

Thingkho *Le* Malcha

A Weekly Newsletter by KSO Media & Documentation Cell



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KUKI VICTIMS' UPDATE

As on 09. 03. 2025



227
DEATHS



200+
VILLAGES BURNT



7000+
HOUSES BURNT



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.

SEPARATION DAY OBSERVED ACROSS KUKI-ZO-DOMINATED AREAS, RENEWING THE FIGHT FOR A SEPARATE ADMINISTRATION



Kangpokpi, May 03: In a solemn and painful reminder of the deep scars left by two years of ethnic conflict, the Kuki-Zo people, in their thousands from far and wide across Sadar Hills, Kangpokpi District, under the aegis of the Committee on Tribal Unity (CoTU), observed Separation Day in Sadar Hills Kangpokpi District today.

With heavy hearts and unwavering resolve, Kuki-Zo communities converged at key locations across the district — Kangpokpi Town, Saikul Hill Town, and Leimakhong — with the central district-level observance held at Brig. M. Thomas Ground in Kangpokpi District Headquarters.

The day marked what the community describes as a “day of severance” from the majoritarian Meitei community in Manipur, after the violent outbreak in 2023, which they regard as a genocide — a targeted pogrom that shattered homes, displaced thousands, and tore apart the fragile fabric of communal coexistence in the state.

Calling it a day to “remember pain, assert dignity, and affirm survival,” the Committee on Tribal Unity called for a total shutdown across the district, bringing life to a standstill. Government offices, banks, private institutions,

schools, and all business establishments remained firmly shut. Traditional livelihood activities such as jhumming (shifting cultivation) and all forms of travel also came to a halt. No shops opened, no fields were tilled, and no other functions were organized on the day as the community collectively entered a day of mourning and remembrance.

However, vehicular movement were exempted from the purview of the total shutdown.

At Brig. M. Thomas Ground, the atmosphere was thick with grief and resolve. village chiefs, leaders of civil society organizations, intellectuals, prominent social activists, and the general public joined in the observation, demonstrating unity, resilience, and remembrance for the lives lost and the homeland devastated.

Prominent voices echoed across the gathering: Ajang Khongsai, President of Kuki Inpi Manipur; Haokholen Kipgen, President of the Sadar Hills Chiefs' Association; Dr. Lamtinthang Haokip, social activist; Thangminlen Kipgen, President of Kuki

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Inpi Sadar Hills; and Rev. Dr. GS Gangte, representative of the Kuki-Zo Council.

A moving condolence ceremony was led by Dr. Rev. Satkhokai Chongloi of the Kuki-Zo Christian Relief Committee (KZCRC), while Rev. Lunkhosat Kipgen, General Secretary of EBCCF, offered heartfelt prayers and blessings for the families of the martyrs.

Amang Chongloi, Vice Chairman of CoTU, spoke with deep emotion and clarity. “Two years on, while much of the world has moved on, we cannot. The wounds of May 3, 2023, remain raw,” he declared.

He underscored that Separation Day marks a “day of severance” from the Meitei community in Manipur, and it stands as a solemn and powerful reminder of a tragic rupture—an irreversible breaking point in the relationship between the Kuki-Zo and Meitei communities.

“It is a day to affirm our identity, mourn our dead, honor our survivors, and proclaim to the world that coexistence with those who inflicted such suffering upon us is no longer possible. Any hope of reconciliation with the Meitei community has been extinguished by the scale of brutality we endured,” he stated.

He highlighted that May 3, 2023 etched in the collective memory of the Kuki-Zo community as a day of targeted pogrom that attempted to annihilate us and tore apart the fragile fabric of communal coexistence in the state.

Today, we commemorate the violent acts of burning our villages, the murder of our people, and the brutal assault on our dignity through acts of sexual violence against our women — deliberate attempts to erase our existence from the land we called home, he added.

He emphasized that Separation Day represents not only physical displacement but also the betrayal of coexistence — a collapse of trust, a wound too deep for silence.

Turning his words toward New Delhi, Chongloi made an impassioned plea: “We cry for justice. We plead for recognition. We demand a future — a Union Territory

with legislature — where the Kuki-Zo people can live in safety, dignity, and self-determination. Far from those who reduced our lives to smoke and ashes.”

