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To  
**The Secretary-General**  
**United Nations Headquarters**  
405 East 42nd Street,  
New York, NY 10017, USA

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**Subject: Concerns about the Humanitarian Crisis and Plight of Meetei - An Appeal to Draw Your Attention to Manipur (India) Violence**

Dear Mr. Secretary-General and Esteemed Members of the United Nations,

We are writing to you as representatives of the indigenous Meetei tribe of Manipur, India, to bring to your attention the ongoing humanitarian crisis unfolding in our region. Manipur has been grappling in this humanitarian emergency since May 03, 2023, although incidences of violence can be traced from earlier months.

The Meetei is an indigenous tribe of Manipur, inhabiting mainly in the valley and surrounding hill districts of the erstwhile ancient kingdom since time immemorial. However, in the past few months, we have been attacked and displaced from Kuki-dominated areas in Churachandpur, Moreh and other villages adjoining the hills districts, where Meeteis form the minority in those Kuki-dominated areas of the state of Manipur.

It is with the utmost concern that we highlight this present crisis, and we are compelled to remind you of the historic commitment made by the international community. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2007, serves as a foundational document that affirms the rights and protections to the indigenous communities worldwide. It was a monumental step towards recognizing and safeguarding the rights of indigenous peoples, and we look to the principles enshrined in UNDRIP for guidance during these challenging times. We implore the United Nations to uphold the spirit of UNDRIP and intervene to address the dire circumstances our community has been facing. The declaration's principles resonate with our situation, emphasizing the importance of indigenous rights, protection from violence, and the right to live in dignity and peace.

Also, the Meetei is currently facing the most serious violation of human rights and international humanitarian law which are clearly defined under Article 6 and 7 of the Rome statute of International Criminal Court.

**Crime Against Humanity on Meetei :**

The International Criminal Tribunal of Rwanda (ICTR) had said that to make a crime- crime against humanity, the civilian population must be the object of a widespread or systematic attack. The ICTY (The International Criminal Tribunal of Yugoslavia) furthered the definition as inhuman acts of very serious nature committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack against any civilian population. Crimes such as murder, rape, sexual violence, extermination and persecution have been committed by the Kuki community against the minority Meetei in the areas where they were majority.





## Meetei Genocide:

Forced expulsion of populations facilitated by terror, persecution and inhuman acts directed against civilian Meetei populations in Churachandpur, Tengnoupal and Kangpokpi Districts of Manipur, India by the majority Kuki community in those areas, are important indicators of “ethnic cleansing” which will potentially lead to crime against humanity and genocide as decided by many international criminal tribunals such as the ICTY (the International Criminal Tribunal of Yugoslavia) and the ICTR (the International Criminal Tribunal of Rwanda).

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International criminal law pandits agreed that if the perpetrator, or the victim considers that the ethnic group exists, then these are very compelling indicators for the application of the crime against genocide. A mere intent to destroy a group even if only in part means seeking to destroy the entire group was a qualified judgement at ICTY judgement in the case of Krstic (IT-98-33-T) by the Trial Chamber to say that there was a genuine ethnic cleansing intended to commit a genocide against a particular group has been committed.

Some of the crimes committed by Kuki against the Meetei with serious violation of international humanitarian law are given below:

- a) **Loss of lives, torture and inhumane killing, dead bodies:** A report submitted by the Manipur Government to the Supreme Court on July 10, 2023 stated that the violence has claimed 142 lives till July 4, with the valley districts of Imphal East and Imphal West having the highest number of deaths at 29 each, while 21 people were killed in Kakching.<sup>1,2</sup> The total number of people killed in the valley districts of Imphal East, Imphal West, Kakching, Thoubal and Bishnupur were 101.<sup>2</sup> Meeteis were even killed despite peace agreements in their villages.<sup>5,16</sup> The bodies of many Meetei victims had been disfigured after they had been killed.

On the early hours of August 05, 2023, three Meetei civilians were killed in a brutal manner, allegedly by Kuki miscreants while they were sleeping in their residence in Kwakta district Manipur. The victims had sustained gunshot injuries, and their throats had been slashed<sup>124,135</sup>. Meetei villagers are unable to find peace within their homes at night, as armed Kuki militants have been setting fire to Meetei residences and launching covert attacks on Meetei individuals during the nocturnal hours.

- b) **Missing people:** According to Manipur police, 32 people are officially missing.<sup>136</sup> Two teenagers (a young Meetei girl and her friend), who went missing on July 06, 2023 near a Kuki dominated area were missing. Further investigation of the matter was not undertaken by the police as the children’s last location was a Kuki dominated area.<sup>116,137</sup>

Tragically, on September 26, 2023, after more than 2 months, distressing images surfaced on social media, revealing the lifeless bodies of the two missing Meetei teenagers. The photos depicted bearing signs of torture on their bodies, lying on the ground. The setting in those photographs appeared to be a makeshift camp with two armed militants in the background, who are suspected to be Kuki militants as the victim boy’s phone was found to be used with a different sim card registered under a Kuki name located in Lamdan, Churachandpur, Manipur.<sup>50,153</sup>

- c) **Brutal killing and inability to retrieve dead bodies:** There have been numerous cases where we have been unable to retrieve the bodies of our fellow Meeteis who perished in the conflict. These individuals were interred in mass graves located in areas







predominantly inhabited by the Kuki community. Access to these areas is restricted for Meeteis due to the implementation of buffer zones within the state.

In a tragic case involving the brutal murder of two young Meetei boys, they were abducted, subjected to torture, and fatally shot in the head. The brutality didn't end there, as they were even struck with an axe to the head when the initial shooting did not prove lethal. Regrettably, their remains have not been recovered, and the limited investigation conducted is hindered by the presence of buffer zones. Faced with no other options, the grieving families conducted religious last rites symbolically, using a tree branch to represent the bodies. In other distressing instances, the level of brutality reached such extremes as gouging out eyes and shattering teeth.<sup>126,127</sup>

- d) **Meetei women gang-raped by Kuki miscreants on May 3:** According to the “zero FIR” registered by the women’s police station in Bishnupur district of Manipur India, on August 10, 2023 at 4.30pm, a case has been registered based on the complaint of the 37-year-old woman under Indian Penal Code (IPC) sections that deal with gang rape, assault or criminal force used with intent to outrage the modesty of a woman, criminal conspiracy and acts in furtherance of common intention. The alleged crime took place around 6.30 pm on May 03, 2023 at Khumujamba Meetei Leikai in neighbouring Churachandpur district.<sup>117,118</sup>

Numerous cases of sexual violations committed by Kukis against Meetei women exist, but many victims have refrained from coming forward due to the fear of social stigma.<sup>152</sup>

- e) **Ethnic cleansing and exodus of Meeteis from Kuki-dominated districts and Mizoram (a Kuki-Zo state):** The Meeteilol-speaking population is in the minority in the hill districts.<sup>6</sup> Violence started on May 03, 2023 in Churachandpur (a Kuki-dominated area) with Meeteis being attacked and their houses burnt.<sup>10</sup> Exodus of Meeteis has occurred even from Mizoram when a former insurgent group issued a statement asking the Meeteis to leave Mizoram for “their own safety”.<sup>7</sup> More than 70,000 people of Manipur (including women and children) have been displaced and are in relief camps since the past four months now.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, any move to resettle the displaced Meeteis in their original places has been opposed by the Kukis.<sup>91</sup>
- f) **Desecration of Mount Ibudhou Thangjing/Thangching – Meetei’s sacred historical heritage site:**

The Meeteis, being the indigenous people of Manipur, maintain profound cultural and spiritual ties to our homeland. Among the numerous deities venerated, Lord *Thangjing* holds the most revered position.<sup>143,145</sup> This particular location carries immense spiritual significance, as it is regarded as the sacred dwelling place of *Eputhou Thangching*. This site is also mentioned in the renowned Meetei classical epic, *Khamba-Thoibi*.<sup>64</sup> Also, according to Section 4 of the Manipur Ancient & Historical Monuments and Archaeological and Remains Act 1976, it provides protection for an area spanning four hectares dedicated to *Ibudhou Thangjing*, situated within the Thangjing/Thangching hill range.<sup>64</sup> Additionally, this legislation safeguards two other historically significant pilgrimage sites related to the indigenous ancient religion (*Sanamahi*) of Meeteis, all of which are located atop Thangjing Hill in Churachandpur district of Manipur.

In a historical account provided by a British ethnographer, R. Brown in 1874, it was mentioned that Kuki refugees were resettled by the Maharaja of Manipur in the



Thangching range of hills and the valley to the southwest of Moirang.<sup>142</sup> However, in the present day, following the exodus of Meeteis, we are denied access to these sacred sites.<sup>143,144</sup> Instead, on September 13, 2023, Kuki militants belonging to the 'Zomi Revolutionary Army' (ZRA) erected a cross and a flag symbolizing conquest and power, which have hurt the sentiments of the indigenous Meeteis. This action constitutes a violation of the human rights of the indigenous Meeteis under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).<sup>64</sup>

- g) Child exploitation by providing militant trainings openly:** There are substantial evidences, including videos, showcasing the recruitment and training of young boys and children by Kuki militants. They are openly providing these minors with illegal arms training in Kuki-dominated areas (Churachandpur).<sup>120, 121, 133</sup>
- h) No access to education:** Children and students were deprived of education and their future are at stake.<sup>28</sup>
- i) Loss of properties and livelihood:** Meetei houses and properties, including temples,<sup>139</sup> have been burnt and bulldozed to the last brick in Kuki-dominated districts,<sup>9, 11, 128</sup> to ensure no return of Meeteis. No Meeteis are left in these districts.<sup>8</sup>
- j) Continuous firing and dropping of bombs** by Kuki militants upon the homes of Meetei civilians, even when they are asleep at night, has resulted in casualties, including a teenager and a child.<sup>12, 13, 14, 15, 21</sup> Such incessant attacks have compelled people to abandon their residences.<sup>16, 29</sup> There are various instances of Kuki militants using sophisticated equipment like drones, thermal cameras and night vision to survey and attack Meetei villages. A drone suspected to have been used by Kuki militants for surveying Meetei villages was recovered at Phougakchao Ikhai on June 8. It contained video footage of Phougakchao Ikhai and surrounding areas.<sup>46</sup> An advanced drone used by ITLF (Indigenous Tribals' Leader Forum), the nodal Kuki group for attacking Meetei villages in the surrounding of Sugnu area was reportedly captured by Meetei villagers. Footage retrieved from the drone also revealed that the members of the ITLF and the Kuki militants used sophisticated weaponry including SLRs, Sniper Rifles, and other automatic weapons.<sup>46, 47, 48</sup> The government has deployed thousands of troops to bring the situation under control, but it has not been able to curtail the ongoing conflict.
- k) Shooting of farmers by Kuki militants from the hills makes farming impossible:** Manipur is an agrarian society but various instances of shooting at Meetei farmers pose a grave threat to food security and the risk of famine in the region. The use of sophisticated weaponry such as snipers against Meetei farmers, despite security measures, exacerbates the already precarious food security situation, especially considering that a significant number of farmers have sought refuge in relief camps, fleeing their homes in the foothill villages.<sup>17, 18, 158, 159</sup> According to Mr. Luwang, President of Irabot Foundation Manipur, *“Around 40,000 metric tons of rice would be under deficit next year, which means around one lakh (100,000) of the population in Manipur will not receive a sufficient share of rice. This is an alarming situation and the government must step up if they want to avoid famine in Manipur”*. Farmers have refrained from accessing their fields since May due to the imminent threat to their lives. The security measures currently in place are limited in scope and do not offer comprehensive coverage for the entire expanse of paddy fields. A farmer from Pukhao







