

Thingkho *Le* Malcha

A Daily Newsletter by KSO Media & Documentation

580 DAYS

19 MONTHS

OF STATE-ORCHESTRATED
ETHNIC PERSECUTION





KUKI VICTIMS' UPDATE

As on 28. 11. 2024



222
DEATHS



200+
VILLAGES BURNT



7000+
HOUSES BURNT

1. Thangtinmang Khongsai



360+
CHURCHES &
SYNAGOGUES BURNT



41,425+
DISPLACED
PERSONS

Thingkho Le Malcha (charred wood tied with chilli): A war symbol; a pre-arranged secret code agreed upon by the Kukis to inform the people about the commencement of war and on receiving this, one has to remain alert and be ready for the battle.

KUKI-ZO BODIES CONSIDER 'BULLDOZED PEACE AND FORCED NORMALIZATION' AS AN ATTEMPT TO CATALYZE RENEWED VIOLENCE

Hundreds of Kuki-Zo community members gathered at Gamgiphai today to voice their strong opposition to what they believe is another attempt by the state government to breach buffer zones by ferrying passengers through the MST bus service. This gathering represents a significant show of resistance as tensions continue to escalate in the region.

The protest is in response to the alleged attempt by the Manipur government to use the MST bus to transport passengers along National Highway 2, passing through Kangpokpi, an area dominated by the Kuki-Zo community. The community views this move as provocative and sees it as part of a broader effort to forcefully normalize the situation without considering the political implications or the impact on the security of the minority Kuki-Zo community.

This is not the first time the Kuki-Zo people have stood up against such attempts. On December 24, 2023, the government's plan to take the MST bus along the same route was successfully foiled by the Kuki-Zo community. Additionally, two similar attempts by Chief Minister N. Biren Singh to push through Kangpokpi via National Highway 2 were also met with strong opposition.

At Gamgiphai, CoTU Spokesperson Ng. Lun Kipgen, flanked by hundreds of protesting Kuki-Zo women, stated that the periodic attempts by the incumbent Chief Minister of Manipur, N. Biren Singh, to breach the buffer zones into areas dominated by the Kuki-Zo community in Sadar Hills, Kangpokpi, are vehemently decried and opposed by the Kuki-Zo people. He emphasized that these actions are a clear indication of efforts to disrupt the already fragile peace in the region.

Kipgen continued, saying that the forced normalization of volatile situations and the bulldozed peace initiative by the current administration in the valley, at the expense of the security of the minority Kuki-Zo community, is a preposterous political approach. He stressed that



such a policy risks replicating incidents like that of Jiribam elsewhere, which must be avoided at all costs.

It has also come to light that the majority-led administration is insistent on enforcing the thoroughfare of the Meitei community—a warring faction—into Kuki-Zo territory. This marks the regrettable third attempt to do so, he asserted.

Reiterating the community's strong opposition, Kipgen stated that, in accordance with the collective decision of all civil society organizations of Sadar Hills, the Kuki-Zo community will never accept the bulldozed peace imposed by the State Government or any other agency.

The Kuki-Zo people also urge the Ministry of Home Affairs to intervene politically in the matter, rather than through the use of security forces.

48-HOUR COMPLETE SHUTDOWN IN KANGPOKPI DISTRICT FOLLOWING PUBLIC APPEAL ON VEHICULAR MOVEMENT RESUMPTION

In response to the Government of Manipur's recent public appeal to resume vehicular movement on the Imphal-Kangpokpi-Senapati and Imphal-Bishnupur-Churachandpur routes, civil society organizations in Sadar Hills, Kangpokpi District, have imposed a 48-hour total shutdown, effective from midnight on December 3.

The shutdown follows the state government's announcement to reinstate public vehicle services, starting December 4, 2024, with strict security measures in place. This decision came after the government's assessment of the law and order situation, which included consultations with security forces and agencies. However, the Kuki-Zo communities in Sadar Hills have strongly opposed this move, accusing the government of attempting to "forcefully normalize" the situation in the region.