In every silent street, every shuttered shop, and every bowed head, the message was unmistakable: the Kuki-Zo will not forget, and they will not be silenced.

In Churachandpur district, the day was observed at the ‘Wall of Remembrance’ under the aegis of the Indigenous Tribal Leaders’ Forum (ITLF).

During the observance, the Kuki Women Organisation for Human Rights (KWOHR), as part of its “Jangnadopna Project,” extended financial assistance of ₹1 lakh, along with a traditional shawl and a memento, to 22 victim families.

Paolienlal Haokip, MLA of Saikot Assembly Constituency, and Henlianthang Thanglet, Chairman of the Kuki-Zo Council, addressed the gathering at the Wall of Remembrance.

The day was also observed at Martyrs’ Cemetery in Sehken under the aegis of the Zomi Council.

Vungzagin Valte, MLA of Thanlon Assembly Constituency, and L.M. Khaute, MLA of Churachandpur Assembly Constituency, delivered speeches during the observance.

Separation Day was also observed at Sangaikot Community Hall, under the Sangaikot Sub-Division, in the presence of MLA Chinlunthang.

The day was also observed in the border town of Moreh, under the aegis of the Hill Tribal Council, Moreh. Many gathered to pay their respects and honor the victims at this solemn event, renewing their spirit in the ongoing fight for a separate administration.

It was also observed in Saikul, Leimakhong, Veitum Kholen, Tegnoupal, Longja, Jiribam, and other locations.

KUKI-ZO COMMUNITY OBSERVE “SEPARATION DAY” NATIONWIDE; REAFFIRMS CALL FOR JUSTICE AND SELF-ADMINISTRATION



New Delhi, May 03: The Kuki Students' Organisation (KSO) Delhi & NCR organized a powerful and emotionally charged event titled “Separation Day” at Jantar Mantar, New Delhi, drawing together members of the Kuki-Zo community and allies to honor the memory of victims, assert the community’s political aspirations, and call for urgent action from the central government.

The program commenced with an invocation by Pastor James Chinjemvel, Director of Grace for All Ministry. In his welcome address, Dr. L. Thangpu Guite, President of Kuki Inpi Delhi, emphasized the paramount importance of solidarity and collective resolve amid ongoing socio-political turmoil. He urged the community to remain unwavering in the pursuit of their political rights and self-determination.

Pastor Tongminthang Haokip of the Kuki Worship Service led a solemn tribute to the departed, honoring those who lost their lives to targeted violence. This was followed by fervent sloganeering led by Thangminlal DOUNGEL, Vice President (Administration), KSO Delhi & NCR. The crowd then sang “Igam Hilou Ham?”, a poignant anthem composed by the late LS Mangboi Lhungdim, paying tribute to the fallen.

A heart-rending testimony was delivered by Hahat Vaiphei, a survivor and eyewitness to the public parading of two Kuki-Zo women by a Meitei mob.

Her account served as a stark reminder of the brutalities endured and the urgency for justice and redress.

Addressing the gathering, Marlin Haokip, Convenor of the Kuki-Zo Women Forum Delhi, denounced the systematic strategies employed by dominant groups to fracture the community from within, often weaponizing internal actors to perpetuate division. Nu Juliana DOUNGEL commended the community’s resilience, applauding the unwavering commitment sustained over two years, and called for continued fortitude in the fight ahead.

Prominent social activist Gladys Vaiphei Hunjan underscored the critical need for both demographic and territorial separation, stating unequivocally that any return to the status quo prior to May 3, 2023 was inconceivable. She urged the central government to acknowledge this political reality and expedite a meaningful and lasting settlement.

An additional round of slogans was passionately led by Chochong, Co-Convenor, Kuki-Zo Women Forum Delhi, reinvigorating the crowd’s collective spirit.

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Paojakhup Guite, President of KSO Delhi & NCR, issued a powerful call to action, asserting that the success of the movement hinges not on elected leaders or representatives, but on the people themselves. He warned that the central government may attempt to manipulate community leaders into submission, potentially silencing the movement from within. “We cannot fail,” he declared, “for coexistence with the Meiteis under a shared administration is no longer an option.” He called on attendees to commit to the people’s movement by signing a pledge form distributed at the event.