- One Ningombam Sunil, a resident of Brahmapur Lalji Lakpa Leikai, was reportedly assaulted at his residence without any provocation or inquiry by the RAF personnel.
- On June 17, Athokpam Jiten, the general secretary of AMWJU (All Manipur Working Journalists' Union), and Moirangthem Khagemba Meetei, the Games and Sports Secretary, were allegedly assaulted by a RAF team near Singjamei Police Station.
- In a separate incident, Ibungo Laishram, a video journalist, also faced a similar situation with the same RAF team.
- On June 23, Haobam Pravinkumar, a sub-editor of *Ichel Express*, was detained and assaulted by RAF personnel at Khurai Popular High School.
- On June 24, personnel of the Central Security Force broke into the house of Nabakumar Khagokpam, the internal auditor of AMWJU, damaging his property and conducting a search under the pretext of pursuing miscreants.
- In September, RAF and police personnel used lethal weapons like pellet guns on unarmed high school Meetei students who were protesting on the murder of two teenagers, injuring 175 students.<sup>155</sup>

As a consequence of such incidences, the Youth's Forum for Protection of Human Rights submitted a memorandum to the Governor and Chief Minister of Manipur, calling for immediate action to prevent atrocities and inhumane acts committed by the Central Forces, particularly the RAF, in the state. The forum strongly condemned the continuous assault on journalists and involvement of the Central Security Force (CSF) and RAF personnel in escalating violence. These recent incidents of abuse and violence by the CSF and RAF personnel have raised concerns over the deteriorating situation in Manipur, the forum said while highlighting incidents of atrocities and involvement of RAF.<sup>90</sup>

- o) Carrying of arms in the open:** A so-called "peace rally" took place on May 03 2023 in the Kuki-dominated regions, where participants carried highly advanced imported weapons. These individuals from the Kuki community mostly concealed their identities behind masks and wore militant clothing. Additionally, the Kuki militant organization, recognized as the 'Zomi Revolutionary Army/Zomi Revolutionary Organisation' (ZRO/ZRA), prominently showcased their flags and insignia throughout Churachandpur.<sup>22,23,82</sup>
- p) Evidence of Central security forces not protecting the Meeteis:** Security forces (RAF) were caught on CCTV footage of destroying private properties in the valley where Meeteis inhabit<sup>24</sup> and the Assam Rifles' role is being questioned for failing to stop huge arms smuggled through the Manipur-Myanmar border.<sup>25,26,27</sup>
- q) Illegal immigrants and infiltrators in the current crisis:** Myanmar nationals with bullet and explosive injuries were arrested in Churachandpur District of Manipur for entering India without valid documents,<sup>1</sup> more than 700 Myanmar nationals have been reported to enter India illegally in just two days<sup>3</sup> and Tushar Mehta, the Solicitor General of India, told the Supreme Court that most of the bodies lying unclaimed in the morgues in Manipur are of infiltrators who came with a particular design and got killed.<sup>4</sup>





- r) **Lack of essential commodities and medicines due to frequent National Highway blockades:** Since the Meetei population mostly inhabit the valley region in the centre of the state, which is surrounded by hills, blockade of national highways has become an effective tool for getting demands from the State Government and Government of India, inducing economic hardships and depriving the people living in the valley of essential commodities and medicines regularly.<sup>30,31,32</sup>
- s) **Arms smuggling and looting:** Intelligence sources stated that arms that were used to spread unrest in violence-hit Manipur were smuggled into India via Myanmar and three Myanmar nationals were arrested in Mizoram.<sup>38,39,40,41</sup>
- t) **Bank robbery:** There have been at least three instances of bank robbery since May 2023 in Kuki-dominated areas.<sup>79,84</sup>
- u) **Creation of bunkers:** Meeteis living in villages adjacent to Kuki-dominated districts live in fear and uncertainty as more bunkers are erected despite the Manipur Government dismantling some of them. This move by the Government was welcomed by the Meetei but not by the Kuki community, creating panic among Meetei farmers and civilians.<sup>33,34,35,36</sup>

## Issues and problems

### 1. Deprivation of rights of the Meeteis

Despite being indigenous to Manipur, the Meetei tribe has been deprived of our rights as outlined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).<sup>64</sup>

The Meeteis are currently denied access to over 90% of Manipur's land. Our existence is confined to a mere 9% of Manipur's territory, primarily located in the valley region, which is also shared with other communities. Consequently, approximately 60% of Manipur's population, including (Meeteis and various other communities), reside in this densely populated valley region, with a population density ranging from 479 to 998 individuals per square kilometer. This stark lack of access to over 90% of Manipur's land for an indigenous community with roots in the region since time immemorial represents a grave violation of the rights of the indigenous people.

The violation of Meeteis' rights primarily stems from our exclusion from the Scheduled Tribes (ST) list within the Indian Constitution after 1949 and the Manipur Land Revenue and Land Reforms (MLRLR) Act, 1960. Section 158 of the MLRLR Act imposes restrictions on tribes not included in the ST list when purchasing land from a person under the ST list, without fulfilling certain conditions.<sup>72</sup> Such Acts and laws fail to safeguard our land, culture and identity. In contrast, communities listed under the ST category have the ability to purchase land even in the 9% of land where Meeteis and other communities reside. This situation has sparked significant apprehension within the Meetei, raising fears that the Act could potentially lead to our alienation from our ancestral lands. This inequality fundamentally represents an injustice to the indigenous Meetei tribe.

Furthermore, the exclusion of Meeteis from the Scheduled Tribes (ST) list brings about various disadvantages within the State and the Country. Comprising only 0.1% of India's population<sup>156</sup> and situated in the remote eastern region of Manipur, we lag behind the



national average in areas like per capita income and employment opportunities.<sup>93</sup> Because of this deprivation, Meeteis are ineligible for employment reservations and related benefits in India, resulting in injustices and impediments to our community's competitiveness at both state and national levels. Simultaneously, granting ST status, along with its associated privileges and protections, to non-indigenous individuals in Manipur, including illegal Kuki immigrants who have unlawfully obtained government identity documents, represents a severe injustice towards indigenous Meeteis.

The indigenous Meeteis have endured a long history of suffering at the hands of numerous Kuki militant organizations. Currently, there are almost 30 Kuki insurgent groups of which 25 are under a tripartite Suspension of Operation (SoO) Agreement<sup>151</sup> with both the Government of India (GoI) and the Government of Manipur (GoM). However, these groups have been engaging in extortion and illegal tax collections, primarily within the dominant Kuki districts of Kangpokpi, Senapati, Tengnoupal and Churachandpur.<sup>42,43</sup> Given Meetei minority status in these Kuki-dominated areas, Meeteis have perennially lived in a state of fear, a situation that existed even before the events of May 3rd. Tragically, thousands of Meeteis are internally displaced and living in relief camps for months in their own homeland.

## 2. Meeteis- The Indigenous/Aboriginal Hill Tribe of Manipur.

The history of the Meeteis goes back to a very early stage despite the fact that its recorded history came to existence at a much later phase. The ancient kingdom of Manipur was inhabited since Stone Age which has wide cultural affinity in Asia, particularly with the Stone Age cultures of south-east Asia (Singh 1988, 69). Manipur was known by various names. In the first recorded treaty between East India Company and Jai Singh (king of Manipur) in 1762 the kingdom was recorded as '*Meeckley*' (Kabui 1988, 3). To the Shans the kingdom was known as '*Kase*' and to the Burmese as '*Kathe*', a corruption of the same word. The Ahoms called it '*Makeli*' and the Cacharis '*Magli*', while the old Assamese name for it is '*Moglan*'. Therefore, the name Manipur became popular only in the modern age.<sup>53</sup>

The state boasts an ancient and independent civilization,<sup>51</sup> with the history of the Meeteis meticulously documented in numerous ancient literary works known as the *Puyas*. These texts are held in high reverence as sacred scriptures, covering a wide array of subjects including medicine, religion, warrior codes, rites and rituals, migration, history, astronomy, politics, administrative guidelines, and natural phenomena. They were originally penned in an ancient script known as *Meetei Mayek*, which can be traced as early as the eighth century A.D.<sup>66</sup>

The culture and literature of the Meetei people was also diversified into the architectural works known for temples, ancient buildings, palaces, court halls and in the laws and customs.<sup>54,55,56</sup> The Meetei kingdom also came to prominence in several sporting areas since ancient times till today. In fact, ancient Manipur is the native birthplace of the modern game of polo<sup>52</sup>. The Meeteis have always been at the forefront to bring democracy and social reform in Manipur.

There are seven Meetei clans known as '*Salais*' which are identified in the *Puyas*. The Salais are - Khuman, Mangang, Luwang, Angom, Moilang, Khapa-Nganpa and Salang Leisangthem. Also, in the Puya '*Cheitharol Kumbaba/ Cheitharon Kumpapa*', the





historical events of seventy-eight kings starting from the first historical king, Nongda Lairen Pakhangba (33-154 A.D.) to Bodhachandra Singh (1941-1955) is chronicled.<sup>66</sup>

Traditional culture, traditions and spiritual beliefs were passed down through generations in the form of oral culture like prose, songs, proverbs, maxims, and verses and various dances.<sup>66</sup> A very important religious and social festival of the Meeteis is the *Lai Haraoba* festival. This festival is primarily a nature-worship festival, where the Meetei people pay homage to various deities, known as *Umang-lais*. (Umang=forest, lais=gods).<sup>66</sup>

*Meeteis* also link our ancestry in the hills. It is believed that the hills were first populated as the valley was initially largely water-logged and marshy. Evidence of a water-logged past of the valley and the gradual drying up process are to be seen even today, in the continued shrinking and disappearance of many lakes and other forms of wetlands. Mythologies of the various ethnic groups living both in the hills, as well as the valley, somewhat coincides with the belief of migration of population from the hills to settle in the valley. The people of the valley believe that the mountains and hills of Manipur are the abode of our ancestors. Even today we visit these mountains and hills and worship the *Surungs* (caves), *Leikhun* (holes inside earth) and *Leikut-Leirai* (gorges) situated in the hills as the original abode of our ancestors. *Kangkhui Surung* (Kangkhui caves) in Ukhrul district of Manipur east is regarded as ancestral abode of the *Angoms* clan (one of the seven clans of the Meeteis).<sup>147</sup> Meeteis believe that Koubru Mountain and its surrounding highland as the first human settlement from where people migrated to different; it has more than 50 sacred places. The first *Lai Haraoba* of the ancestors is believed to have taken place at *Koubru Haraoethel* at *Koubru hill*.<sup>147</sup>

Meeteis/Meithei were recognised and listed as a hill tribe and aboriginal people of Manipur/*Munnipore* in the British records.<sup>69</sup> In a historical account provided by a British ethnographer – T. C. Hudson in 1908, in his book “The Meitheis” quoted that “*there is far more ground to conclude them to be descendants of the surrounding hill tribe.*”<sup>55</sup> (page 6). Also, he mentioned in his book (page 7):

“*Should it be a correct view that the valley, of Munnipore was at no very distant period almost covered entirely by water; the origin of the Munnipories from the surrounding hill tribes is the proper and only conclusion to be arrived at. I think it is probable that when only a small part of the valley skirting the hills was capable of cultivation, the hill men bordering it used to descend and cultivate the little land there then was, returning to their homes in the hills after reaping their harvests: as, however; land increased, some few of them settled permanently in the plain, gradually increasing in numbers.*”<sup>55</sup>

Nevertheless, the Meetei tribes were not included in the Scheduled Tribe list by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India (GoI),<sup>148</sup> following the merger of Independent Princely Sovereign Manipur into the Dominion of India on September 21, 1949.<sup>49,149</sup>