The opposition is rooted in a deep mistrust of the government's intentions, with local leaders and activists labeling the initiative as a "bulldozed peace attempt" that disregards the concerns of the Kuki-Zo people. In response, a massive protest has erupted in the district, with residents voicing their anger at what they perceive as the imposition of the government's decisions on their community.

The 48-hour shutdown is seen as a form of resistance against what they consider an unjust and unilateral decision by the state authorities.

Local shops, schools, markets, and other businesses will remain closed. The civil society organizations



have also called for the immediate suspension of government offices in Sadar Hills, Kangpokpi, to express their resentment against what they claim is a biased and nepotistic notification by the state government.

However, educational institutions in the district, considering the ongoing academic examinations, will be exempt from the shutdown while there will be no restriction on vehicular movement during the 48-hour total shutdown but if the Government fails to withdraw its decision, restriction of commercial vehicles will be imposed in the next course of action.

With the decision to imposed the total shutdown, the people of Kangpokpi are sending a strong message to the Government of Manipur that peace cannot be imposed, and that their voices must be heard in any efforts to resolve the situation in the region.



The patriot's blood is the seed of Freedom's tree.

— Thomas Campbell

KUKI-ZO REMEMBRANCE DAY CALLS ON GOI TO GRANT POLITICAL DEMAND AS A CHRISTMAS GIFT

Thousands of Kuki-Zo people across Sadar Hills, Kangpokpi, solemnly observed the 19th Remembrance Day today at Saikul Sub Divisional Headquarters in Saikul Hill Town. The district-level commemoration, organized by the Committee on Tribal Unity (CoTU), was hosted by Kuki Inpi Saikul Gamkai in collaboration with KSO Saikul and KWU Saikul. The occasion marks a poignant remembrance of the fallen Kuki-Zo martyrs who have lost their lives in the ongoing conflict in the region.

As a mark of respect, business establishments, schools, and other institutions in the district remained closed throughout the day. However, vehicular movement was exempted from the total shutdown, allowing essential travel while maintaining the solemnity of the occasion.

The 19th Remembrance Day also served as a platform to voice a critical political demand. Leaders called on the Government of India to urgently grant the Kuki-Zo people their political rights, specifically the demand for a Union Territory (UT) with a Legislature. The appeal, delivered with deep emotion and unity, was framed as a hopeful request for the Government to grant the political demand as a “Christmas Gift.”

Lamminlun Singsit, the General Secretary of CoTU, delivered a powerful message during the observance, underscoring the unity of the Kuki-Zo people in their quest for justice and political recognition. “We have gathered here today to honor our fallen martyrs and stand firm in our commitment to our political movement. Enough is enough; we cannot wait any longer for our rightful political solution,” he declared.

The appeal for political recognition comes amidst growing concerns about the delays in addressing the long-standing demands of the Kuki-Zo community. Singsit emphasized the urgency of the matter, urging the Government of India not to further delay a solution that has long been sought by the people. “We stand



united, and we call on the Centre to recognize our political aspirations,” he added.

The 19th Remembrance Day not only honors the sacrifices of the Kuki-Zo martyrs but also stands as a powerful reminder of the community’s determination to achieve political justice. As the call for a Union Territory with a Legislature echoes through the hills, the Kuki-Zo people remain resolute, waiting for a response from the Government of India to their long-overdue demand.

KUKI-ZO BODIES HOLD PROTEST AGAINST FMR, BORDER FENCING IN LAMKA

A demonstration was held in Lamka on Tuesday to protest the government's decision to scrap the India-Myanmar Free Movement Regime (FMR). The demonstration, led by the United Zou Organisation (UZO), started at the 'Wall of Remembrance' around 11:30 am.

Carrying posters and placards, the demonstrators raised slogans against the government's decision to scrap the FMR and fence the international border.

"No border fencing can sever our cultural ties," said a demonstrator.