Vishwajeet Singh, Legal Advisor to the Kuki Organisation for Human Rights, decried the systemic erosion of democratic rights and legal protections afforded to the Kuki people. He accused the state of collusion with the perpetrators of violence and affirmed that expanded

legal initiatives are being actively pursued.

The program concluded with a symbolic demonstration led by Paojakhup Guite and Thangminlal Dounge, followed by the singing of the national anthem led by Chochong Haokip. Lamtinthang Dimngel, General Secretary of KSO Delhi & NCR, delivered a heartfelt vote of thanks. The event ended with a benediction from Pastor Steven L. Infimate of the Hmar Christian Fellowship Delhi.

The day was also observed across various cities, such as Kolkata, Mumbai, Guwahati, Chennai, Pune, Coimbatore, Ernakulam, Hyderabad, Shillong, Bengaluru and Aizawl.

-----GLIMPSES OF SEPARATION DAY OBSERVATION ACROSS THE COUNTRY-----



MANIPUR'S TAPES: SC SET TO HEAR LEAKED BIREN AUDIO CLIP ON MAY 5

New Delhi, May 03: As the Supreme Court prepares to review forensic reports on allegedly incriminating audio tapes in a landmark hearing on May 5, the political and communal future of Manipur hangs precariously in the balance. The case, Kuki Organization for Human Rights Trust vs. Union of India and Anr. (W.P.(C) No. 702/2024), has become a litmus test for justice in India's conflict-ridden Northeast, and a potential inflection point in former Chief Minister N. Biren Singh's embattled political career.

At the heart of the case are leaked audio recordings that allegedly capture Singh, who resigned in February under immense public and political pressure, speaking in a closed-door meeting about facilitating violence against the Kuki community during the ethnic unrest that erupted in May 2023. The tapes have reignited national debate over state complicity, communal bias, and the standards of forensic evidence in high-stakes political cases.

Audio Tapes and the Demand for Accountability Filed by the Kuki Organization for Human Rights Trust (KOHUR) and represented by senior advocate Prashant Bhushan, the petition alleges that the former CM enabled Meitei groups to loot state armories and protected them from legal consequences — acts that would represent gross abuse of power and a direct incitement of ethnic violence.

Truth Labs, a private forensic lab, has already found a 93% match between the voice on the tape and Singh's, citing auditory and spectrographic analysis. But critics, including Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, have dismissed these findings as insufficiently authoritative, arguing that only the Central Forensic Science Laboratory (CFSL) — whose sealed report will be reviewed by the Supreme Court — can provide a credible assessment.

The implications of the forensic report are enormous. If authenticated, the tapes could not only cement Singh's culpability but also expose the BJP's state government as complicit in communal violence. If dismissed,



however, they risk being seen as a politically motivated fabrication — further alienating the already traumatized Kuki community and raising questions about justice delivery in conflict zones.

A Test for the Judiciary — and for India's Democracy
The Supreme Court's decision to directly hear the case signals its recognition of the gravity of the allegations and the erosion of trust in local institutions. As former Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud famously said, "The court cannot sit in an ivory tower" — and in Manipur's case, where over 260 lives have been lost and more than 70,000 displaced, this stance is being tested in full.

The court must now determine whether to allow the case to proceed under its supervision, or refer it to the Manipur High Court — a move that could be seen either as deference to local jurisdiction or a retreat from judicial oversight in a volatile, politically charged case.

Political Stakes for BJP and Biren Singh
For the BJP, the timing couldn't be worse. Still reeling from public criticism over its tepid response to the two-year-long Manipur conflict, the party now faces a potential credibility crisis. Singh's fall from grace — marked by his February resignation — has already shaken the party's dominance in the region. A Supreme Court finding against him

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could devastate its future electoral prospects in the Northeast and erode national trust in its governance.

For Biren Singh himself, the stakes are existential. Should the tapes be validated, his political career will almost certainly end in disgrace, potentially followed by criminal prosecution. If the tapes are proven to be fake, Singh may attempt a comeback by portraying himself as a political scapegoat — but his credibility, especially among Kuki and tribal communities, may be irreparably damaged.

Forensic Evidence: Science, Politics, and Perception
At the core of the controversy lies the question: can audio forensic science conclusively prove complicity in such a politically sensitive case? While techniques like spectrographic analysis and voice pattern matching have become more sophisticated, they are not infallible. Environmental noise, speech modulation, and editing — all possible in this case — can skew results, and even expert opinions vary.