### 3. The Kuki-Chin-Zo settlers:

The Kuki-Chin-Zo community is spread all over the Northeast states of India, Myanmar and parts of Bangladesh.<sup>63</sup>



The Mizos of Mizoram claim to originate from China as indicated by the terms ‘Sinlung’ or ‘Chhinlung’ (a place or a person’s name) in their traditional history which are handed verbally down through several decades. The majority of the Mizo tribes settled at Khampat area in Chin Hills during the 12th to the 14th century A.D.; they then slowly moved towards the west and entered the present Mizoram state during the 16th century.<sup>87</sup>

The Kuki-Chin-Zo people in Manipur are not indigenous to Manipur. Wherever the Kukis settle, they claim to be the indigenous people of that country or State. They also claimed to be lost tribes (Manmashi) of Israel and some 2000 Kukis went to Israel for permanent settlement. They entered Manipur as invaders and refugees.<sup>45</sup> Kukis entered Manipur from the Chin Hills of Myanmar in later parts of the 19th century and early 20th century<sup>57,45</sup> and they came to settle in ‘lands not of their own’.<sup>57</sup> Important historical factors such as the population explosion and wars in the Northern and Southern Chin societies of the then Burma (Myanmar) led to the movement of the Kukis and settlement in the hills of Northeast India, particularly Manipur.<sup>57</sup>

The Kukis looked out for land to establish new villages as accorded by the feudal system they follow till date.<sup>45</sup> British ethnographer - Brown, Robert (1874) described the settlement of Kuki refugees by the King of Manipur in 1872 in the Thangching range of hills and valley south-west of Moirang.<sup>142</sup> Sharma (2011, p. 18) quoted that:<sup>57</sup>

*“The Kuki-Chin population of hills in the broader geographical areas that comprise the states of Manipur, Mizoram, and Assam were as the product of social and political transformations in Chin hills. Two important historical factors such as the population explosion and wars in the Northern and Southern Chin societies of the then Burma are responsible for the historical migration of the present people in the hills of Northeast India. This is especially true of the present Kukis, the old Kukis, new Kukis and other later non-Naga tribes like the Paite in Northeast India, particularly in Manipur.”<sup>57</sup>*

A Standing Order of the President of Manipur State Darbar issued by T.A. Sharp mentioned that “Kukis in Naga area are Aliens and Refugees”. Another order in 1941 stated that “Kukis shall obtain prior permission from the Chief of the Naga Village for settlement and pay House Tax to the Naga Chief”.<sup>63</sup> The first payment of the Kuki Refugee fund was paid on 22 Apr 1957 by the Ministry of Home Affairs Govt of India through the Govt of Manipur vide Memo No. 01/R/RFL. This is the evidence of the Refugee status of Kukis in 1957<sup>63</sup>

Kukis were one of the disruptive tribes that were frequently pushed from one location to another due to their inability to coexist peacefully with other communities. They are recorded as having conflicts with various indigenous tribes in history. In the Standing Order of the President of Manipur State Darbar by Captain Harvey, the Kukis were known to be of savagery nature against the Naga in 1931 and they were not issued with firearms.<sup>63</sup>

#### 4. The Current Kuki-Meitei Conflict:

There are a number of Kuki-Zo-Chin insurgent groups in North-East India. Their main aspiration is to create a Kuki nation (Kukiland/Zalengam/Zoland),<sup>59,70,103</sup> which dates back to the late 1980s, when the first and largest of the Kuki-Zo insurgent groups, the Kuki National Organisation (KNO), came into being.<sup>62</sup> They are currently under a tripartite Suspension of Operation (SoO) Agreement with GoI and GoM. Their aspiration to form





this Kuki nation is possible only by land encroachments,<sup>107</sup> huge funding for supply of arms and ammunition<sup>131</sup> mostly through poppy cultivation<sup>76,129,130</sup>, extortion and ‘protection fees’ from civilians,<sup>110,131</sup> smuggling of weapons<sup>101,102</sup> and increase of population through illegal immigration from neighbouring countries.<sup>107</sup> There is also a strong nexus of illegal immigrants, especially the Kuki-Chin from Myanmar who are currently the leaders of the Kuki SoO militant groups,<sup>123,132</sup> with the Kuki politicians in Manipur (5 out of 10 Kuki MLAs who are demanding separate administration are connected with the Kuki militant groups).<sup>88,123,134,138</sup> Hugh cache of arms and ammunitions were ceased in Mizoram on 11 July, 2023 allegedly heading to Manipur to hand over to Zomi Revolutionary Army (ZRA) who are also currently under SoO Agreement in Manipur.<sup>101, 102</sup>

On May 03 2023, ATSUM (All Tribal Students’ Union Manipur) organised mass rally across Manipur, against the High Court’s directive to the Manipur Government to submit the two pending (pending since 25<sup>th</sup> May 2013) reports i.e., Ethnography report and Socio-Economic report of Meetei along with the recommendation for inclusion of the Meeteis in the Scheduled Tribe list. Kukis targeted Meeteis as the Scheduled Tribe status demand of the Meeteis will permit Meeteis to buy land in the Kuki dominated areas which hinders the Kuki’s aspiration for Kukiland/Zalengam/Zoland, as already published in the book “Zale’n-gam-The Kuki Nation” first published on April 1998.<sup>59</sup> This situation has led to acts of violence against the Meeteis by the Kukis, including instances of exodus and ethnic cleansing of Meeteis from Kuki-majority districts such as Churachandpur, Moreh, Kangpokpi, and Chandel in Manipur<sup>115</sup> and also from the State of Mizoram,<sup>7</sup> making the districts homogenous Kuki-dominated areas. Meeteis in Bishnupur district, adjacent to Churachandpur are still suffering due to firing and killings by Kuki armed groups.<sup>115</sup> The *modus operandi* to drive out Meeteis by Kukis is the same as the one they followed to drive out Nagas and Tamils from Kuki dominated areas in Manipur.<sup>113</sup> In addition, the Kukis have placed certain conditions before the re-settlement of displaced Meeteis in their original places,<sup>111</sup> which violates human rights and the rights of the indigenous Meeteis as declared in the articles of United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), such as Articles 10, 25, 26.<sup>112</sup> Meeteis are the victims in the Kuki-Chin-Zo community’s desire for land and power leading to this current crisis.

*Please refer to Section 6 for more details on other ethnic clashes perpetuated by Kuki-Zo-Chin people with various other communities of North-East India.*

## 5. Genesis of the Manipur Violence 2023:

The violent incidents that erupted on May 3, 2023, cannot be viewed in isolation. The origins of the crisis can be linked to the emergence of several Kuki-Zo-Chin militant groups with the objective of establishing Zalengam/Kukiland/Zoland/Greater Mizoram. As a result, the Kuki-Zo-Chin community began to raise objections to the various actions undertaken by the Government of Manipur. These actions include the eradication of poppy plantations in hill catchment areas under the "war on drugs" initiative, Government of Manipur (GoM) initiative to protect reserve forests by identification and removal of illegal encroachments, ongoing discussions on the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in local media, and the inclusion of Meetei in the scheduled tribes list of GoI. Tensions and hostilities are particularly pronounced within the Kuki community in Manipur, as these Government initiatives pose hindrance in their formation of a Kuki Nation.



These issues were simmering in the Churachandpur district for several months leading up to April 2023 due to the government's efforts to remove villagers from reserved forest areas. This unrest escalated with the burning of 16 forest offices on May 03 2023<sup>75,85</sup> starting on April 27, 2023. Rather than directing their grievances solely towards the Manipur Government, the Kuki community in Churachandpur, which is a Kuki-majority district, exacerbated communal tensions by vandalizing a Meetei Sanamahi (Pakhangba) temple and desecrating a Meetei flag during the night of April 29, 2023. Consequently, the mass rally on May 3, 2023, acted as the catalyst for the current crisis.

The events that led to the ongoing crisis in Manipur on May 03 2023 are detailed in *Reference No. 80* of this letter, a draft which was submitted to the Supreme Court of India.

a) **The Mizoram Peace Accord (Memorandum of Settlement):**

The current crisis in Manipur can be traced back to the Mizoram Peace Accord, which marked the beginning of efforts to establish a Kuki-Zo-Chin Nation. This accord, signed on June 30, 1986, was an official agreement between the Government of India (GoI) and the former militant group known as the 'Mizo National Front' (MNF). Its primary objective was to bring an end to the Mizo insurgency and violence in India.<sup>81</sup>

The MNF's overarching goal was to unite the Kuki-Zo-Chin people within a single administrative entity, encompassing territories from various north-eastern states of India, as well as portions from Bangladesh and Myanmar.<sup>61</sup> Consequently, the state of Mizoram was created in 1987 through the reconfiguration of territories that were previously part of Assam.

However, the dream of unifying the Kuki-Chin-Zo inhabited areas remained unfulfilled, as the Government of India did not make any commitments regarding this goal when signing the Mizoram Peace Accord.<sup>61,62,81</sup> As a result, in the current Manipur crisis, the MNF has revived its demand, to unite the Kuki-Chin-Zo people under a single administrative unit.<sup>61</sup>

In addition, many other Kuki armed wings i.e., Zomi Revolutionary Army (ZRA), Kuki National Army (KNA), Kuki Revolutionary Army (KRA) were formed in the mid 1980-1990s having similar aspirations to form Kuki-Nation (Zalengam/Zoland/Kukiland/Greater Mizoram).<sup>62,88</sup> This is the root cause of all Kuki-related violence occurring in Manipur and various other regions of North-East India since 1990s.<sup>62,81</sup>

*Please refer to **Section 6** for more details on ethnic clashes perpetuated by Kuki-Zo-Chin people with various communities of North-East India.*

b) **Kukiland/Zalengam/Zoland/Greater Mizoram:** At present, the Kukis have formed their armed associations to promote their idea of creating a separate administration and then a separate state and then an ultimate aim of forming a separate country called 'Kukiland/Zalengam/Zoland/Greater Mizoram'<sup>59,70</sup> by claiming territories from India, Myanmar and Bangladesh. To achieve this goal the Kuki armed wings i.e. Kuki National Army (KNA) formed on February 24, 1988, Kuki Revolutionary Army (KRA) formed in December 1999, and Zomi Revolutionary Army (ZRA) founded in 1997 by the Kuki people in India and Myanmar (Burma).<sup>62</sup>

c) **Kuki militant group leaders from Myanmar:**





The Zo people of Mizoram, the Kuki settlers in Manipur and the Chin people in Myanmar share kinship ties and ethnic affiliations which predate the formation of national citizenship and regional identities, resulting in the movement of people across borders, international and state, in times of strife.<sup>108</sup>

The issue of illegal influx of people, particularly from Myanmar, poses a significant threat to the integrity and security of India, particularly Manipur. This is evident in the identification of five leaders of Kuki insurgent groups being of Myanmar origin. They are presently engaged in a tripartite Suspension of Operations (SoO) Agreement with the GoI and GoM who are directly linked to the ongoing crisis. This information has also been corroborated by Advocate Geeta Rani in a media interview.<sup>138</sup> –

