



Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF)

Conglomerate of Recognised Tribes in Lamka, Outer Manipur

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PRESS RELEASE

Last Thursday, when Meitei gunmen attacked Zairawn village in Jiribam and brutally killed a Hmar woman, CRPF personnel posted nearby refused to fire even one shot to help the villagers and stayed put in their camp as the village was pillaged and burned for over an hour.

On Monday, the central force went a step further by brutally killing 11 Hmar village volunteers who were on patrolling duty to sanitize tribal areas in the wake of the Zairawn attack. Kuki-Zo groups have repeatedly stressed during the entire Manipur conflict that they never target central forces and consider them as a buffer against attacking Meitei militants.

It is important to note that the state has never witnessed so much casualties in one incident of cross-firing. This suggests that the CRPF and Meitei state forces ambushed and murdered all the village volunteers. If the volunteers were indeed armed and intending to attack the security forces, it would have been impossible to kill so many of them in one incident of cross-firing from a distance.

The hidden motive behind the decision to replace Assam Rifles and replace them with CRPF is now coming to light. The entire Kuki-Zo community should reconsider labelling the CRPF as a "neutral" central force.

The Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF) is deeply saddened by the tragic loss of our 11 brave volunteers. They are martyrs who selflessly gave their lives for our land. May their sacrifice serve as a beacon of hope, motivating us all to keep defending our land. ITLF shares the sorrow of the bereaved families and extends our support in solidarity with them.

Issued by —

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