The Truth Labs report is compelling but not conclusive. The CFSL report, despite being government-endorsed,

may also be viewed through a political lens — especially if its findings contradict those of the private lab. This forensic divergence could spark a broader debate on the reliability and transparency of scientific evidence in India’s judiciary.

A Moment of Reckoning

The Supreme Court’s decision on May 5 could reshape not just Manipur’s political future, but also how India deals with state complicity in communal violence. It tests the country’s commitment to justice, to constitutional governance, and to the idea that no leader — however powerful — is above the law.

In a state still bleeding from two years of ethnic unrest, where displaced families await justice and trust in institutions has eroded, the stakes are not merely legal or political — they are profoundly human.



Jon Suante
@jon_suante



“Two years since the start of the ethnic violence in Manipur, the government's inaction has left tens of thousands in limbo, forced to endure life in inhumane conditions with no end in sight,” said Aakar Patel, chair of board, Amnesty International India.






13:07 · 03 May 25 · 427 Views



KSO CHURACHANDPUR
@KSO_CCPur

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Separation Day observed across India by the Kuki community, marking 2 yrs since the targeted violence perpetrated by Manipur government, where hundreds of lives were lost, leaving thousands displaced.

We demand constitutional separation !
@UN @RajBhavManipur @HMOIndia @PMOIndia






UN Human Rights and 9 others
11:28 · 04 May 25 · 165 Views

MODI'S CONTINUED SILENCE ON MANIPUR IRKS CONGRESS; DEMANDS FRESH POLL

New Delhi, May 03: Prime Minister Narendra Modi's swift reaction to the recent Pahalgam terror attack has reignited criticism over his conspicuous and prolonged silence on the two-year-long humanitarian crisis in Manipur. As the nation reels from yet another tragic terror incident in Kashmir, opposition leaders have accused the Prime Minister of "selective outrage," contrasting his immediate condemnation of the Pahalgam violence with what they say is a calculated indifference to the ongoing suffering in the Northeast.

The Congress party, in a scathing rebuke, marked the second anniversary of the ethnic violence in Manipur by demanding fresh elections and slamming the Prime Minister for what they described as "dereliction of Rajdharma" — the fundamental duty of a leader to protect and serve all citizens without bias.

"Where is the Prime Minister's outrage for Manipur?" asked Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge. "Over 260 lives lost, more than 70,000 displaced, and still, Modi ji has not stepped foot in the state. But in Pahalgam, where violence tragically struck, he was quick to respond with statements and condemnations. Why this hierarchy of human suffering?"

Kharge didn't mince words, accusing the Prime Minister of prioritizing optics over empathy. "Since January 2022, Modi ji has attended 250 domestic events and 44 international trips, but not a single visit to Manipur. This isn't just political negligence — it's moral failure."

The contrast, Congress leaders argue, lays bare a troubling pattern: the Prime Minister's readiness to address terror attacks in high-profile or electorally significant regions, while systematically ignoring protracted crises in areas deemed politically less advantageous. Critics say the silence on Manipur is not mere oversight — it is political calculation.

Saptagiri Ulaka, Congress in-charge for Manipur, went

further, alleging the government's inaction may be deliberate. "There's growing fear that the violence in Manipur was manufactured and then allowed to fester for political gain. Two years on, there's been no accountability, no healing, and still, no Prime Minister."

Despite the imposition of President's Rule in February, Congress leaders claim that the situation on the ground remains volatile and unresolved. They argue that President's Rule was imposed hastily and only to avoid a no-confidence vote, not out of genuine concern for the state's deteriorating conditions.

Jairam Ramesh, Congress General Secretary, emphasized the humanitarian aspect. "The suffering of Manipur's people continues with 60,000 still in relief camps. But the Prime Minister, who has found time to travel across continents, has not made time for his own citizens in crisis. His silence is not just political — it is cruel."

Congress has called for immediate fresh elections in the state, arguing that a new, popularly elected government is the only viable solution to restore peace and trust among Manipur's divided communities.

Keisham Meghachandra Singh, Congress's Manipur unit chief, issued a stark warning: "Force cannot bring peace, and clearly, the BJP cannot either. The people of Manipur deserve dignity, not abandonment."