- i. **Mr. Thanlianpau Guite:**<sup>123</sup> The current President of the Kuki militant organisation ‘Zomi Revolutionary Army’ (ZRA). He was originally an Ex-MP Candidate in the Chin state of Myanmar.
- ii. **Mr. Khenchin:**<sup>123</sup> Vice President cum Secretary of Kuki militant organisation ZRA. He also originates from Chin state of Myanmar.
- iii. **General Mr. P.S. Haokip:**<sup>123</sup> The current President of the Kuki militant organisation ‘Kuki National Army’ (KNA), who originates from Myanmar and is currently sheltered at the Indian state of Nagaland.
- iv. **Mr. David Hangshing:**<sup>123</sup> The current President of another Kuki militant organisation ‘Kuki Revolutionary Army’ (KRA), who originates from Myanmar and also husband of **Mrs. Kimneo Haokip Hangshing**, who is the current sitting Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) from Saikul Assembly Constituency (AC) of Manipur, India.
- v. **Mr. ST Thangboi Kipgen:**<sup>123</sup> The current Chairman of another Kuki militant organisation ‘Kuki National Front’ (KNF) and the United Peoples Front (UPF). He is also husband of **Mrs. Nemcha Kipgen**, who is the current ‘Minister of Commerce and Industry and Cooperation’, (MCIC), Manipur.

d) **Nexus of Kuki politicians in Manipur with SoO militant groups originating from Myanmar:**

10 Kuki MLAs visited Mizoram to meet the CM of Mizoram.

There is also evidence suggesting that five out of the ten Kuki MLAs, who are advocating for separate administration from the Manipur Government, have direct affiliations with Kuki militant groups. These individuals are:

- i. **Kimneo Haokip Hangshing:**<sup>134</sup> is the current MLA from Saikul AC. Her husband David Hangshing is the chairman of Kuki militant organisation ‘Kuki Revolutionary Army’ (KRA). Her party Kuki People’s Alliance (KPA) was established by Kuki militant organisation KNA/KNO under the Chairmanship of PS Haokip, of Myanmar origin.
- ii. **Chinlunthang Zou:**<sup>134</sup> is the current MLA from Singhat AC who is also a KPA candidate and member of the Kuki militant organisation KNA.
- iii. **Vungzagin Valte:**<sup>134</sup> is the current MLA from Thanlon AC who is a representative of and sponsored by the Kuki militant organisation ‘Zomi



- Revolutionary Army' (ZRA). ZRA is a militant outfit under the Chairmanship of Thanglianpau Guite, an ex-MP candidate from Myanmar and presently living in Churachandpur district, Manipur.
- iv. **Paolienlel Haokip:**<sup>134</sup> is an advisor of the Kuki National Army (KNA). He is also a person of Myanmar origin and has recently joined Manipur politics.
  - v. **Nemcha Kipgen:**<sup>134</sup> is the current MLA from Kangpokpi AC and is currently a cabinet MCIC minister of Manipur. Her husband ST Thangboi Kipgen is the Chairman of the Kuki militant group 'Kuki National Front' (KNF).

Under article 7 of Rome statute, an organisation is not necessarily a state organisation but any organisation with its own policies and planning. The ICTY and ICTR could prosecute individuals, corporate bodies, and organisations for violation of international crimes. There is no reason why these above-mentioned individuals and organisations should not be tried under state law but there is no visible action as yet.

- e) **The issue of illegal immigration in the present crisis:** Aside from the leaders of Kuki militant groups being of Myanmar origin, the issue of illegal immigration is one of the primary factors fuelling the current crisis. There have been accounts of Kuki village chiefs receiving Rs 3,000 from each Kuki illegal immigrant who crossed the Myanmar border. These immigrants were then granted permission to construct houses in the hill districts of Manipur through a lottery system.<sup>140</sup> Also, on 12 April 2023, 7 Myanmar nationals who possessed Indian Identity cards were arrested at Imphal airport.<sup>71</sup>

Furthermore, in a drive conducted under the directive of a cabinet sub-committee set up in February 2023 and reported by the Inspector General of Police (Intelligence, Narcotics and Affairs of Border), a whopping 2,480 illegal immigrants from Myanmar were detected in various districts of Manipur.<sup>107</sup> During the identification drive, it was observed that these illegal immigrants had illicitly established their own villages in Manipur.<sup>107</sup>

The details are as follows:

Sl. No.	District	No. of Immigrants detected /remarks
1	Tengnoupal	1147
2	Chandel	1175
3	Churachandpur	154 (2 expired due to Covid 19)
4	Kamjong	1 person for smuggling contraband and 3 persons apprehended under Foreigners Act.
5	Pherzawl	Nil
	<b>Total No. of immigrants detected</b>	<b>2480</b>

A large number of new unrecognised villages were identified in Manipur. As of the last conducted census in India in 2011, there were 2,793 officially recognized villages in





Manipur. However, on April 26, 2022, as many as 966 “unrecognised villages” were found to be established which were not recognised by GoM. Out of these 966 ‘unrecognised villages’, 925 were found to be in Kuki dominated areas (309 were situated in Kangpokpi, 281 in Churachandpur, 205 in Chandel, and 130 in Tengnoupal districts).<sup>71</sup>

Additionally, on June 29, 2022, during a press conference at the Chief Minister's Secretariat office, the Chief Minister of Manipur announced that Manipur Police had effectively dismantled gangs engaged in the production of **counterfeit Aadhaar cards in Manipur**.<sup>119</sup> *(The Aadhaar card, is a government-issued identification document in India. It is administered by the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI), a statutory authority established by the Indian government. The Aadhaar card contains a 12-digit unique identification number, known as the Aadhaar number, which is linked to an individual's biometric and demographic information. Based on the Aadhaar card, individuals can readily establish their Indian citizenship).* Addressing the press, the Chief Minister of Manipur also disclosed that, acting on a tip-off, Superintendent of Police (SP) Tengnoupal and his team intercepted two vehicles traveling from Moreh to Imphal near Moreh Police Station the previous day. Among the ten passengers, nine were identified as illegal immigrants lacking valid documentation. Upon further investigation, it was confirmed that all the undocumented migrants were from Myanmar, he added.<sup>119</sup>

There has been huge influx of illegal immigrants from neighbouring countries into North-eastern India. According to UNHCR Regional Bureau for Asia and Pacific (RBAP), the Myanmar emergency update report has indicated the total number of arrivals from Myanmar to India (Mizoram and Manipur) following the events of February 1, 2021, to approximately 53,500 either as refugees to Mizoram or illegally into Manipur<sup>60</sup>. However, the actual number of illegal immigrants might be much higher. As per a 1947 census report of Myanmar (formerly known as Burma), the self-declared Burmese Kuki population was estimated at approximately 100,000. However, according to a statement from the Myanmar military government in 1990, this number had dwindled to approximately 40,000, as reported by AMYPCO.<sup>122</sup>

- f) **Aggressive drive against Drugs:** The present administration of Manipur has been actively involved in a robust anti-drug initiative, leading to the dismantling of numerous acres of illicit poppy plantations. Out of the total 15,496 acres of land where poppy cultivation was detected over the past five years, the largest portion of cultivation occurred in regions predominantly inhabited by the Kuki-Chin community, accounting for 13,122.8 acres.<sup>141</sup> Kuki SoO militant outfits have been accused of illegal poppy cultivation in remote parts of the state of Manipur.<sup>76</sup> Such tremendous increase in the cultivation and production of poppy could have been a fallout of the declining trends in Myanmar's poppy production.<sup>73</sup> This, in turn, significantly impacted the poppy and drug business supply chains of the notorious Golden Triangle's route shifting to Manipur.<sup>73,74,125</sup> Due to these reasons, Meeteis have been urging both the Government of India (GoI) and the Government of Manipur (GoM) to annul the SoO Agreement.

Between 2018 and May 2023, over 17,000 acres of opium poppy fields in Manipur were destroyed, the Ministry of Home Affairs told the Rajya Sabha (Upper House Parliament of India).<sup>86</sup>







to submit its recommendations regarding the inclusion of the Meeteis in the Scheduled Tribe list of India. According to ATSUM, the rallies were originally intended to be peaceful; however, violence was reported as early as 10:30 am with rallyists vandalizing and burning forest offices, Meetei houses, looting of arms and killing two people starting from Churachandpur district Manipur.

Furthermore, May 03 2023 violence has been covered in detail as mentioned in *Reference No. 80* of this letter, which was submitted to the Supreme Court of India.

## 6. Ethnic clashes involving Kuki-Zo-Chin and other communities in India

The Kuki-Zo-Chin people in India have been in frequent clashes with various communities or among themselves in India. In the chronicles of clashes as listed below, they have been the major instigators of violence, leading to ethnic cleansing of certain communities:

- a) **Naga-Kuki Conflict**<sup>95,96</sup> – The Kuki community had started growing in numbers in the hill districts of Manipur, especially Moreh, with substantial influx from Myanmar. These new illegal immigrants belonged to the Chin sub-tribe that is part of the larger Kuki-Chin-Zo ethnic group. Kukis started attacking Naga settlements in the hills in 1990, allegedly with the aim of forcing the Nagas out of their lands. The Kukis wanted to claim vast swathes of Manipur's hills which have been inhabited by Nagas, as their own land. The objective was, and remains so to this day, to claim a major part of the hill districts of Manipur as 'Kukiland'. Many Naga villages were burnt and hundreds of Nagas displaced. Many Nagas were also killed by Kukis. In 1992, when repeated warnings to the Kukis to stop the eviction of Nagas from their lands went unheeded, the Nagas retaliated which lasted until 1997. As a result, hill districts of Manipur which were earlier dominated by Nagas became Kuki dominated areas. Moreh, which was once a multicultural frontier town bordering Myanmar, became homogenous after this conflict as the Nagas who were displaced were unable return to Moreh.
- b) **Kuki-Tamil Clashes**<sup>113</sup> – The Moreh town in Manipur was once a peaceful multicultural town until the early 1990s. However, this changed after the Kuki-Naga Conflict and the subsequent Kuki-Tamil conflict which took place in the Moreh town of Manipur in 1995. Large scale illegal influx of Kuki-Chins from Myanmar and arming of the Kuki militant outfits made the Kuki-Chin community numerically strong who then started asserting themselves, leading to extortion and acts of vandalism. This triggered tension between the two communities and in April 1995 a Tamil businessman was kidnapped by Kukis for a huge sum of money as ransom. On refusal to pay the huge ransom, the Kuki militants killed the man. This murder greatly angered the Tamil community and brought out a rally to protest the murder. The Kukis attacked the Tamils during the rally and this triggered the clashes between Kukis and Tamils, leaving nine dead. In that cycle of violence, Tamil houses and shops were looted and destroyed. The Kukis even attacked and defiled the old Tamil temple.<sup>113</sup> The clashes led to an exodus of Tamils from Moreh town and they number just 1,500 in Moreh today, which was about 15,000 in 1995.<sup>113,114</sup>
- c) **Kuki-Karbi Clashes**<sup>95</sup> - The Kukis, who had started moving into the hilly Karbi Anglong district of Assam State in India in the third decade of the last century (in the 1930s), started skirmishing with the indigenous Karbis of the district from 1999. The Kukis, concentrated in the Singhason Hills - a small pocket in the Karbi Anglong district



- started asserting themselves and demanding political autonomy. A section of Kukis, encouraged by the Kuki Revolutionary Army (KRA), also started voicing the demand for integration of Kuki-inhabited areas in Karbi Anglong with the Kuki-inhabited areas of adjoining Manipur to form a 'Kukiland' state. This brought the Kukis into direct conflict with the Karbis who had their own militant outfits like the United People's Democratic Solidarity (UPDS). The KRA triggered the violence by attacking Karbi villages in October 2003 and killing a few Karbis. The UPDS retaliated by attacking Kuki settlements and killing Kukis.

The worst massacre took place in March 2004 when the KRA killed 39 Karbis in a single day. The conflict ended with security forces launching operations against both the militant groups. But not before it left about a hundred persons dead.

