



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

Conglomerate of Recognised Tribes in Lamka, Outer Manipur

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### **PRESS RELEASE**

What started out as a dangerous disinformation campaign by Manipur's chief minister to divert attention from leaked audio tapes which proved his complicity in the violence against the Kuki-Zo community has ended with egg on his face.

A 'leaked' intelligence report, oddly coming from the CM's office, had claimed that over 900 Kuki militants had entered Manipur from Myanmar – preposterous by any measure.

A social media post by the army showed it was totally unaware about the so-called influx of militants. Sadly, Manipur security advisor Kuldiep Singh, who heads the Unified Command that takes all security related decisions in the state, gave legitimacy to the CMO's report by parroting the CMO's claims. This created tension and fears among both the Meitei and the Kuki-Zo communities. Social media posts and press statements show the Meiteis are gearing up to "counterattack" Kukis, while tribals believe the so-called intel was a ruse to justify attacking the Kuki-Zo community, and are getting ready to repel an imminent attack by Meitei state forces and militants.

Lacking proof and being unable to substantiate it "on ground", the state government and the security adviser have fortunately retracted their claims, saying "the public need not worry further in this regard." But the damage has been done, as tensions have spiked on both sides of the buffer zones.

As a specific date (September 28) was earlier given by the security advisor for the launching of "potential attacks," Kuki-Zo organisations have issued public advisories like closure of schools, institutions, and offices, halting of movement in the frontline areas, and asking village volunteers to be on high alert.

If any untoward incidents happen because of the earlier report, the CM and security advisor should be held responsible for publicizing false intel.

This episode also shows that the Manipur government is highly unreliable and partisan, with no qualms about falsifying and publicizing sensitive intelligence reports, which could ignite violence and lead to a bloodbath.

Issued by –

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