As the Pahalgam tragedy rightly receives national attention, the growing chorus from the opposition demands that the Prime Minister extend the same sense of urgency, empathy, and leadership to Manipur — a state still waiting for justice, peace, and a visit from its Prime Minister.



FEATURED ARTICLE

Two Years On, Women who Became Tragic Symbols of Manipur Horror Live in Shadows

Prawesh Lama

In Manipur, two years after violence killed 260, Kuki families live in fear, haunted by trauma, as protests and high security mark the anniversary.

Tens of thousands of people in Manipur will be out on the streets this Saturday, marking their protest on the second anniversary of the violence that has torn the state apart and killed 260 people. Security will be on high alert, nearly 8,000 security personnel will be patrolling the streets, and leaders will be addressing rallies.

But two Kuki families will be away from the crowds, spending the day at small rented homes in Churachandpur town.

They once lived in their own houses in Kangpokpi district, from where a mob pulled them out on May 4, 2023, killed two male members, stripped the two Kuki women naked, gang raped them, and paraded them naked – their plight caught on video becoming the emblem of the horrors that roiled Manipur.

“Our case is such that we don’t come out in the open. My wife and the other young woman were paraded naked and violated while the mob recorded videos and later circulated it on social media. We want to forget everything, but this is a trauma that won’t heal quickly,” said the husband of one of the two victims, a 45-year-old woman. The other victim was 22.

In the last two years, the two families have changed houses at least four times, trying to live in places where they are not easily identified.

“But this is difficult. Until last year, my wife was suicidal. I cannot explain how I managed to convince her that it was not her fault, and how we needed to be strong. The younger woman became a recluse. She would not step outside her house and refused to talk to any unknown man. Even today she does not speak to outsiders,” said the 45-year-old’s husband.

He said a few months ago, the Assam Rifles (AR) helped the family get in touch with a top psychologist from Guwahati for counselling. Once every week or fortnight, the two women visit the Sector 27 Assam Rifles office in Churachandpur town for a virtual counselling session with the psychologist, said people aware of developments.

Unlike others, whose cars are not allowed inside the high security campus, the women – who come with their faces covered by shawls – drive inside and directly enter the room with video conferencing facilities, said the elder woman’s husband. There are no questions asked at the gate.

“The counselling session is helpful. Our community

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leaders are protecting us. We also speak to our pastor at the church. It is a work in progress,” said the man, a 65-year-old retired junior commissioned officer (JCO) who served in Jammu & Kashmir during the Kargil War.

A Kuki-Zo community youth leader, who has been given the charge to look after the two families, said, “They are not from Churachandpur but their case is such that people have seen the viral videos. This is why they have to change homes. Whenever they say they are uncomfortable, we immediately shift them to a new place. They had also shifted here during the peak of the violence. There is no normalcy in Manipur. The women are yet to come to terms with their new life here.”

Despite the community leaders’ attempts to get the women to meet new people and spend their time outside, the two women have expressed their inability to go out and meet people, said the Kuki-Zo community youth leader.

“My wife has trouble sleeping but she is slightly better. But the younger woman has developed anxiety issues. The incident has affected her psychologically. We may never feel what she is going through but we know what has caused it. But still things are slightly better now. If the administration can help them find suitable jobs, it would be of great help not just financially but psychologically too. This will also help in the healing process,” the elder woman’s husband said.

The younger victim was a college student at the time but later dropped out. She lives with her mother.

The police say the younger woman’s father and brother were also killed by the mob that day. The first information report said a mob of 900-1,000 men armed with AK rifles, INSAS and SLRs, entered the victim’s village, burnt houses to the ground, looted and committed the crimes on the women at 3pm on May 4, 2023 – less than 24 hours after ethnic clashes between Kukis and Meiteis broke out.

On October 5, 2023, the Central Bureau of Investigation(CBI) filed a charge sheet against seven

persons at a special CBI court in Guwahati. Last month, the Supreme Court said that the trial of this case and 26 others being probed by CBI will be held in Guwahati.

Manipur government officials aware of the case details said the two women successfully identified all the men in the test identification parade (TIP) and recorded their statements before a magistrate in August 2023.

“The TIP was held in Manipur itself. Despite their trauma and what they went through that day, they successfully identified all the accused. There were so many similar looking photographs on the table, of which they picked up faces of the accused. They have a strong case whenever the trial starts,” a senior government officer said.