- d) **Hmar-Dimasa Clashes**<sup>95</sup>- The Hmars belong to the Kuki-Chin-Zomi-Mizo ethnic group and apart from the Indian States of Mizoram and Manipur, had settled down in pockets of present-day Dima Hasao district of Assam, that is inhabited by Dimasas who once ruled over large parts of Assam and the plains areas of present-day Nagaland. Like their brethren in neighbouring Karbi Anglong district, the Hmars started flexing their muscles in the district from the late 1990s and challenging the Dimasas. The Hmars, all Christians, also started an aggressive proselytization drive to convert the Hindu Dimasas to Christianity. In this, they were aided by the Church and the Naga insurgent group - the Isak-Muivah faction of the NSCN that punctuates all its communication with 'Nagalim for Christ'. The Dimasas started resenting the assertion by the Hmars who were recent settlers in the district. They (the Dimasas) were particularly angered by the fierce opposition by Hmars to their demand for greater autonomy or a separate Dimasa state within the Indian Union. The Hmar militant outfit - the Hmar People's Convention (Democratic), the HPC(D) started attacking Dimasa settlements in 2002. The Dima Haram Daogah (DHD), a Dimasa militant outfit, started retaliation and full-scale clashes broke out in early 2003.

The worst massacre took place in March 2003 with the HPC(D) massacring 27 Dimasas. Attacks and counter-attacks continued and more than a hundred people were killed. The Hmars also demanded that the areas they inhabit in Dima Hasao be integrated with 'Kukiland'. The violence ended with peace talks involving the two ethnic groups and the Assam government as well as the Union Government in 2004. But tensions still simmer.

- e) **Kukis Vs Gorkhas**<sup>95</sup> - The Kukis, in their bid to claim most of the hills of Manipur as their homeland, also came into conflict with Gorkhas inhabiting the Kakching, Tengnoupal, Kangpokpi and Churachandpur districts of Manipur where they (the Kukis) are in a majority. The first batch of Ghurkhas as a group came to Manipur in 1824, during the time of Raja Gambhir Singh. During this period Ghurkhas of the 16th Sylhet Local Battalion, later to become the 8th Gurkha Rifles, were included in the Police Levy of Gambhir Singh. During the first quarter of the 19th Century, Manipur was much troubled by Burmese intruders and their military.<sup>157</sup> The Gorkhas are a poor and socially disadvantaged group in the state who number about 67,000 now. They are engaged mostly in farming small plots of land, dairy and poultry, petty businesses and as labourers. Some Gorkha ex-servicemen of the Indian Army and Assam Rifles have also settled down in Manipur. As such, due to their low population and poor socio-economic status, they pose no threat to the Kukis. And yet, they face all kinds of





pressures to leave the area. There are also disturbing reports that encouraged by the Church, the predominantly Christian Kukis have been trying to convert Hindu Gorkhas by force and enticements. In a recent memorandum to BJP president J P Nadda, the Gorkhas of Manipur have asked for security and protection from Kuki militant groups<sup>97</sup>.

- f) **Mizos and other minority communities' conflicts in Mizoram**<sup>95</sup> - The Mizos, a close-ethnic-brethren of the Kukis, have also found themselves in more than one ethnic conflict in Mizoram. Severe restrictions have been imposed on the rights of non-Mizos for many decades, even from the pre-Independence days, in what was the Lushai Hills of Assam that became the Mizoram state in 1987. Many communities in Mizoram like the Marwaris, Biharis and Bengalis who have been engaged in business activities or have been employed in the administration for many decades have faced curtailment of their rights, especially with regard to owning properties. The non-Mizo business community in the state have also faced curtailment of their freedom to carry on their businesses in the form of reducing the quotas of trade licences for non-Mizos and restricting them from bidding for government or semi-government contracts. But the worst discrimination was faced by the Brus (or Reangs) who have resided in Mizoram for many centuries.

The Brus are historically spread over contiguous areas of Mizoram, Tripura, Assam and the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) of Bangladesh. The Mizos resented the presence of the Brus since they were a separate ethnic group. Two powerful civil society groups - the Young Mizo Association (YMA) and the Mizo Students' Association - forced the state government to arbitrarily remove the names of Brus from the state's electoral rolls in order to disenfranchise them, marginalise them politically and then divest them of their rights. That triggered a conflict between the Brus and Mizos, and more than 35,000 Brus were forcibly displaced from Mizoram in 1997. Since then they have lived in inhuman and squalid conditions in refugee camps in Tripura.<sup>98</sup> Their homes were set on fire, women raped, hounded out of Mizoram for resisting conversion and being Hindus<sup>99</sup>. Today, they have no identity cards, getting birth certificate is a challenge. Safety of the girls is a challenge and they are married off in teens.<sup>99</sup> Because of such traumatic experiences the Bru people did not want to return to Mizoram and in the year 2020 arrangements has been made for their permanent settlement in Tripura<sup>100</sup>.

People of other ethnicities and religions however, pejoratively called 'vai' in Mizo, and are not offered similar refuge in Mizoram<sup>95</sup>.

- g) **Mizo-Chakma Conflict** - The Mizo/Zo-Chakma conflict in Mizoram is a deeply entrenched ethnic dispute pitting the majority Mizos against the minority Chakmas. This prolonged conflict has been marred by a history of violence and discrimination directed to the Chakma community. A grim chapter in this conflict unfolded in 1993 when a mob of Mizos brutally lynched 20 Chakmas in the Lawngtlai district. Subsequently, in 1997, over 30,000 Chakmas were forcibly displaced from their homes in Mizoram due to escalating ethnic clashes. Discrimination against the Chakmas has extended to issues of land ownership, educational access, and employment opportunities. The underlying cause of this conflict revolves around the critical matter of indigenous status, which has put the Chakma population at risk of displacement from their land. The Chakmas who have been displaced by the conflict, have been forced to live in relief camps and have been unable to return to their homes. The Indian government has taken steps to resolve the conflict, but these efforts have been largely



unsuccessful. The government has signed several agreements with the Chakma and Mizo communities, but these agreements have not been fully implemented.<sup>154</sup>

- h) **Thadou-Paite Conflict**<sup>57,58</sup> - There has also been evidence of ethnic clashes which took place within the Kuki community. i.e. between the Thadous and the Paites. The deadly clash took place in 1997–1998 within the Kuki community at Churachandpur district in Manipur, India. An agreeable common denominator for all the Kuki Chin groups has not been achieved as the majority of Thadous wish to retain Kuki as a generic identity, to which others choose Zomi. Further, there is the presence of large anti-Thadou Kuki factions. The so-called Old Kukis in Chandel district including Maring have chosen to be Nagas because of the above equation of power mentioned above within the broadly Kuki-Chin-Mizo groups that run-in favour of the larger group, the Thadous. The causes of the conflict were ethnic tensions and armed terrorism and started in June 1997 when Kuki-Thadou insurgents executed nine Kuki-Paite villagers. Over 352 people died, thousands of homes were destroyed and over 13,000 people were displaced. The Government of India sent in the Indian Army to attempt to stop the violence. The conflict ended in September 1998 with a peace agreement between these two communities of Kukis.

#### 7. Timeline of the ongoing Manipur violence:<sup>65,80,89</sup>

- 1) **April 27, 2023:** The actual instigation was started by Kuki mobs. They destroyed an open gym at P.T. Sports Complex, which was planned to be inaugurated on the April 28, 2023. They also destroyed the structure prepared for celebrating the first anniversary of Churachandpur's MLA L. M. Khaute's election victory. The Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF), a conglomerate of recognised tribes of Churachandpur district in Manipur, announced non-cooperation of all government-related programs and the total shutdown of the district from 8 am to 4 pm on Apr 28, 2023. The State Government imposed 144 Cr. PC and shut down internet services for 5 days. However, militancy and violence continued. The offices of Range Forest (Tuibong) were also attacked.
- 2) **April 28, 2023:** Section 144 of CrPC was imposed along with a five-day suspension of internet services. Protesters and security forces clashed, with police resorting to the use of tear gas shells to disperse the mob in the district of Churachandpur<sup>104,105</sup>.
- 3) **April 29, 2023:** On the night of 29 April 2023 at Churachandpur's Thingam-phai Meetei Leikai, some 20 Kukis allegedly vandalised a Meetei temple of the Eputhou Pakhangba and Salai Taret Flag.<sup>106</sup>
- 4) **May 03, 2023 – Start date of Exodus of Meeteis from Kuki-dominated areas (Churchandpur, Moreh, Kangkopki valleys):**

Thousands of Kukis, many brandishing sophisticated arms, turned up for the Tribal Solidarity March called by the All Tribal Students Union of Manipur (ATSUM) to protest against the inclusion of Meeteis in the ST category. More than 60,000 people were estimated to have attended the rally in Churachandpur.

- a) The events that led to the ongoing crisis in Manipur on May 03 2023 are detailed in *Reference No. 80* of this letter, which was submitted to the Supreme Court of India.





- 5) **May 04, 2023:** The violence escalated, with reports of houses being burnt down, widespread looting, and arson. Miscreants from the Kuki community burned down houses belonging to Meeteis at Moreh, some escaped and went to take shelter in Myanmar, some in Assam Rifles camp while others took shelter at the Police Station, in Moreh. 3 villages in Imphal East near Kangpokpi were burned down by the Kuki miscreants. The victims took shelter at Khundrakpam village. 20 houses in 2 villages of Meeteis in Kangpokpi district adjoining Imphal West, were also burned down. The victims took shelter at Sekmai village. There were reports of similar incidents of burning of vehicles and houses at some places in Imphal. Deployment of 55 Columns of Assam Rifles and Army and 14 Columns were on standby. 7,500 personnel were evacuated by Army and Paramilitary forces. Additional Forces like Border Security Force (BSF), RAF & Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) along with sophisticated weapons were flown into Imphal Airport. Reports came in of 8 deaths in the incident. Mr. P. Dounge, Director General of Police (DGP) Manipur Police briefed the media at this time and apprised the public to return looted arms and ammunition within 2 to 3 days.
- 6) **May 05, 2023:** The Indian government deployed paramilitary forces to the state to try to restore order. Army fired at a protester to disperse the mob at Keibul Lamjao, Bishnupur District. Commander of Sagolband Moirang Hanuba, Mr Oinam, 28 years, got a bullet injury to the stomach. Many houses adjoining valleys and hills were burned down. Reported death of 35 (22 in Regional Institute of Medical Sciences - RIMS), 13 in Jawaharlal Nehru Institute of Medical Sciences (JNIMS)) persons. Treatment of 44 injured persons at RIMS and 64 at JNIMS. Reported that most of them sustained bullet injuries. Some arms and ammunition looted from the police stations starts to be recovered.
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Eb0uI\\_Gzzk&t=505s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Eb0uI_Gzzk&t=505s).
- 7) **May 06, 2023:** The violence continued, with more reports of deaths and injuries. The Indian government imposed a curfew in some parts of the state and also deployed paramilitary forces to try to restore order. Meeteis from Khundrakpam and Saikhul villagers left their homes fearing an attack. Meetei Ikou village was destroyed by arson. Villagers complained about Central Security Forces not stopping armed Kuki personnels and letting them use weapons and firing at will. Mrs P. Surbala Ex-Pradhan, Waiton GP and other villagers requested through the media for State security forces because the Assam Rifles were not helping them.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DtLtNkUkjFI>
- 8) **May 07, 2023:** Phukhao villagers started collecting licensed guns to protect themselves. The villagers alleged through the media that Assam Rifles (AR) did not stop but appeared to be helping the Kuki-armed SoO groups to fire at them from hilltops nearby. Dr. Sambit Patra, BJP spokesperson, told citizens to trust the Security Forces in a press briefing.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1w1fV7ILl-c&t=506s>
- 9) **May 08, 2023:** Security Advisor Mr Kuldeep Singh briefed the media that 20,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) have been evacuated out of 30,000 IDPs. 208 FIRs (First Impression Reports) have been lodged and raids have been conducted to arrest



miscreants but they were not found to be in their homes. 192 weapons have been recovered. He further said 65 persons have died.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S3nmF\\_BhY5E](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S3nmF_BhY5E)