The demonstration was attended by Saikot MLA Paolienlal Haokip, Henglep MLA Letzamang Haokip, and Singngat MLA Chinlunthang, as well as leaders of various Kuki-Zo tribes.

Speaking at the event, Saikot MLA Paolienlal Haokip said, "We, the Kuki-Zo people, are not a threat to India's security. Our people across the border in Myanmar are fighting for democracy in that country; they are nationalist Myanmarese. Those of us in India are fighting for justice against a regime whose deepest political motives are to break away from India. Our people across the border are least concerned about crossing the border. The real threat to India's security is forcing the Kuki-Zo people to live under a secessionist Meitei regime. The separate administration and Union Territory that we demand today is the safest way of securing India's border. Hon'ble PM and HM, listen to our voice. We are for the security and integrity of India. Granting us Union Territory is the safest way of securing India's border from the political movement of secessionist Meiteis. Instead of spending crores on the FMR and border fencing, spend that money on developing our people and our land. We will secure India's border."

If you want to construct border fencing, do it in Kangvai – a border between Kuki-Zo dominated Churachandpur and Meitei dominated Bishnupur district, not in



Behiang. The people of Behiang do not need border fencing to keep them secure, said Singngat MLA Chinlunthang.

A one-minute silence was also observed in remembrance of those killed in the ongoing ethnic violence in the state, which has claimed over 250 lives since May of last year.

Leaders of the Kuki-Zo Council, Zomi Council, Kuki Inpi Manipur, and Hmar Inpui addressed the gathering.

At the end of the program, a memorandum addressed to Union Home Minister Amit Shah was submitted to Deputy Commissioner Dharun Kumar by UZO leaders.

The FMR allowed people residing close to the India-Myanmar border to venture 16 km into each other's territory without any documents.

The announcement to scrap it was made in February after Shah stated that India had decided to fence the entire 1,643 km-long India-Myanmar border, which passes through Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland, and Arunachal Pradesh.

The FMR was implemented in 2018 as part of India's Act East policy.



FINAL TRIBUTE TO OUR 12 MARTYRS

First Session

Date: 5th December 2024
Time: 11:00 AM
Venue: Peace Ground, Tuibuong

Masters of Ceremonies	Samuel T. Haokip & Sharon Parmawi
Program Coordinator	Ginza Vualzong, <i>Spokesperson ITLF</i>
Opening Prayer	Rev. J.F. Lalropuia, <i>Senior Executive Secretary, Presbyterian Synod Church, Lamka</i>
ITLF Theme Song	Mizo Zaimi Inzawmkhawm (MZI)
Keynote Address	Chin Ngaih Pau, <i>Chairman, ITLF Steering Committee</i>
Tribute to our Martyrs	i. One minute silence ii. Puandum & Garland homage to our martyrs
Choral Singing	Joint Artistes Association
Speeches	1. Kuki Inpi Manipur 2. Zomi Council 3. Special Guests
Condolence Message	Rev. Dr. S. Vung Minthang, <i>President, Goodwill Council</i>
Choral Singing	Joint Artistes Association
Speech on behalf of the Martyrs families	Rev. Zakapthuom
Vote of Thanks	Rev. Ros Infimate, <i>President Hmar Inpui GHQ</i>
Closing Prayer	Rev. Th. Khuala Vaiphei, <i>General Secretary, Kuki Christian Leaders Fellowship</i>

Second Session

Date: 5th December 2024
Time: 2:00 PM
Venue: Martyrs Cemetery, Sehken

Conductor	Lianzalal Suantak, <i>Secretary JPO</i>
Special Number	Vahboi Haokip
Tribute to the Martyrs	Martyrs Families
Farewell Song	<i>Blessed Choir</i>
Gun Salute	<i>All Village Volunteers</i>
Burial Minister	Rev. Dr. Lalrosiem Songate, <i>Chairman, Hmar Christian Leaders Forum</i>



