



## **Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF)**

Conglomerate of Recognised Tribes in Lamka, Outer Manipur

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### **PRESS RELEASE**

On June 6, 2024, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) published a statement to the public regarding the arrest of Mr. Thongminthang Haokip @ Thangboi. Thongminthang Haokip was implicated in the Manipur and Myanmar ethnic conflicts, according to the NIA.

Over 170 Kuki-Zo people have been killed by the Meitei militia and armed radicals since May 3, 2023. Additionally, over 8,000 residences and 360 churches have been burned, resulting in over 20,000 people being internally displaced. The Meitei's massive destruction and slaughter of people have left the Kuki-Zo with no choice but to organize village volunteers to defend their villages. Thongminthang Haokip is one such village volunteer.

Despite the central government's efforts to safeguard the villages by establishing buffer zones, many Kuki-Zo were killed by the Meiteis while being watched over by the Indian security forces. This demonstrates that our lives cannot be fully protected by the security forces of the government.

There are many instances of Meitei's brutal killings. One such horrific murder was the decapitation of David Thiek. Why did the NIA choose and pick the Kuki-Zo, and why is the NIA ignoring the atrocities committed against the Kuki-Zo? For killing over 170 Kuki-Zo, how many Meitei have been taken into custody by the NIA? This once again further demonstrates the NIA's prejudice.

Kuki-Zo have deep respect for the Indian security forces. Never once have they fired at them. Nonetheless, the Meitei killed numerous Indian security personnel and caused the Indian security forces an extensive amount of trouble.

We ask that the government practice impartially at all times. The Kuki-Zo will stop believing in the central government if this partiality persists.

Issued by

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