- 10) **May 10, 2023:** Firing between Assam Rifles personnel and Kuki armed personnel (suspected SoO militant group) took place at Kangpokpi hill adjoining Imphal East district. One Assam Rifles personnel got a bullet injury on the chest. 105 persons belonging to the Meetei community who were sheltering at 35<sup>th</sup> AR, Ukhrul were evacuated to Khundrakpam with the help of 35<sup>th</sup> Assam Rifles unit. Still firing from Kuki armed groups continued. 300 Meetei victims from Moreh were brought to the Imphal relief camp by Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). The victims from Moreh express their discontentment through the media that it is out of the ordinary for Kukis civilians to be using arms to get their demands met; if they were ordinary citizens, they should make their demands to the Government through regular lawful channels. Hence, they suspect the involvement of armed Kuki militants during the present conflict. Another victim questioned why the number of Assam Rifles personnel deployed from Tengnoupal to Moreh are more than the number of Kuki armed personnel, but they have been unable to stop the armed militants from attacking the Meetei and burning their houses.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uxaz-P-2p7c>

- 11) **May 11, 2023:** Tronglaobi Makha Leikai, Bishnupur district - firing took place between Kuki armed groups and 5 Manipur Rifles personnel. 1 dead and 4 injured from Manipur Rifles. Thongam Sham, 33 years, s/o Th. Achouba, Torbung Bangala: Leichonbam Suraj Singh 23 years, s/o late Mohan Tera Khongshangbi: and Naorem Nanao 33 years s/o N Chaobal of Torbung Bangla were kidnapped at Torbung Bangla by Kuki miscreants while they went to collect paddy grains from their home. BSF personnel on guard at that place rescued others. 1 BSF personnel was injured from an attack by a sharp weapon.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w0sFoIB1wkg&t=1827s>

- 12) **May 12, 2023:** Chanung, Imphal East - suspected Kuki armed groups fired at villagers. Some villagers with licensed gun holders of the Meetei returned fire in self-defence. CSOs raised questions to the Govt, about why such firing incidents are happening in the presence of so many security personnel.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LXa5aC1QHLA>

- 13) **May 13, 2023:** All Manipur State Bus and Allied Transport Association, Inter State Transporters Association, Imphal Silchar Transporters Welfare Society, and Joint Transporters Committee declared to stop passenger transport services till Govt of Manipur is able to provide security to them on NH-2 and NH-37 highways.

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=U3-bYaQtniE>

- 14) **May 14, 2023:** 10 Meetei houses were torched at Torbung Mamang Sabal in the presence of Central Armed Forces. People demanded Central Forces to leave Manipur if they cannot protect them. Ordinary citizens demand to be provided weapons to protect themselves. 10 Kuki MLAs (Members of Legislative Assembly) demanded separate administration in Manipur. Mr Kuldeep briefed the media that 73 people have





been killed in the violence, 243 personnel were reported injured and 1,809 houses have been torched.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9rjs0Khm8YM&t=1810s>

15) **May 15, 2023:** The state name “Manipur” gets removed from the signboard and hoardings by the Kuki community in Kangpokpi, in demand of separate administration.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=URhMnzaScfY>

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16) **May 16, 2023:** No Security personnel are deployed at Kumbi, villagers are afraid of attack from Kuki militants. Villagers are guarding their village and demanding provision of weapons if the Government cannot provide security forces.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7hDFRSD3U3k&t=1364s>

17) **May 17, 2023:** The bench led by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud expressed its inclination towards staying the order, but it eventually did not do so. Justice PS Narasimha and Justice JB Pardiwala were also part of the bench. *“I think we have to stay the order of the High Court. We have given Justice Muralidharan time to correct himself but he did not. I mean it’s very clear what to do if the High Court doesn’t follow the constitution,”* CJI, Chandrachud remarked, orally. Bar and Bench offered a slightly different version of the Chief Justice of India, CJI’s words. This version comes across as more critical: *“We have to stay the order of the Manipur HC. It is completely factually wrong and we gave time to Justice Muralidharan to remedy his error and he did not...we have to take a strong view against it now.”*

<https://thewire.in/law/supreme-court-manipur-hc-meitei-scheduled-tribes-list>

18) **May 18, 2023:** Many bunkers were created by Kuki SoO militants in Kangpokpi district, adjoining Imphal, Security forces have not stopped these illegal activities.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SEFVkgkIM-c>

19) **May 19, 2023:** 3 houses belonging to the Meetei were burned down at Dolaithabi. Mizoram Chief Minister Zoramthanga announced that the Mizo National Front (MNF) has been working for the unification of all Zo tribes for decades since 1961.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VEUw5uPmuqY&t=16s> (9:00 - 9:30m)

<https://www.indiatodayne.in/mizoram/story/mizoram-cm-zoramthanga-calls-for-integration-of-zo-tribes-605794-2023-06-28>

20) **May 20, 2023:** Mr. Kuldeep said that unannounced checks of SoO groups are in progress and day by day, the number of SoO group cadres is increasing in the designated camps. He is negotiating with the concerned party to restore free road mobility on NH-2. Three Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) were diffused by the Indian Army near Saiton (near Churachandpur).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VEUw5uPmuqY&t=16s>

21) **May 21, 2023:** Armed Kuki miscreants fired at Meeteis at Moidangpok, Patsoi. Khangembam Kiran, 30 years, s/o Kh. Naba, Moidangpok Maning Leikai, Thangjam Dipak, 30 years, s/o Mangi Moidangpok Mamang Leikai, Yenkhom Naoto, 27 years, s/o Birchandra Moidangkhong Leikai, sustained bullet injuries.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KH0huX9CIik>



- 22) **May 22, 2023:** On May 22, Jat Regiment and other Central forces assaulted three journalists, who were covering the resurgence of violence at New Chekon. The targeted journalists were assaulted despite clearly identifying themselves as media persons.

<http://e-pao.net/GP.asp?src=44..260623.jun23>

Armed Kuki miscreants threaten Meeteis and Pangals that they cannot run a business at New Chekon, Imphal, and if they resisted, they would be shot dead. An angry mob torched 4 houses at Chekon. Police arrested 3 miscreants with 2 heavy weapons.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KH0huX9CIik>

- 23) **May 23, 2023:** The Army announced a combing operation at Imphal East, Imphal West, Bishnupur and Kangpokpi districts. They did not mention Churachandpur which was the epicentre and where the current conflict originated started from April 27, 2023 onwards. Manipur fire service personnel protested to seek suspension of 16 JAT personnel who had beaten them while performing their duties at Chekon the previous day.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K6E-l45Mqig>

- 24) **May 24, 2023:** At Phoubakchao Ikai Awang Maning Leikai, 5 Meetei houses were burned down, paddy grains were looted and farm domestic animals were stolen (ducks, hens and pigs) by Kuki miscreants. Though this village had been torched, no security personnel were deployed. At Tronglaobi, some Meetei houses were burned down and villagers were fired upon by armed Kuki miscreants. At Thamnapokpi, Kangkhalamngai Hill Valley School run by the Meetei was burned down. Meetei villagers came to put out the fire but the Indian Army personnel stopped them and seized some of the licensed guns brought by some villagers. Koijam Chandramani, 30 years s/o Ingochouba was shot dead by armed Kuki miscreants. IFCD Quarters at Kangpokpi were ambushed by Kuki armed groups. Aribam Rishikesh, 31 years s/o Late A. Brajabidhu sustained several bullet injuries on his body. Firing between armed Kuki miscreants and combined forces at Yalzang village Kangchup erupted. At 22<sup>nd</sup> Assam Rifles post no.9, armed Kuki miscreants came and fired at Meetei villagers who blamed Assam Rifles personnel for letting armed Kuki groups to fire at them. The office of Minister Govindas Konthoujam at Bishnupur was vandalised by the public.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pe9CiVAjS0Y&t=855s>

- 25) **May 25, 2023:** At Imphal Konung Mamang 3 RAF personnel set ablaze a Muslim meat shop. The incident was captured on CCTV.

- 26) **May 26, 2023:** Armed Kuki groups fired from 3 different directions near Phoubakchao Ikai Maning Leikai, Manipur Police arrived and returned fire. Villagers again blamed the Indian paramilitary for not stopping the armed Kuki groups. One house belonging to the Meetei was burned down by Kuki miscreants at Tronglaobi Makha Leikai, Loubuk Maning. The villagers blamed the Central security forces for non-action again, as the incident took place near a sentry post of Central security forces. Allegedly, they not only helped the miscreants, but even prevented the villagers from putting out the fire. The villagers demanded the State police force in place of Central security forces because of this incident.





<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VUcKA5Impac&t=13s>

- 27) **May 27, 2023:** Phoubakchao Ikai Maning Leikai, Torbung and Kangvai - 50 Meetei houses were burned down by Kuki miscreants despite being surrounded by Central paramilitary forces. Villagers blamed the Army for allowing Kuki miscreants to torch those houses and stopping the police reinforcement vehicle who had come to assess the situation at Tidim Road by using their Casper vehicles. At Kangvai, an old man wanted to run away from the house fearing violence from Kuki miscreants but one of the Indian Army personnel locked the door from outside, to his luck the fuel of Kuki miscreants got exhausted and he survived. Central Forces sent all village volunteers home and India Reserve Battalion (IRB) and Manipur Police including commandos were not allowed to come to Phoubakchao Ikai and were told to sleep peacefully. Villagers trusted them and Kuki miscreants came in their presence and burned down 50 houses.

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oyCM9h3s-Hk>

- 28) **May 28, 2023:** Chief Minister Shri N Biren Singh spoke in a media briefing that State Police and commandos can operate in all crisis-affected areas, and there are no jurisdictional limitations imposed. 40 Kuki militants were killed. They had used AK-47s and M-16 assault weapons. Eight Meeteis were killed, including a police officer, in an encounter with armed Kuki groups at different places. Villagers blamed 22 AR personnel for not taking any action against armed Kuki personnel. The public had started checking vehicles suspecting movements of armed Kuki groups at Imphal after this incident. Armed SoO groups attacked 13 different villages and burned down many houses. LPG gas cylinder godown and Airtel tower at Sugnu were also burned down. The police conducted many operations related to this. 6 houses were also burned down at Leitanpokpi.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oR4iF3n1ehg&t=302s>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Sfs4PDuRKY&list=PLP7R0U4Ap1x-t03KU6nJManePy4PHTDo1&index=13&t=112s>

- 29) **May 29, 2023:** State Cabinet meeting was held with the Union Home Minister Shri Amit Shah at Imphal. Kuki miscreants burned down houses and fired heavily in Leimakhong Chingkhong and Kanto Sabal areas. Manipur Police came and an encounter took place. CO Sikh Regiment and his team came to 2<sup>nd</sup> IRB HQ at Naransinha, Moirang to collect arms and weapons. After getting this information, Thongam Shanti MLA of Moirang came along with villagers to 2<sup>nd</sup> IRB HQ and stopped the taking of arms and weapons by the Sikh Regiment. People from the relief camp came at 2<sup>nd</sup> Manipur Rifles (MR) at North AOC to take arms and ammunition but the Manipur Rifles personnel could convince the crowd and disperse them.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kyZqe-fHb\\_U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kyZqe-fHb_U)

- 30) **May 30, 2023:** Shri Amit Shah, Hon'ble Home Minister of India had a series of meetings with different CSOs and SoO groups at Imphal and Churachandpur.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l5kPcEzZoJ4&t=13s>

- 31) **May 31, 2023:** Pipe bombs fired by armed Kuki groups injured 5 Manipur Police Commandos at Bishnupur. The injured police commandos are SI Salam Gyanendro, 4<sup>th</sup>



IRB rifleman Elingalong alias Alex, constable Khangembam Janaranjan, head constable L Gojendro and 2<sup>nd</sup> IRB rifleman Prasanta.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GR5FrIcofAw>

- 32) **June 01, 2023:** Union Home Minister Shri Amit Shah said in a press meeting, an enquiry commission led by a retired High Court judge will be commissioned to investigate the crisis in Manipur. A saw mill was burned down and destroyed, and a poultry farm at Phayeng was looted.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cfyj08V6lXA>

- 33) **June 02, 2023:** Heavily armed Kuki militants once again attacked several Meetei villages during the morning, injuring 16 people.