National Commission for Scheduled Tribes ✓

@ncsthq

Members of the Kuki Tribes Council from Manipur called on the Hon'ble Chairperson of NCST, Shri Antar Singh Arya and the Hon'ble Member of NCST, Shri Nirupam Chakma. @AntarsinghArya @PMOIndia @PIB_India @JHussainNayak @NirupamChakma4 @AshaLakra79



5:12 PM · Dec 3, 2024 · 1,397 Views



Thongkholal Haokip

@th_robert

History repeats itself in demonizing the Kukis so as "to obscure their own responsibility for the events" since 3 May 2023; and "the enduring representation of the events of" 1917-1919 as Kuki rebellion "reflected to this determination to preserve" the status quo (of domination).

Such a demonization of course made it easier for the British to obscure their own responsibility for the events of 1857, and thus to justify the continuance of the Raj. But it opened up as well a gulf between Briton and Indian that could not easily be closed again after the restoration of order. As G. O. Trevelyan noted in *The Competition Wallah*, 'Men cannot at will cast aside the recollection of those

LIBERALISM AND EMPIRE

the Mutiny was to be found in the 'cartridge affair and nothing else'; that the people had been 'for the most part in our favour'; and that the revolt was consequently nothing more than an irrational panic on the subject of caste among credulous and superstitious sepoys. The enduring representation of the events of 1857 in British historiography as a 'sepoy mutiny' reflected too this determination to preserve Britain's reputation as an imperial power.

9:31 PM · Dec 2, 2024 · 2,536 Views



Ten young men from the Kuki-Zo community in Manipur's Jiribam district recently lost their lives in what's been reported as a gunfight with personnel from the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF). The CRPF claims these individuals, labelled as "militants," had attacked a local police station and a nearby CRPF camp. However, subsequent post-mortem reports, seen by Newsreel Asia, cast doubt on the legality and ethics of the actions taken by the paramilitary force.

The Incident

The incident occurred on Nov. 11, as part of an ethnic violence involving the Kuki-Zo tribes and the majority Meitei community in Manipur. The 10 deceased young men were "village volunteers," between the ages of 16 and 31. The "village volunteers" are members of a civilian guard formed to protect Kuki-Zo areas shortly after violence erupted on May 3, 2023. They were organized in response to frequent attacks by Meitei groups, allegedly supported by members of the Manipur police, which continue to this day.

Four days earlier, on Nov. 7, a 31-year-old Kuki-Zo woman and mother of three, Zosangkim Hmar, was

allegedly assaulted, raped, tortured and burned to death by an armed Meitei group, without any clear provocation. According to a statement by a Kuki-Zo group, Hmar Students' Association, before the young men were gunned down, they had approached the CRPF checkpoint in a friendly and cordial manner. They informed the personnel on duty that they were pursuing the killers of the Kuki-Zo woman, Zosangkim, as these assailants had been targeting multiple villages in the Kuki-Zo community.

What transpired next remains unclear. Reports indicate that CRPF personnel, possibly accompanied by members of the Manipur Police, shot the 10 young men, claiming that these men had attacked the police station and CRPF post.

The names of the victims are 16-year-old Robert Lalnuntluong, 19-year-old Joseph Lalditum, 21-year-old Elvis Lalropei Zote, 22-year-old Lalthanei, 25-year-old Francis Lalarlien, 25-year-old Henry Lalsanglien, 29-year-old Ramneilien, 30-year-old Roulneisang, 30-year-old Lalsiemlien Hmar and 31-year-old Fimlien Kung Ngurte.

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Contd.**The Autopsy Reports**

The autopsy reports from Silchar Medical College and Hospital, situated in the neighbouring state of Assam, revealed that each of the deceased sustained multiple gunshot wounds from behind. This pattern of injury indicates that the young men were either fleeing or not directly engaging at the time they were fatally shot.

According to the reports, the bullets struck the young men from head to foot, hitting them all over their bodies. If the young men were possibly fleeing or, at least, were not in a position to actively fire at the time, it raises questions about why the security forces needed to fire so many rounds with apparent lethal intent.

