



Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF)

Conglomerate of Recognised Tribes in Lamka, Outer Manipur

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PRESS RELEASE

As Moreh continues to be on edge due to the recent firefights and arson committed by Meitei police personnel, the Manipur government has shown its intent to keep the pot boiling by appointing a Meitei policeman as the border town's new SDPO.

Local organizations in the area have repeatedly said the deployment of Meitei forces in the Kuki-Zo-majority area during an ethnic conflict involving the two sides is the cause of the violence. The strategy is an attempt by the state's Meitei chief minister to drive out tribals from the area using state machinery.

Events in the past few days have only heightened the resentment against state forces. Meitei police personnel, joined by well-armed Meitei insurgents, burnt down multiple homes and schools in Moreh on January 17.

A news report by ThePrint said, "CCTV footage from that day appears to match allegations levelled by local residents that Assam Rifles personnel looked on as men in uniform, alleged to be Manipur Police commandos, entered localities in Moreh on 17 January and engaged in acts of arson."

Even Nepali, Tamil, and Bihari residents of Moreh say commandos of the Manipur police burnt the houses. This proves that they are a communal force that uses state-issued weapons to terrorize civilians.

If the central government really wants the violence to stop in Moreh, it can simply replace Meitei forces with neutral central security forces.

Any police personnel stationed in Moreh, including the SDPO, should be from a neutral community or from one of the Kuki-Zo tribes. Until that happens, local volunteers will have no choice but to defend their land.

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