<http://e-pao.net/GP.asp?src=1..030623.jun23>

- 34) **June 03, 2023:** The officer in charge of Kakching police station stated that an unknown dead male body had been lying unclaimed at JNIMS morgue for the past five days. According to a statement from the Kakching police station, the body was recovered from the Serou village area on May 29, 2023. Bodies of 3 persons killed in firing by armed Kuki militants on a Meetei village in Kakching district on May 28 have been claimed by their family members from the JNIMS morgue on Saturday for performing their last rites. The deceased have been identified as Yumlebham Siva of Sugnu, Heikrujam Bobisana of Khongjom and Khagembam Ananda Prashad of Wangjing Khara-khong. At about 9:45 pm, armed Kuki armed groups burned down houses at Serou Mamang Leikai to Mayai Leikai after the departure of AR's Casper vehicle from the location.

<http://e-pao.net/GP.asp?src=11..040623.jun23>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RMCsGwbc9dk>

- 35) **June 04, 2023:** Firing took place between Police commandos and armed Kuki groups. 30 Houses were burned down at Nazareth Camp of UKLF including a wood-ply factory and a school near Sugnu. Armed Kuki groups came and burned down 200 houses including the residence of Sugnu MLA K Ranjit Singh. United Kuki Liberation Front (UKLF) personnel continued firing with reported 6 armed Kuki personnel and injured 1 villager.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RMCsGwbc9dk>

- a. Bharatiya Gorkha Parisangha (Gorkha community of Manipur), wrote a letter to the BJP National President, Shri JP Nadda, sharing the grievances of the Gorkha community in the state of Manipur, which are being created by the activities and dominance of the Kuki terrorists. The letter of grievance mentions how the Nepali-speaking Gorkha community is a minority in the state of Manipur, with a population of only 63,756 as per the 2011 census and how this crisis has badly affected the Nepali-speaking Gorkha minority community across the state of Manipur.
- b. International Gorkha Forum has also shown serious concern about the numerous instances of continuous extortion in cash and kind from the Gorkha community of Manipur by the Kuki militants. A statement by the International Gorkha Forum based in London, while expressing strong condemnation of the act of







Shantamani and Laishram Naothoibi (32) s/o Ningthou of Kongpal Ningthoubung Leikai, Telem Thoithoi (28) s/o Surjit of Leimakhong Mapal, Yumnam Surjitkumar (43) s/o Kula of Ningthemkhun, Laishram Suresh (33) s/o Samungou of Ningthemchakhul and Laishram Abung alias Mathai s/o Megha of Kangla Sangomsang Awang Leikai.

<http://e-pao.net/GP.asp?src=20..150623.jun23>

40) **June 16, 2023:** RAF personnel arrested and assaulted numerous unarmed and innocent civilians. One Ningombam Sunil, a resident of Brahmapur Lalji Lakpa Leikai, was reportedly assaulted at his residence without any provocation or inquiry by the RAF personnel.

<http://e-pao.net/GP.asp?src=44..260623.jun23>

41) **June 17, 2023:** Athokpam Jiten, the general secretary of All Manipur Working Journalists' Union (AMWJU), and Moirangthem Khagemba Meetei, the Games and Sports Secretary, were allegedly assaulted by a RAF team near Singjamei Police Station. In a separate incident, Ibungo Laishram, a video journalist, also faced a similar situation with the same RAF team.

<http://e-pao.net/GP.asp?src=44..260623.jun23>

42) **June 23, 2023:** The Youth's Forum for Protection of Human Rights has submitted a memorandum to the Governor and the Chief Minister of Manipur, calling for immediate action to prevent atrocities and inhumane acts committed by the Central Forces, particularly the Rapid Action Force (RAF), in the state. The forum strongly condemned the continuous assault on journalists and involvement of the Central Security Force (CSF) and RAF personnel in escalating violence. Haobam Pravin Kumar, a sub-editor of *Echel Express* was detained near Khurai Popular High School, at 10:30 p.m. for some time and released after being beaten up by an RAF team.

<http://e-pao.net/GP.asp?src=44..260623.jun23>

43) **June 24, 2023:** RAF personnel broke the fencing of Times of Manipur (TOM) TV editor Mr Nabakumar's residence at Khurai, Imphal East, and broke the windshield of his car Maruti SX4 at 01:10 a.m. Haobijam Ghaneshwor (32) of Napat village sustained bullet injuries when Kuki militants opened fire towards the Tangjeng Khunjao area of Kakching district. A drone suspected to be remote-controlled by Kuki militants hovered over the Tangjeng Khunjao area. In their effort to shoot down the drone, some village defence volunteers opened fire using double-barrel guns. On hearing the gunshots, Kuki militants fired several rounds from Bongmol village of Churachandpur district.

<http://e-pao.net/GP.asp?src=8..260623.jun23>

44) **June 27, 2023:** At least two volunteers guarding Meetei villages near Leimakhong were killed in an attack by suspected Kuki militants early in the morning. The deceased were Waikhom Nilachandra alias Boicha (40) s/o Boiyai of Kongpal Khaidem Leikai and Konsam Herojit Meetei (38) s/o Santrok alias Joy of Senjam Khunou Mamang Leikai; 7 others were injured. 5 of the injured were treated at Raj Medicity and 1 at Shija Hospital. As per reports, Kuki militants launched attacks using sophisticated weapons and bombs on Meetei villages from the direction of Nelon Vaiphei (Nungyung-bi), Sangshang, Mulai and Haraothel villages which are on the western end of Senjam Chirang at irregular intervals from 5 am until late evening.





<http://e-pao.net/GP.asp?src=28..300623.jun23>

- 45) **June 28, 2023:** RAF personnel rang the customary bell (banging of a metal electric lamp-post), practised by Meetei groups, to indicate an emergency gathering at night on roadsides. The local people came out and gathered thinking there was an emergency. The RAF personnel then chased and beat them. They also fired teargas shells at the people and their houses.

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[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rFc\\_ruH95eM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rFc_ruH95eM)

- 46) **July 02, 2023:** 3 Meetei village volunteers Ningombam Ibomcha Meitei (32), son of N Iboton, Haobam Ipocha Meitei (40), son of Late H Kesho and Naorem Rajkumar (25), son of N Sanjoy all from Khoijumantabi were killed by Kuki militants in a brutal attack. Also injuring three others including a woman at Khoijumantabi provoked a retaliation that burnt several houses. Details of the injured are Laishram Somon (42) of Napat Mayai Lambi and Heisnam Naocha Meitei (43) s/o Yaima of Chairrel Mangjil Maning Leikai.

<http://e-pao.net/GP.asp?src=1..030723.jul23>

<http://e-pao.net/GP.asp?src=25..030723.jul23>

- 47) **July 03, 2023:** Kuki militants continued attacks on Meetei settlements at Chanbirok, under Sekmai police station in Imphal West injuring several civilians and burning down houses. The Kuki militants came down from Luwang Sangol hill range early morning carrying sophisticated weapons and fired indiscriminately towards Chanbirok village at around 4.30 am. 3 people were injured in the attack by the Kuki militants. Later, the Kuki militants burnt down several houses and damaged several properties belonging to Meeteis.

[Three injured, houses torched by Kuki militants | E-Pao](#)

- 48) **July 04, 2023:** Even as a gunfight raged on at Khoijumantabi in Bishnupur district since July 1, one person was hit by a sniper bullet fired by suspected Kuki militants.

[Several houses burnt, one injured | E-Pao](#)

- 49) **July 06, 2023:** At least 2 persons suspected to be from the Meetei have been killed mercilessly in the Gamphazol area of Kangpokpi.

[Two suspected Meiteis killed at Gamphazol - The Sangai Express](#)

- 50) **July 07, 2023:** Women folks were beaten up by RAF male personnel at Kawkta. A sit-in protest was staged by Moirang Multipurpose Higher Secondary School students, teaching and non-teaching staff on Friday condoling the death of School's class XII student Mayengbam Rickey Meitei who died in a firing incident at Kwakta Ward No.9.

[School condemns killing of student Ricky | E-Pao](#)

- 51) **July 08, 2023:** Even as the State Government has taken up special arrangements to provide protection to farmers working in the paddy field, one farmer working in the field was hurt in firing by Kuki militants in the Phubala area today. Another person was hurt in an explosion at Kwakta in Bishnupur district today. The farmer who sustained the bullet injury has been identified as Yumnam Ranjan Singh of Phubala Ward No 2. The other injured person is Md Warish (18), son of Ayub Khan of Kwakta Ward No 8 - lathode injury.



[Kuki militants continue to pick soft targets | E-Pao](#)

- 52) **July 09, 2023:** Mr Saikhom Sanjit alias Subon Singh, about 29 years S/o Mr Saikhom Rocket Singh Uripok, Achom Leikai was killed due to a bullet injury. After the post mortem, the bullet was identified be of INSAS Rifle used by only Indian Security personnel. Mr Saikhom Rocket Singh who is retired from Indian Army could identify the bullet recovered from his son and suspected that his son was killed by either Assam Rifle personnel or Indian Military weapon in the hands of Kuki militants.

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[One killed, one hurt in attacks after bunkers dismantled | E-Pao](#)

- 53) **July 12, 2023:** Even as intermittent exchange of fire between Kuki militants and State forces continued in Khoijumantabi and Chairel Mangjing in Bishnupur district, an unexploded 'pipe bomb' fired by Kuki militants was detonated at Phougakchao Ikhai Leikai during gunbattles on July 7 and 8 was recovered by the Bishnupur police.

[Pipe bomb fired by Kuki militants recovered, detonated Firing unabated at Khoijumantabi | The Sangai Express](#)

- 54) **July 17, 2023:** Heavily armed Kuki militants launched a fresh offensive at Chairel Mangjin hills, Bishnupur district. Notably, Chairel Mangjin is located adjacent to Khoijumantabi where three village volunteers were killed by Kuki militants in the most brutal manner in the intervening night of July 1 and 2. Since July 2, Khoijumantabi and Chairel Mangjin have been witnessing gun battles on a daily basis.

[Kuki militants launch fresh offensive | E-pao](#)

- 55) **July 22, 2023:** Exodus of minority Meeteis from Mizoram, India has also started taking place. The Peace Accord MNF Returnees' Association (**PAMRA**) in Mizoram has asked Meeteis residing in the state of Mizoram, to leave Mizoram and return to their home state. The Mizoram Chief Minister's statements and comments on these issues indicate clearly that he supports this violence and mass exodus of Meeteis from Mizoram and supports the illegal Kuki immigrants from Myanmar for his political gain. If this violence continues it may lead to more suffering of minority Meeteis living in other parts of India as well.

