



Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF)

Conglomerate of Recognised Tribes in Lamka, Outer Manipur

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PRESS RELEASE

June 24, 2024: Thousands of protesters from the Kuki-Zo tribal community marched through the streets in Lamka (Churachandpur) on Monday demanding a political solution to end the year-long ethnic violence in Manipur.

The rally, organized by the Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF), started at Lamka Public Ground in the center of town at 11 am and ended at the Wall of Remembrance, a memorial for almost 200 tribals killed during the violence.

Protesters held placards like "No Political Solution, No Peace", "Union Territory for the Kuki-Zo People Right Now!", "Forced Union With Meiteis Will Not Last" and "We Want UT Under Article 239A".

ITLF Chairman Pagin Haokip delivered the keynote address at the rally. Other speakers include MLA Paolienlal Haokip, Zo United Secretary Rev. VL Ngakthang, Zomi Council General Secretary Pauneihlal and Kuki Inpi Manipur Vice President Jangmang Haokip. ITLF General Secretary Muan Tombing read out the content of the memorandum to be submitted to the Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

The peaceful rally was organized to demand that the central government expedite the process of finding a political solution to the violence in Manipur. Tribals want the creation of a Union Territory with legislature under article 239A of the constitution. Similar rallies were also held in Kangpokpi, Tengnoupal and Pherzawl districts on the same day.

ITLF, an umbrella group for tribal bodies, says the government should accelerate the process of finding a political solution because:

1. After more than a year of killings and displacements, there is no improvement in the security situation, with citizens at risk of being killed every day. In the past few weeks, two tribals were killed by Meitei miscreants in Jiribam district. Another was abducted, and his whereabouts are still unknown.
2. Homes and properties of tribals are still being burned and destroyed, one year after the start of the conflict. To date, almost 200 tribals have been killed and more than 7,000 homes destroyed. In the recent flareup of violence in Jiribam, around 50 homes and shops belonging to tribals were burned down.

3. For more than a year, supplies of all goods, including essential items, have been blocked from entering tribal areas. Even basic hospital items like cotton swabs often run out. This has severely affected the quality of life for tribals.
4. All development activities, including maintenance and repair of public infrastructure, have grinded to a halt for the past year in tribal areas, while all Meitei-controlled valley areas enjoy state patronage.
5. The valley-based population even resorts to destroying public utilities like electricity, denying us our basic rights.
6. With tribals unable to travel to the state capital, the Meitei-controlled state government is using the opportunity to conduct mass job recruitment, knowing fully well that tribals will not be able to avail themselves of the opportunity. Many job opportunities have already been lost for tribal youths, showing that the state government is openly partisan.
7. Tribal students have also been adversely affected, especially those in technical lines, as all major centers of learning and all head offices are located in the capital.
8. As a minority community with fewer numbers and even fewer resources to protect ourselves, we are under constant threat of being attacked by militant groups like Arambai Tenggol and the proscribed UNLF, who have access to a large arsenal of weapons bought from across the border or looted from state armories. They have openly stated that their aim is to either kill all of us or drive us out of our lands.

The rally was concluded with the submission of a memorandum to the Union Home Minister through the Deputy Commissioner of Churahandpur, Manipur by ITLF leaders led by the Chairman and General Secretary.

Issued by –

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