The family said the last time they heard from CBI was sometime in June last year. HT reached out to CBI for a comment but did not get one immediately.

“I do not think the government has forgotten about this case but for some reason there is no development. We have not been called to the court even once. We still maintain that one main person has not been caught. Two years have passed, and we are still waiting for justice,” the husband said. Last month, the families were notified that two of the accused have sought bail.

Both families are now waiting with trepidation for May 3. That day, Manipur’s horrors will hit the national headlines again. Messages, photos, videos will be circulated on social media and phones. Among them will be the illegal, once viral and perennially traumatic video that changed their lives, two years ago.

Published by [The Hindustan Times](#)



FEATURED ARTICLE

The Horror of May 3, 2023, and Way Ahead

WL Hangshing

May 3, 2023 will go down as Manipur's day of infamy, when Meitei rioters and arsonists went to town targeting pre-marked Kuki houses for ransack and for arson. TV visuals showed the mobs to be accompanied by Manipur policemen in uniform, who did nothing to prevent the lawlessness and in fact were seen as a backup to the rioting. The crowds were fired by news of the rape and killing of a Meitei woman by Kukis (which later turned out to be old visuals of a Delhi incident). The mischief, monger, a meitei youth, though identified, still roams free. The evening was marked by the clanging of electric poles, an innovative rallying sound for the riotous crowds, an innovative stratagem that seems to have been well rehearsed for such a situation. There is no instance till now of any of those policemen in uniform, all Meiteis, having been questioned or chargesheeted for waywardness.

May 4, instead of seeing an easing of tensions, was replete with recharged meitei mobs on the rampage everywhere in Imphal. Kuki students in the University and Medical colleges were hunted out, beaten and killed. Women jobbers in rental accommodations were fished out, raped and murdered. There were visuals of Meira Paibis handing over young Kuki girls to the men to be raped. Social media was awash with Kukis, women and men, chased down and butchered all over the city. There was a gruesome picture of the beheading of

David Theik and his head being held by the culprit. The culprit was identified and reported to be the assistant of a Meeitei MLA. He still walks free.

The days rolled on with no improvement in sight. Law and order seemed to have taken leave. Even worse, the Police forces, notably the Manipur commandos, were clearly seen to be taking a partisan role against the Kuki populace. The Chief Minister himself was prominent in his screaming of war against the Kukis. All Kuki officers were stripped of their functions and rendered ineffectual. Top posts such as the Chief Secretary and the DGP were made out of bounds to Kuki officers. The DGP, P Doungel was stripped of his charge. Officers like Clay Khongsai took the route of Central deputation as DG ITBP and was awarded the President Medal nailing the CM's lie that he was unfit for the post. Vumlunmang Vualnam, IAS, who was denied the CS post, has now been entrusted with the esteemed post of Secretary Finance-expenditure. They were both found to be unfit for the top posts of Manipur Administration by the then Chief Minister N Biren Singh, who himself now faces incriminating charges in the voice-recorded case in the Supreme Court.

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The Imphal valley is now devoid of any Kuki. The last one Kuki woman, 21 years of age, who was married to a Meitei, was rescued only a couple of days ago, having survived a slit in the throat, bodily abused, and bruised all over. The demographic and geographical partition of the Valley and the hills of Manipur is complete and irreversible.

The figures of 260 deaths in the beginning of the pogrom are all Kukis who were living in the valley. They were unable to escape the cauldron of death, while Meiteis in the hills were safely escorted under the watchful guard of Kuki women, laying bare for all to see where humanity lies.

Two years on, the Arambol, the Leepun and the falana falana Meitei secessionist

Cadres who were called back from their hideout camps in Burma by the meitei CM Biren Singh, are reinforcing, recruiting, whetting and grinding their axes in preparation for another attempt at annihilating the Kuki. The prominent slogans are 'illegal immigrants' directed at Kuki and 'the idea of Manipur' a secessionist dream that they have. Their fangs, dripping with the blood of innocent unwary Kuki, women and children unspared, they are still thirsting for more. All meitei casualties have occurred in their attacks on Kuki settlements, yet they go to town crying the victim cry.