Further, the reports noted that one eye was missing from the bodies of four of the deceased.

For instance, the autopsy report of Fimlien Kung Ngurte states: "The deceased is found wearing camouflage full shirt, T-shirt, long pants, black shawl, brief, socks and boots. Built is average, complexion is swarthy. Right eye missing, left eye is closed and mouth partially open. Blood stain present over the face and body at places. Blood oozing from left ear. Body cold on touch. Post mortem hypostasis present and fixed over the back. Rigor mortis (the stiffening of the muscles) partially present over the lower limbs only."

This suggests the eyes were gouged out after the four men had been killed. One has to wonder what could motivate such a desecration of the bodies other than hate. Were the bodies not under the custody of CRPF personnel? Mutilation of bodies is a violation of international humanitarian law under the Geneva Conventions, which prohibit outrages upon personal dignity, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment.

All CRPF personnel undergo training in human rights, adhering to international standards, both during their initial training and repeatedly after joining their

battalions, a retired CRPF official told Newsreel Asia. They are also expected internally to follow the guidelines set by the National Human Rights Commission, the source added.

No Sovereign Immunity

Further, the use of excessive and disproportionate force contradicts the standards set by law for the use of force by law enforcement.

In the 1993 landmark case of Nilabati Behara vs. State of Orissa, which addressed a custodial death, the Supreme Court declared police brutality a violation of fundamental rights, awarding compensation and ordering criminal proceedings against the responsible officers. The Court ruled out sovereign immunity – with the principle that government entities are not exempt from liability in cases of human rights abuses.

Further, India's penal code applies to all individuals within the country, including members of the armed forces and central forces. Members of the central forces are subject to the same criminal laws as civilians when it comes to criminal activities. However, for actions taken during the course of their official duties, there might be additional considerations under specific acts governing these forces, like the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA), which provides certain protections to armed forces operating in designated "disturbed areas." However, in Jiribam, where the 10 young men were shot and killed on Nov. 11, had not been declared a "disturbed area" under AFSPA until three days later, on Nov. 14.

Above all, police excesses breach the right to life guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution of India. The oath of the CRPF includes a pledge to

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uphold the Constitution: "I shall be faithful and bear true allegiance to India and to the Constitution of India as by law established and that I shall as in duty bound, honestly and faithfully serve in the Central Reserve Police Force ..."

Need for Neutrality

The ongoing violence over land rights and identity, which has lasted for 19 months, has resulted in over 250 deaths. Hundreds of villages and thousands of homes have been burned, leaving tens of thousands displaced. Central forces are deployed in Manipur not merely for their arms and ammunition, which the state police also possess, but because they are uniquely positioned to bring neutrality in controlling the violence.

It's not an incident that should be brushed under the carpet. It calls for a transparent investigation by an independent body to ensure accountability, uphold the rule of law and maintain public trust in government and law enforcement.

After all, in a democratic setting like India, the legitimacy for the armed forces to carry and use arms is a result of a combination of constitutional authority, legislative actions, democratic oversight, judicial review and also public scrutiny, all of which stem from the sovereign will of the people.

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A FRACTURED TRIBAL BOND

In erstwhile Manipur's hills, tribals once stood tall,
A unity of purpose, that echoed through them all.
But May 3 marked a turning point, a day of dismay,
When tribal solidarity, began to fray.

The Kuki people, with a history so grand and bright,
Now find themselves isolated, in a troubled and dark night.
Tribal bonding torn apart and left it in endless night,
With a distrust that's so wrong.

Their infidelity, a wound that cuts so deep and wide,
A betrayal of trust, that will forever be remembered.
The bond that once held strong, now lies in tatters and pain,
As the conflict rages on, with no end to the strain.

But still the Kuki-Zo people, hold on to hope,
A brighter day will dawn, their resilience will prevail
Through the darkness and the pain,
Justice will be served and their rights recognized.

~ Aaron Th Haokip