[As tensions rise, Meiteis forced to leave Mizoram | The Hindu](#)

- 56) After two months of the National Highway blockade, two groups of the Kuki militants - United Peoples' Front (UPF) and Kuki National Organisation (KNO) who are under the suspension of operation (SoO) agreement with the government of India, officially withdrew the National Highway (NH-2) blockade in Manipur's Kangpokpi district on July 2, 2023. This decision came in response to an appeal made by Union Home Minister Shri Amit Shah, who expressed deep concern to Kuki militants UPF and KNO over the prevailing situation in the state of Manipur, India. However, Kuki civil society group, Committee on Tribal Unity (COTU), which had announced a roadblock on NH-2 two months ago, has not officially withdrawn the agitation yet.

[Manipur News Highlights: Blockade on NH-2 lifted after 2 months by Kuki groups in Manipur | The Indian Express](#)

- 57) **July 23, 2023:** Due to the ongoing clashes at Khampat, Myanmar, a total of 718 fresh illegal immigrants of Kuki-chin origin of Myanmar<sup>67</sup> had been identified to have entered New Lajang of Chandel District, Manipur, India. The details of this report are





available with the Superintendent of Police, Chandel District, Manipur HQ IGAR (S), GS (Ops/Int) Branch.<sup>3</sup>

- 58) **July 26, 2023:** Fresh clashes were reported to have taken place between Kuki miscreants and the armed forces in Moreh town of Chandel district of Manipur (Indo-Myanmar border) where around 30 abandoned houses of Meeteis in the Moreh Bazaar area were torched by Kuki miscreants.

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[Manipur Violence: Fresh Clashes Reported In Moreh; Meeteis' Houses Torched By Attackers \(freepressjournal.in\)](https://www.freepressjournal.in/Manipur-Violence-Fresh-Clashes-Reported-In-Moreh-Meeteis-Houses-Torched-By-Attackers)

- 59) More evidences to link the further events and incidents of violence till date have been recorded at this web link:

[Violence in Manipur 2023 News Timeline \(e-pao.net\)](https://www.e-pao.net/Violence-in-Manipur-2023-News-Timeline)<sup>89</sup>

In the present crisis, Meeteis have suffered from various forms of violence perpetrated by the Kuki-Chin-Zo people. This has led to the ethnic cleansing and exodus of Meeteis from Kuki-majority districts and the state of Mizoram, as they aspire to exert dominance and establish a distinct nation exclusively for Kukis.

### Our appeal

This cycle of violence must cease without any further delay. All parties involved in the conflict must prioritise peaceful resolutions and engage in reconciliation efforts. It is essential for authorities to explore methods of rebuilding trust as a primary step, and in our perspective, this can only be achieved through impartial actions. We firmly believe that United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees (UNHCR) as a guardian of human rights holds the responsibility within its mandate to ensure that those entrusted with safety and security act without bias and in the best interest of all parties concerned.

Therefore, we, the Meeteis from across the world, submit this letter to respectfully appeal to the United Nations for assistance and attention to the following critical areas:

### Protection of Human Rights:

- a) Protection of the indigenous Meeteis under the Indian constitution by granting Scheduled Tribe (ST) status: The Meetei people are not recognised under the Scheduled Tribe list of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India (GoI) to protect our land, culture, and civil rights. Hence, while we are deprived of our rights to settle in the hill districts of Manipur which 90% of the land in Manipur; it is occupied by tribes under the scheduled tribe list of GoI. Over decades this has caused systematic erosion of our ancestral land, ancient literature, civilisation, and civil rights violation of aboriginal Meeteis of Manipur. Due to this lack of protection, Meeteis have also started becoming minorities in our own lands. This is also the main reason why the Meetei population is declining over the years. There are 25 lakh (2,500,000) people identified as Kuki themselves in India, and 15 lakh (1,500,000) people identified as Meetei in India. Therefore, the big statement of Meetei as a major/big community is a hoax. We strongly believe that this is in direct violation of the United Nations' commitment to the protection of Indigenous and Aboriginal Rights.



We request the United Nations to collaborate closely with the Government of India (GoI) and the Government of Manipur (GoM) in safeguarding and ensuring the rights of the Meetei people as the indigenous and aboriginal residents of the region, by officially including in the Scheduled Tribes list of the Minister of Tribal Affairs, GoI. This approach will not only secure our Indigenous and Aboriginal rights but also grant us constitutional privileges, enabling us to access the restricted 90% hill districts of our ancestral land. The emotional well-being and overall mental health of indigenous Meeteis, whether living in remote or urban areas, hinge on our ability to maintain ownership and authority over our ancestral lands, emphasizing the importance of access to these traditional territories.

Additionally, it will support the revival of our culture and history through educational initiatives and advocacy efforts. Therefore, it is crucial to acknowledge the Meetei community as a tribe under the Indian constitution to safeguard both the land and the indigenous rights of the Meetei people.

- b) During the ongoing crisis, there has been a glaring absence of adequate protection from the Central Security Forces. Numerous complaints have arisen from Meetei individuals asserting that their lives and properties were left unprotected in the face of armed Kuki groups' attacks, resulting in the burning and destruction of their homes and belongings, even when the central security forces were present. Alarming instances caught on CCTV footage reveal Indian Security Forces (RAF) engaging in the destruction of private properties within the regions inhabited by Meeteis. Furthermore, there is growing scrutiny regarding the role of the Assam Rifles in connection with the significant influx of arms and illegal immigrants through the Manipur-Myanmar border.

In this tumultuous situation, Kuki infiltrators and armed Kuki groups have been launching attacks on innocent Meetei villagers from elevated positions, employing advanced weaponry and snipers. These attacks have resulted in numerous casualties, including both civilians and security personnel, and have hindered many farmers from cultivating paddy during the critical farming season. The Hill districts of Manipur and other northeastern states, where Meeteis are a minority, have witnessed an exodus of Meetei residents.

Also, disturbing reports of war crimes, including the *recruitment of children and teenagers* by Kuki militants have emerged which is a threat to our security. These young individuals are subjected to armed training in Kuki-dominated areas by militant groups operating under the SoO Agreement. Many of these armed Kuki militants possess sophisticated assault weapons and drones, posing a grave threat to civilians.

Additionally, the encroachment of hill districts by illegal Kuki immigrants raises substantial security concerns for Manipur and India as a whole. Many Kuki villagers are engaged in poppy cultivation under the direct orders of Kuki militants and militants from Myanmar, resulting in the destruction of reserved forests in Manipur and turning the hills into a battleground for drug-related activities. Evidence of these destroyed regions can be observed on platforms such as Google Earth.





Tragically, there are reports of abducted Meetei women and children, with some still missing. This has left their families in dire circumstances, as they are unable to locate the bodies of their loved ones to perform proper last rites.

We urgently call upon the United Nations to closely monitor and address the severe human rights violations inflicted upon the indigenous Meetei by Kuki-Chin-Zo armed militants.

Furthermore, we appeal to the United Nations to ensure that all Manipuris can live free from fear and discrimination. We request diligent monitoring of the human rights situation in Manipur, India, particularly concerning the Meetei, and call for necessary actions to prevent any further violations. We wholeheartedly urge the United Nations to actively participate in securing the safety of civilians and prevent war crimes in this region.

- c) **Reconstruction:** We respectfully urge the United Nations to support in the resettlement and reconstruction efforts for communities that have suffered devastation and harm due to the conflict. This assistance is instrumental in fostering stability and enhancing the quality of life in these affected areas, thereby facilitating the return of displaced individuals to their original homes, and offering assistance and a pathway for them to regain normalcy.
- d) This violence needs to stop immediately, parties to conflict need to restore to peaceful means and focus on the re-building exercises. The authorities need to think of ways to work toward trust building before anything, and that in our opinion can only be done when such acts are carried on impartially. And we believe that UNHCR as a protector of human-rights has in its mandate to oversee that those in charge of safety and security acts impartially and to the benefit of all parties involved.
- e) **Abolition of Kuki Chieftainship:** We also call upon the United Nations to address the issue of "Kuki Chieftainship," which operates as a semi-feudal system and should be dismantled due to its undemocratic and dictatorial nature. As the Kuki chiefs are mostly involved in politics, this system stands as one of the fundamental drivers behind the establishment of new illegal Kuki villages and population engineering in Manipur.
- f) **Accountability:** According to Judge Rosalyn Higgins of the International Court of Justice, offences which are universally condemned are a matter of concern to the international community. Both the actions of the state machinery as well as that of the non-state actors come under such universally condemnable crimes. We request that individuals and institutions responsible for gross human rights violations in this current ethnic crisis be brought to account for their actions.

In conclusion, the Meetei of Manipur earnestly solicits the support and immediate intervention of the United Nations to address the ongoing humanitarian crisis for Meeteis. We firmly believe that your intervention will play a pivotal role in re-establishing peace, security, and well-being for our community. We remain hopeful that the United Nations will respond to our plea and take necessary measures to alleviate the suffering endured by the Meetei people.



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Central Executive Committee | [www.worldmeeteicouncil.com](http://www.worldmeeteicouncil.com)

Head Office: Singjamei, Near Super Market, Imphal West, Manipur - 795001, India

Thank you for your urgent attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

*Heigrujam Nabashyam*

**Chairman – World Meetei Council**

Address: Singjamei Chirom Leikai, Imphal West

Manipur – 795001, India

Mobile: +91-8837474630

E-mail: [info@worldmeeteicouncil.com](mailto:info@worldmeeteicouncil.com)

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*Yambem Arun Meetei*

Secretary General,

**CEC - World Meetei Council**

Address: No. 15, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, 5<sup>th</sup> B Cross, Anepalya, Bangalore – 560030, India

Mobile: +91-9886605739

Email: [worldmeeteicouncil@gmail.com](mailto:worldmeeteicouncil@gmail.com) ; [nk.khuman@rediffmail.com](mailto:nk.khuman@rediffmail.com)

**CC:**

1. Ms Virginia Gamba – Under-Secretary-General, United Nations 405 East 42nd St New York, NY 10017

2. Ms Fabienne Vinet and Ms Stephanie Tremblay, Media, United Nations 405 East 42nd St New York, NY 10017

**PS:**

Meetei and Meitei means the same. However according to the Gazette notification issued by the government of Manipur the word Meetei is made official.<sup>160</sup>

Enclosure: As mentioned above.







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## Abbreviations:

All Manipur Working Journalists' Union (AMWJU)

Assam Rifles (AR)

ATSUM (All Tribal Student's Union)

Border Security Force (BSF)

Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)

Committee on Tribal Unity (COTU)

Central Security Force (CSF)

CRPC (Criminal Procedure Code of India)

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)

Director General of Police (DGP)

Government of India (GoI)

Government of Manipur (GoM)

Indian Penal Code (IPC)

Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs)

Indigenous Tribals' Leader Forum (ITLF)

Kuki National Army (KNA)

Kuki National Organization (KNO)

Kuki Revolutionary Army (KRA)

Manipur Land Revenue and Land Reforms Act, 1960, 72,87 (MLR & LR Act, 1960)

Members of Legislative Assembly (MLA)

Mizo National Front (MNF)

National Register of Citizens (NRC)

Peace Accord MNF Returnees' Association (PAMRA)

Protected Forest (PF)

Rapid Action Forces (RAF)

Reserved Forest (RF)

Regional Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS)

Suspension of Operation (SoO)

Scheduled Tribe (ST)

United Kuki Liberation Front (UKLF)

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)

United People's Front (UPF)



UNHCR Regional Bureau for Asia and Pacific (RBAP)

Zomi Revolutionary Organization/Zomi Revolutionary Army (ZRO/ZRA)