The allegation of 'illegal immigrant' has been debunked many times over by the academia, the intelligentsia and the media. The meitei still wave that slogan for perhaps

too reasons. One, that being the only justification they have left for their nonsensical anti-Kuki pogrom and the other being that they are devoid of reason any righteousness. The other concept of "The idea of Manipur", besides being fallacious is Seditious, and counter to the provisions of the Constitution of India. The idea of Manipur lies buried with the king's signing of the Instrument of accession to the Indian Union in 1949.

Two years on, war cries are only getting louder. Two years on, the question being now asked is as to the 'Way Forward'. The only difference with the President's Rule is that the Manipur armed forces, namely the Police Commandos and the state paramilitary, are somewhat reined in from their partisan role against the Kuki populace. Two years on, there is no sign of retributive justice upon those Meitei murderers and rapists whose identities are not unavailable.

The only way forward is to accept the ground realities of Manipur and to provide the Kuki with a means to secure their life and property, by way of a formal self administrative set up. It has to be realised that restoration of status quo is not possible. It is not the way forward. It is not even science fiction.

W. L. Hangshing is a retired bureaucrat and the General Secretary of the Kuki People's Alliance.

Published by [Power Corridors](#)



**What can be asserted without evidence can
be dismissed without evidence.**

— Christopher Hitchens



FEATURED ARTICLE

Time to Revisit the Forgotten Past: Separate Administrations for Kuki-Zo and Meitei

Dr. Seilen Haokip

3 May 2025 is the second anniversary of the devastating violence of 3 May 2023; the state remains deeply fractured—ethnically, politically, and emotionally. A growing chorus of historians, tribal leaders and constitutional scholars argues that the solution may lie not in forced integration, but in restoring the time-honoured practice of separate governance for the valley-dwelling Meitei and the hill-dwelling Kuki Zo.

The conflict between the majority Meitei and minority Kuki-Zo communities has reached a point of no return under the current unitary administrative framework. The time has come to face a sobering truth: peace will not come from forced coexistence but from constitutionally guaranteed autonomy rooted in historical precedent.

A Legacy of Separate Rule

Separate administration is not new. Long before the British arrived in 1824, the Meitei kingdom (confined to the fertile Kangleipak valley) and the myriad Kuki-Zo chieftainships in the surrounding hills coexisted under distinct administrations. Even under colonial rule, the British maintained this divide for 'administrative convenience', drawing the modern boundaries

of Kangleipak, which for their political and administrative convenience was constructed as 'Manipur', including the surrounding hills where the Meitei monarch's administration never was. The boundaries were drawn in stages—West (1832), East (1834), North (1873), South-East (1894) and South (1900)—yet never unifying the valley and hills under a single local authority.

Post-Independence Imbalance

When Manipur acceded to India in 1949, the nascent government chose to preserve those colonial boundaries. Article 371C of the Constitution established a Hill Areas Committee to protect tribal interests—on paper. However, in a 60-seat assembly, 40 seats were assigned to the Meitei majority (around 44 percent of the population, including some non-Meitei) and only 20 to tribal communities (41 percent). Advocates say this 'lopsided representation' rendered Article 371C toothless and denied Manipur's hill tribes the Sixth Schedule safeguards enjoyed by other Northeast states.

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‘Our hill communities have been second-class citizens in their own land’, says Dr L Thangjam, a legal scholar at Imphal University. “The colonial legacy was never dismantled; it was merely repackaged to favour the valley majority.”

Echoes of Discontent

Decades of underrepresentation have fuelled two parallel insurgencies. The NSCN-IM, predominantly Tangkhul Naga, continues to press for incorporation of Naga-inhabited areas into a ‘Greater Nagalim’. Meanwhile, Kuki-Zo groups entered a Tripartite Suspension of Operations with the Centre and the Manipur government, seeking political and territorial autonomy within the state of Manipur, India.

Despite those talks, tension boiled over on May 3, 2023, when radical Meitei-majoritarian mobs—overtly aided by the Meitei dominated state security forces—led widespread attacks on Kuki-Zo settlements in Imphal valley and hamlets bordering the valley and hill districts. Hundreds were killed, many women raped and slaughtered, and thousands displaced – the twin communities or one-time brothers found themselves physically and psychologically severed. Thereafter, stretching over two misery-filled years, the minority Kuki Zo victim have only waited for Government to acknowledge their plight and secure safe political separation from Meitei dominated Manipur with Constitutional safeguards.

