May 3, 2023, tribals have been butchered and driven out of the valley – their homes and churches burned to the ground. Meiteis didn't even spare women, children and the mentally-challenged in what can only be described as an ethnic cleansing exercise.

Since the state education board and offices of all technical institutes are based in Imphal and are controlled by the majority Meitei community, tribal schools and students are at their mercy. The recent Manipur Board examination, in which a majority of tribal Psychology students were failed (some got zero marks), shows to what level Meitei officials will stoop to. For any complaint and other office-related work, tribals can no longer go to Imphal. Schools in tribal areas, therefore, had no choice but to seek affiliation with other school boards.

Under the circumstances, Jangkhohao Haokip (ZEO, Churachandpur), Lhingtinneng (ZEO, Kangpokpi) and L. Taithul (DI of Schools, Samulamlan) were well within their rights and had the moral responsibility to guide schools in tribal areas in seeking CBSE affiliation. Their actions were vindicated when the CBSE approved the requests. It was only after pressure from the Meitei government that CBSE unfortunately withdrew the affiliation.

Suspending these three officials for acting in the interest of students is punitive and morally wrong, and will not be accepted by the Kuki-Zo community. Also, ordering them to shift to Imphal is the height of insensitivity as everyone knows they will be butchered the moment they enter the Meitei-dominated areas.

As for the Meitei community and government – if you don't want us to live together with you, why are you stopping our schools from joining other boards. This shows the majority community is trying to punish us in any way possible..

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