A Return to Historical Norms

In the aftermath of this tragedy, many tribal leaders now openly call for direct central rule under modelled on Article 239A (the same provision used to govern Puducherry) for Kuki-Zo areas, with a parallel arrangement for their Naga neighbours, alongside

autonomous Meitei administration in the valley. The Puducherry model would amicably address overlapping land issues in the existing hill districts that were established not on ethnic lines, but for administrative convenience. They argue that only by formally acknowledging the pre-colonial—and pre-1949—status quo can the three communities, Naga, Kuki Zo and Meitei, hope to rebuild mutual trust and be reconciled as good neighbours that would nurture a stable symbiotic relationship.

‘Separate administration isn’t separatism’, insists Mr V Haokip, a Kuki-Zo academic. ‘It’s recognition of historical realities and a proven foundation for peaceful coexistence, and a promise that neither community will be ruled at the whim of the other.’

Constitutional experts note that India’s federal framework already accommodates a wide variety of arrangements—states, union territories, Fifth and Sixth Schedule areas—to reflect linguistic, cultural and tribal diversity. Manipur’s mixed model, they say, is an anomaly born of colonial bureaucracy, not organic evolution.

Obstacles and the Road Ahead

Critics of this proposal warn that formal separation risks fragmenting the state beyond repair or setting a precedent for similar demands elsewhere. This argument, made against Kuki Zo political demand, is flawed given the pre-colonial history of separate administration. Legitimacy of the demand is accentuated by the state-sponsored ethnic cleansing commencing 3 May 2023. No other state or Union territory were created under similar circumstances. Proponents also counter that ‘separation’ need not mean secession. Rather,

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it can be a form of internal autonomy that keeps both administrations firmly within the Union of India. The reasoning is congruent with the visionary Constitutional fathers, who envisaged the needs for a growing nation and enshrined provisions under Article 3 to create new states and Union Territories, not to break or weaken, but to strengthen the Union.

To move forward, they urge: Invoke a transitional central administration modelled on Article 239A in Kuki-Zo regions with a parallel arrangement for the Naga-majority regions.

Conclusion

More than two centuries after their first encounter with British 'divide-and-rule', the Meitei and Kuki Zo once

again stand at a crossroads. The surge in violence since May 2023 has shattered the illusion that a one-size-fits-all administration can guarantee peace. As Manipur's leaders and Government of India debate the path ahead with the United People's Front and the Kuki National Organisation, one thing is clear: any lasting solution must respect the historical—and constitutional—right of each community to govern its own affairs. In the words of historian Dr Thangjam, 'To build a unified tomorrow, we must first honour the separations of our past.'

Dr. Seilen is the Spokesperson of the Kuki National Organisation (KNO).

Published by [Power Corridors](#)



2 YEARS OF PERSECUTION ON KUKI-ZO TRIBALS



3RD MAY FOR THE THIRD TIME

- Jacquelyn Laltanpuui Suantak

It's the 3rd of May for the third time and
I still have my pen and paper, but with
Empty pages this time.

I know i was raised better, but i wish
I could fake my emotions better.

Yesterday, the world seemed so simple,
There was meaning on earth, a widow's heart
was filled with hope, and children had dreams again.
But today, I walk past the Wall of Remembrance
and the death of the hills pierces
through my skin and i'm angry all over again.

Prescriptions to deal with empty chairs and beds,
Children settling with a distant memory of home,
Prayers lining up at heaven's gate while we're still
knocking on the government's door.
The embers of hope are fading
In the hills with every breaking dawn.

I pass through the graves of the greatest
sons and daughters of our land.

The name of a father who could never
Return home to hold his first-born child,
The name of a mother who put herself last
until her last breath, the name of a child
who never had the chance to see his father's eyes
and sleep with his mother's lullabies.

This old town has changed and I still feel
pangs of survivor's guilt whenever I eat
my mother's home cooked meal and
laugh at my father's jokes.

How could we just go ahead and carry on?
I came by your grave today and brought
Flowers from our forefathers' garden.
Silence is the only love language between us now.
And when dusk arrives, illl be walking
the longest walk home as I leave with
echoes of your voices coming from six feet under:
"WE'RE JUST GLAD YOU COULD VISIT."

~ Seineo KUKI